

Definitions Project – Follow-up from 1st Meeting on January 5–6, 2006

Definitions Results – January 2006

The Definitions Project began its series of 4 meetings on January 5-6, 2006, with 28 attendees representing federal agencies, professional organizations, and other NGOs. The following notes summarize the activities and results from that meeting.

Process

- Agenda

Day 1 - Introductions and Presentations

Day 2 - Finish presentations

Discuss issues and challenges

Prioritize goals/strategies

Establish next steps

- Objectives of this session

1. Work towards stated goals

- Open dialogue between represented agencies/organizations
- Look to future collaboration
- Develop products: at least publication and website

2. Set course for next meeting

- Next Steps

RD 1/12/06 Establish website page for group meeting notes

TM 1/13/06 Send e-mail with suggested dates/locations and website address to group

LB 1/13/06 Organize data from meeting and send to participants

All Respond to data from meeting

KM 4/1/06 Collect models of other glossaries and send to Lisa Brochu

LB 4/15/06 Post collected information on website

All Collect and bring any definitions you can find with citations to next meeting

Early in the day, the group determined its specific goals within the scope of the project goals and discussed the relative merits of participating in the project.

Goals for Group

- Determine what goes on the list, value and who will use it
- Determine key areas of collaboration
- Create a coalition to upscale the efforts of all agencies/organizations in the field

Value of Project

- improve internal communications within and between organizations
- improve external credibility
- establish power of collective (a common voice for a changing educational paradigm)
- improve ability to speak with confidence about commonalities

The group identified potential contacts for future participation or collaboration.

Additional Contact Agencies

(*previously invited; declined to attend)

Access Fund

*American Association for State and Local History

*American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta

American Birding Association

American Library Association

Archeology Conservation

Association for Science and Technology Centers

Association of Youth Museums

Biodiversity Project

Conservation International

International Association for Public Participation

Leave No Trace

National 4-H

National Art Educators Association

National Association of State Foresters

National Council for Geographic Studies

National Council for Social Studies

National Council of History Education

National Park Service – Cultural Office

*National Science Teachers Association

National Society for Environmental Education

National Trust for Historic Preservation

*National Wildlife Federation

Sierra Club

Smithsonian Natural History Museum

Society of Future Educators

The Nature Conservancy

Following presentations by each participant in which their organization was introduced, and specific interest in the project suggested, the group listed issues and concerns that they are currently experiencing.

Issues and Concerns

1. Building consensus amongst organization's members on definitions
2. Communicating to others outside field
3. public perception of definitions – does terminology matter to anyone but us
4. definitions can create differences
5. who determines “best practices”
6. importance of terms to field vs. management/bureaucracy
7. audience-driven definition
8. longevity/endurance of terms has value
9. interface of what we do as professions as a group with public image (strength in numbers to accomplish mission)
10. making our definitions applicable to real life
11. defining mission of organization
12. how do we know we're accomplishing anything (Roper polls)
13. partnership opportunities with other organizations
14. what are tools of engagement
15. influence over funding/support as a whole
16. identifying loaded terms and how to avoid them
17. skills development
18. audience decline
19. \$/positions being cut
20. creating holistic approaches across disciplines
21. combating extinction of experience
22. getting people to sites; taking message off-site
23. when and why are definitions needed
24. branding of organization
25. measuring effectiveness
26. truth in media
27. agency/organization identification and recognition
28. responsiveness to current political/social climate
29. achieving buy-in from management levels without losing meanings
30. trend spotting/forecasting for industry
31. measuring long-term results
32. who has responsibility for interpretation and/or interp planning
33. how do we make a bigger difference
34. utilizing mass media to promote organizational messages
35. getting broader buy-in beyond this group for accepted terms
36. lack of clarity in literature and among members, users on subtle distinctions between terms
37. definitions become so broad they lose meaning
38. relationship between learning and education
39. “our” organizations working with corporate world
40. Can definitions lead to uniform standards for evaluation and monitoring?
41. What are the issues facing us that this group might work towards
42. How can we best connect people with their world?
43. How do we best determine what activity is most appropriate for where, when, and whom?
44. How can we better connect educators with their organizational goals/missions
45. Where education fits into power/funding structure

When the results from voting on the above issues were tabulated, the following key issues were defined. Some of these issues may be beyond the scope of this project, but provide excellent guidance for future discussions:

- Definitions – how do we agree or respectfully disagree on common vocabulary
- Organizational Issues – how can we best identify and deal with internal issues facing our organizations
- Big Picture/External Issues – how can we best identify trends that affect our operations
- Professional Development – how do we best prepare ourselves for our chosen jobs
- Effectiveness – how do we tell if we're making any difference (internally and externally)

The group brainstormed a list of terms that prove to be somewhat problematic in terms of coming to agreement on a common, useful definition. The terms have been categorized to make it easier to compare them.

Terms related to Process or Products

(Original list generated 1/6/06)

Accreditation
Advocacy
Alignment
Appreciation
Assessment
Brain-based learning
Capacity building
Certification
Character interpretation
Communication
Competencies
Comprehensive environmental education program
Conservation
Conservation education
Correlation
Credentialing
Cultural education
Cultural learning
Curriculum
Differentiated instruction
Education
Education for sustainability
Entrepreneurship
Environmental education
Environmental literacy
Evaluation
Experiential education
Experiential learning
First-person interpretation
Formal interpretation
Free-choice learning
Front-end evaluation
Geography education
Global education
History education
Informal interpretation inquiry
Interpretation
Interpretive planning
Interpretive services
Learning
Living history
Natural resource management
Nature education
Nonpersonal interpretation
Object-based learning
Outdoor education

Performance measurement
Personal interpretation
Place-based learning
Preservation
Problem-based learning
Problem-solving communication
Professional development
Public affairs
Public archeology
Resource education
Resource issue interpretation
Science education
Self-directed interpretation
Service learning
Social marketing
Stewardship
Sustainability education
Teacher training
Tourism
Training
Wilderness education

Terms related to Content

(Original list generated 1/6/06)

Earth science
Geotechnology
Heritage

Terms related to People

(Original list generated 1/6/06)

Art educator
Curator
Customer
Docent
Educator
Facilitator
Guide
Home schoolers
Interpreter
Mentor
Messenger
Museum educator
Naturalist
Tourist
User
Visitor

Terms related to Facilities/Sites

(Original list generated 1/6/06)

Contact station
Environmental learning center
Interpretive center
Museum
Nature center
Visitor center

Miscellaneous Terms

(Original list generated 1/6/06)

Accessible
Benefits
Best practices
Built
Citizen science
Communities in practice
Community character
Connoisseurship
Cooperating associations
Cultural landscape
Cultural resources
Culture
Formal
Formative
Green
Human dimensions
Impacts
Informal
Interdisciplinary
Interpretive opportunity
Logic models
Natural
Natural landscape
Natural resources
Nonformal
Nonformal settings
Not formal
Objectives
Outcomes
Outputs
Outreach
Place-based
Program(s)
Quality
Responsible action
Resource
Standards
Summative
Sustainability
Theme
Visual literacy