Quality Standards in Heritage Interpretation

An Extract from the ParcInterp Trainer Manual

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Quality Standards in
Heritage Interpretation

Bildungswerk
interpretation

Contents

Foreword

All programmes run by the United Nations underline the paramount value of freedom. But resting on pillars like innovation and flexibility, it seems impossible to untie our current idea of freedom from the idea of continuous economic growth within free markets. For about 200 years, this alliance brought the Western world to the fore. But, for some decades, we have become aware of losing the ground beneath our feet by following that path. In our efforts to outdo each other, and predicated on loans from people and nature, we leave our children a world in debt.

"A World in Debt" was the title of a book written during the crisis of the 1930s by an author, who became more renowned for his later work. The author was Freeman Tilden, and his later book was "Interpreting Our Heritage". Freeman Tilden felt the tension between perpetuation and transformation. He suspected that a feeling of belonging is relevant to getting one's feet back on the ground.

This feeling of belonging in a changing world is key to heritage interpretation. And it becomes even more significant in the context of lifelong learning and education for sustainable development.

More than 50 years ago, the idea of empowering people by helping them to interpret their natural and cultural heritage evolved from national parks through other protected areas, and from museums through other visitor-related facilities like zoos or botanical gardens. As one of the latest fruits of this development, ParcInterp resulted from the EU project called TOPAS (Training of Protected Area Staff) in 2008. TOPAS had determined that there was an urgent need for qualified staff to open the windows to our heritage at the stunning sites that can be found all over Europe, and aimed to set reliable quality standards and common criteria for training of interpretive staff.

To reveal the meaning of their heritage to visitors and provoking them to relate what they experience to their daily lives, in terms of sustainably managing the future, is an ambitious goal. And to prove the effectiveness of the interpretive approach is critical. It calls for a reliable quality management system backed by scientific research. Because that task cannot be undertaken solely by one agency, ParcInterp seeks to bring together park authorities, non-governmental organisations and university faculties researching the field. And because that task cannot just be managed by one country, ParcInterp pursues the international approach of TOPAS.

While the intent of ParcInterp is to define reliable qualities, standards and criteria, and to transfer them into practical training of protected area staff, the aim of this booklet is to describe the basics of the ParcInterp system, which have evolved over the last ten years from several pilot courses in protected areas in Germany.

We hope that these ideas will contribute to fruitful discussions about the necessity and the quality of heritage interpretation, not only in our parks but in all places where people encounter their heritage in seeking better ways to enable and promote our collective concern for what the Brundtlandt report called, simply but evocatively, "our common future".

Thorsten Ludwig
August 2012

1.   About ParcInterp

1.1   What is ParcInterp?

ParcInterp is a programme that aims to improve the quality of heritage interpretation in national parks, biosphere reserves and nature parks. It refers to educational visitor services which

- take place directly on site,
- are usually visited only once,
- last up to one day.

ParcInterp was recognised by the German UNESCO Commission, as a pilot project for integrating education for sustainable development (ESD) into heritage interpretation. It has been established and is supervised by EUROPARC Germany, the German Ranger Association and the German Association for Natural and Environmental Education (ANU). Scientific monitoring is provided by the Academy for Sustainable Development Eberswalde (HNE).

The aim of the partner organisations is to set up quality standards and criteria that

- emphasise the benefits to non-formal education through the involvement of protected areas,
- deliver common quality measures for protected area staff,
- offer specific approaches for the development of the ranger profession,
- strengthen connections to contemporary concepts such as universal access or ESD,
- are applicable to other visitor-oriented heritage facilities (e.g. zoos, botanical gardens or museums),
- provide proof of quality in comparison to other national or European certificates (e.g. EN 15565)[1].

1.2   How did ParcInterp evolve?

The first important impetus for comparable endeavours was the formation of the Interpretive Development Program by the US National Park Service (USNPS 1996).

In Europe, Leonardo project TOPAS (Training of Protected Area Staff) was initiated in the late 1990s. The aim of TOPAS was to create common European training standards for staff of protected areas. The results of the TOPAS pilot course "Basic Interpretive Skills", set up by partners from Italy and Germany, were encapsulated in a course manual (Ludwig 2003). They were further developed as a certification course after being reviewed at the International Academy for Nature Conservation on Vilm Island (Baltic Sea) in 2004.

This course - from then on consisting of three parts with two assignments, a written and a practical test - was successfully conducted until 2008, when it was transferred into the ParcInterp system.

1.3   When and why did Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) come in?

In 2008, EUROPARC Germany, the German Ranger Association and the Association for Natural and Environmental Education (ANU) declared a wish to work together to combine the two international concepts of heritage interpretation and education for sustainable development. From that, ParcInterp was born. In 2009, the approach was presented for the first time at an international conference held by the US National Association for Interpretation (NAI) in Athens.

Earlier, and following an initiative of the Danish Ranger Association, this development had been encouraged in 2003 by the World Conference of the International Ranger Federation (IRF) in Australia. The IRF extended Tilden's principles of heritage interpretation (Tilden 1957:8) with several elements concerning sustainability and finally adapted eleven shared principles under the heading "Heritage Interpreters Promoting Sustainable Development" (IRF 2003). In 2008, these principles were confirmed

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[1] EU standard for the provision of professional tourist guide training and qualification programmes

in Copenhagen by the IRF Nordic-Baltic Forum for Nature Interpretation from several countries around the Baltic Sea. One of the organisations represented was the German Ranger Association.

Including education for sustainable development within heritage interpretation is an important step in aligning interpretation with the ongoing debate about environment and development, which resulted in the present UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNESCO 2005).

ESD is an extension of the idea of protecting our natural and cultural heritage for future generations by integrating the crucial aspect of global justice. In practice, interpreters are encouraged to search for original objects on site which

- stand where ecology, equity and economy meet,

- build bridges from the local situation to global aspects,

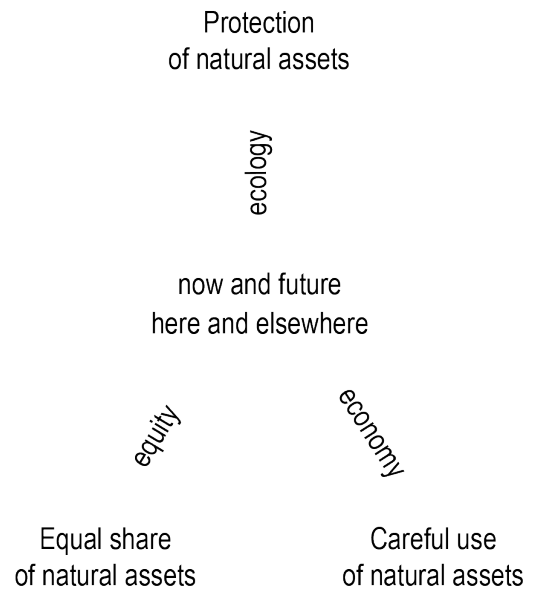- point from the past and the present to the future.

Protection
of natural assets

ecology

now and future
here and elsewhere

equity   economy

Equal share   Careful use
of natural assets   of natural assets

Figure 1. ESD Key Phenomenon

In addition to the implementation of these key phenomena of Education for Sustainable Development (see figure 1 and appendix: Examples for ESD Key Phenomena), ESD stands for contemporary learning principles, such as participation which were part of heritage interpretation from the start.

It is not only heritage interpretation, therefore, that can advance ESD; ESD itself can confirm and support the value of the profession.

2. About the ParcInterp Training Programme

2.1 Why is ParcInterp focused on training?

In discussing the question of what should be the specific results of heritage interpretation - for example, how a successful guided walk or an attractive interpretive panel should be designed - it soon became obvious that the quality of such products depends, of necessity, on the quality of staff training.

Furthermore, and especially against the background of limited means in European protected areas, staff members need to be encouraged and empowered to assess the quality of their own work for their personal advancement.

This means that rangers, in particular, who come from other professions - as they usually do in Germany - need to acquire a new understanding of education and training in the context of interpretation. Competence associated with this understanding need to be experienced and require training, because they cannot be passed on through simple knowledge transfer.

All these factors resulted, principally, in setting up a training programme that was evaluated and developed, in several settings, over the last ten years.

2.2 How is the ParcInterp training system built up?

ParcInterp has developed a two-stage training system that consists of a basic course and a professional course. Successful participants finish the first stage as "Certified Heritage Interpreters" while they aim to be awarded after the second stage as "Certified Interpretive Rangers".

All training activities rely on local on-site short courses - mainly out of doors - that alternate with on-the-job training. Each course consists of 120 hours in three training sessions. However, the focus will shift gradually, over several years, from joint training to supported educational activities in everyday practice. During the professional course, just 48 out of 120 hours are designed to be training time with the whole group (see appendix: ParcInterp Training System).

Until 2012, only the redeveloped basic course was tested with groups from four different protected areas (Molitor 2012). Thirty-three participants passed the exam and were certified as heritage interpreters.

2.2.1 Qualities

To convince internal and external stakeholders of the benefits of heritage interpretation, it is important to describe its qualities in a few brief sentences. Conversely, using the term "heritage interpretation" should be avoided when only some of its qualities are met, because interrelation of all the qualities is critical for the interpretive process. Based on a literature review, exchange with experts and practical experiences, four qualities were specified.

Heritage interpretation

- is committed to the universal relevance and protection of natural and cultural heritage,
- relates to visitors' immediate experience of sites (or objects / events at these sites),
- integrates visitors in a participatory way, taking their own 'world' into account.
- focuses on inspiring themes that unite the three aspects mentioned above.

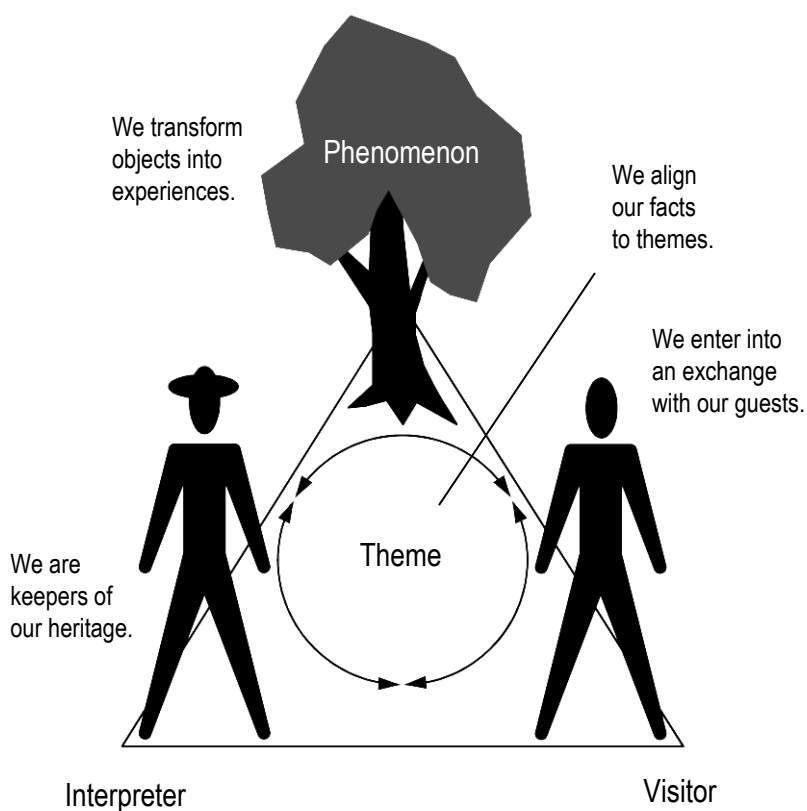These four qualities are illustrated through the interpretive triangle (Ludwig 2003, Bauszus 2004):

Figure 2. Interpretive Triangle

2.2.2 Quality Standards

While the qualities, mentioned above, describe the general aims of heritage interpretation, the quality standards are set as objectives and therefore more specific and measurable. In ParcInterp, standards have been developed for interpretation in protected areas, as well as for interpreters (see appendix: Comparison of ParcInterp Standards for Interpretation and for Interpreters).

The ParcInterp standards for interpreters (training standards) ensure that certified interpreters are able to deliver interpretive services to meet current research findings. However, these standards relate only to the quality of the tools available to the interpreter. The successful implementation and skilful use of these tools is the responsibility of park management. Park managers should

- ensure that the standards are met,
- give their employees enough space to develop their skills,
- regulate the completion of their tasks for recertification.

Education is a diverse process. To make its success measurable, standards have to provide a framework for results. For that reason, standards in education are always conflicting, and it is critical to decide what needs to meet standards.

As an example, ParcInterp sets standards for the active involvement of visitors. Within training courses, participants learn about several methods of how to achieve participation. But which of these (or of other) methods they use in a specific situation is up to them.

The uniqueness of the protected area and the individual character of the interpreter cannot be subject to any standardisation.

2.2.3 Quality Criteria

ParcInterp quality criteria break down the standards and make them manageable (see appendix: ParcInterp Basic Course - Certification Standards and Criteria).

Because of the complexity of the interpretive process success is not absolutely quantifiable in most cases. Therefore, it is still the responsibility of the trainer, or of a supervisor, to decide where further training is needed.

An example of a standard and of criteria:

Standard   Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to involve visitors as whole people (head, heart and hand), and to encourage encounters and changes of perspective, giving phenomena a meaning beyond facts, and inspiring visitors to support their protection.

Criteria   The interpreter is able to

- demonstrate different ways of determining the needs of visitors,
- open and close talks in a way that is compatible with the visitors,
- explain and use, systematically, universal ideas and personal meanings,
- select and apply stepping stones into the visitors' 'world'.

Through the criteria, both trainer and participants can assess where standards are already met and where further advancement is required. Thereafter, the park management can identify deficiencies and make necessary decisions for improvement.

2.2.4 Levels of Competence

ParcInterp is inspired by the career programme for interpretive rangers in the US National Park Service, and works with three levels of competence, building up on each other.

Competences are combinations of knowledge, skills and behaviour. They become part of one's personality and can usually not be acquired from a single training event. Beside the intake of knowledge and skills, practice as well as collective and individual reflection are needed.

One competence in ParcInterp is, for example, the ability to transfer the elements of, and the interdependencies within, the interpretive triangle to different personal and non-personal interpretive methods (see appendix: Competence Levels for Interpretive Training). According to training plans, this competence should be achieved during the basic course which will be completed within one year.

In contrast, for example, the ability to (a) develop an assessment plan for all interpretive services, considering front-end, formative and summative evaluation, and (b) to implement this plan and to know how to analyse and utilize the results of the research, is subject to the professional course, and is therefore designed to take several years.

The advantages of a common set of well-defined competences are

- during the development of the competences, learning objectives stay comparable,
- it is always possible to interrupt training or to change into another course group,
- the trainer has a scale for measuring the educational progress of the participants.

The three levels of competence - basic knowledge, working knowledge and professional knowledge - have been defined for each of the 20 course topics. Participants on the basic course helped to determine which topics within the course were able to provide professional knowledge, and where the second or third level of competence should be part of the professional course.

Level I: Basic Knowledge

Participants that have basic knowledge are able to classify the relevant content. They know the limitations and opportunities associated with the particular subject and they know what is needed to apply a course topic like "themes" or "interpretive walks".

An example of a competence at the first level is the planning, within the basic course, of an interpretive centre: Participants are familiar with the levels and stages of planning and can support planners by providing ideas and information on site.

Level II: Working Knowledge

Participants that have working knowledge are not only able to classify the relevant content, under guidance they can also put it into practice. Therefore, they can assist more experienced colleagues in planning and implementing the particular subject.

An example of a competence at the second level is the development, within the basic course, of audio elements: Participants can develop provisional texts and record them on voice recorders. They should be able to select a suitable phenomenon, create a theme, suggest a dramatic production and by doing so, contribute substantially to the result.

Level III: Professional Knowledge

Participants that have professional knowledge are able to put the particular content into practice, and to transfer it to other situations without any assistance. This requires a certain routine, which is why professional knowledge is practised from the beginning of the first training sessions and constantly repeated on a higher level throughout further progression.

An example of a competence at the third level is planning, conducting and assessing of an interpretive talk under all conditions that can be expected in the area - for example, at every season, in any weather, by day and night.

2.2.5   Didactic principles

During training, some content is not passed directly to the participants but transmitted through course structure or course design. This is especially the case with most aspects of education for sustainable development.

One key term is participation. In ParcInterp, participants develop their training content mainly on their own in small groups and in exercises on site, sharing the outcomes and assessing the results against standards and criteria.

ParcInterp trainers are expected to

- follow the principles of heritage interpretation,
- design learning holistically (with head, heart and hand) and in various forms,
- respect the needs of the individual learner,
- include experiences from the learner's own work and life,
- initiate and promote new learning experiences and inspire the desire for learning,
- strengthen personal responsibility and the readiness to give and to receive critiques,
- support the cooperation of learners with each other and with other players,
- use pin boards, flip charts, moderation cards, markers and other media in a professional way,
- integrate content spontaneously from a computer or the internet using a data projector,
- develop ideas together with learners using a computer and a data projector,
- first demonstrate all methods learners will acquire,
- allow cooperative development of content in realistic situations,
- provide space to share new experiences and to challenge habitual ways of thinking,
- visualise results in the seminar room - and relate to them during following training sessions.

2.3   What are the requirements for certification?

In addition to the requirements connected with the courses (see appendix: Parcinterp Training Stages), participants have to attend at least 75% of the course hours. Whether or not conditions for certification are met is decided by the course instructor, who needs to be certified as a trainer within the ParcInterp system. The trainer is always expected to ask for an external evaluation - usually from a university - at least in terms of the video documentation of the practical test.

Participants who meet the requirements receive a certificate signed by the course instructor, by the chairmen of the partner organisations and by the university involved in the certification process. In addition they receive a small badge in the shape of the ParcInterp logo which rangers are requested to wear on their uniform.

The certificate is valid as long as the participants fulfill the requirements to keep it (see appendix: ParcInterp Training Stages). The foremost aim in this connection is not to encourage further training but to ensure that participants actually apply the acquired skills to their daily work.

3. Links and References

3.1 List of References

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Molitor, H. (2012) 'Verbindung der werteorientierten Konzepte Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung und Natur- und Kulturinterpretation.' In Auf dem Weg zu gutem Leben - Die Bedeutung der Natur für seelische Gesundheit und Werteentwicklung. ed. by Jung, N., Molitor, H., and Schilling, A. Opladen: Budrich UniPress: 151-166

Tilden, F. (1936) A World in Debt. New York: Funk and Wagnalls

Tilden, F. (1957) Interpreting Our Heritage. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (2005) Draft International Implementation Scheme for the United Nations Decade on Education for Sustainable Development. Paris: UNESCO Executive Board

USNPS - US National Park Service (1996) Essential Competencies for National Park Service Employees. Washington: US Government Printing Office 1996-775-626

3.2 List of Links

Academy for Sustainable Development Eberswalde (HNE): www.hnee.de
Bildungswerk interpretation: www.interp.de
Europarc Germany: www.europarc-deutschland.de
German Ranger Association: www.bundesverband-naturwacht.de
German Association for Natural and Environmental Education (ANU): www.umweltbildung.de
ParcInterp Programme: www.parcinterp.eu

4.   <u>Appendix</u>

ParcInterp Training Stages
Comparison of ParcInterp Standards for Interpretation and for Interpreters
Competence Levels for Interpretive Training
ParcInterp Basic Course - Certification Standards and Criteria
Examples for ESD Key Phenomena

ParcInterp Training Stages

Course Hours		Self-study Hours		Audience / Certificate
Stage 1: ParcInterp Basic Course				ParcInterp
entry training	32			target group:
		assignment	8	staff working at visitor services at times
advanced training	32			
		assignment	8	
final training	30			
written test	2			
practical test	8			
	104		16	Certified Heritage Interpreter

To retain their certificate, participants must, once a year, receive and provide one peer-reviewed interpretive talk and create or rewrite one short interpretive panel text.

Course Hours		Self-study Hours		Audience / Certificate
Stage 2: ParcInterp Professional Course				ParcInterp
		on two occasions each, receive and provide a peer-reviewed interpretive talk	8	target group:
		on two occasions, create or rewrite one short interpretive panel text	8	staff working at visitor services almost all time
Prof. Training I (Personal Services)	16			
		on two occasions each, receive and provide a peer-reviewed interpretive talk	8	
		on two occasions, create or rewrite one short interpretive panel text	8	
		assignment	8	
Prof. Training II (Non-personal Services)	16			
		on two occasions each, receive and provide a peer-reviewed interpretive talk	8	
		on two occasions, create or rewrite one short interpretive panel text	8	
		assignment	8	
Prof. Training III (Planning / Evaluation)	16			
		assignment	8	
	48		72	Certified Interpretive Ranger

To retain their certificate, participants must, once a year, develop and deliver one best practice example.

Quality Standards in Heritage Interpretation

Comparison of ParcInterp Standards for Interpretation and for Interpreters – Subject Areas 1 and 2

Standards for Interpretation in Protected Areas	Standards for Interpreters (Competence Level III)
1.1. Principles and Models of Interpretation Short-term education activities for visitors in protected areas are aligned to the idea of heritage interpretation and to the methods and scientific findings on which interpretation is based. They rely on firsthand experience of original sites and objects, linked to themes, and designed to provoke active involvement of visitors.	The interpreter is aware of the origin and purpose of heritage interpretation. S/he knows the elements of and the interdependencies within the interpretive triangle, and is able to transfer them to different personal and non-personal interpretive methods without any assistance.
1.2. Natural and Cultural Phenomena Short-term education activities for visitors in protected areas are focused on the firsthand experience of the conserved natural or cultural phenomena which are presented in a broader context and in a way that raises questions, and allows an exciting revelation of different aspects in the course of their interpretation.	The interpreter can explain the meaning of original objects and sites for heritage interpretation. S/he is able to select natural and cultural phenomena according to their interpretive potential, and to share and reveal specific aspects in an exciting way without any assistance.
1.3. Interpreters Protected area administrations support their educational staff – especially rangers – in developing their strengths and in recognizing their weaknesses. They encourage staff members, within an agreed structure, to improve their own style, to cooperate with each other and to acquire further qualifications in a well-directed way.	The interpreter is familiar with the mission of the ranger service. S/he is committed to the protection of natural and cultural heritage, aware of the role s/he is playing within this task, and able to emphasize her/his strengths and to plan her/his career in a well-directed way.
1.4. Visitors Short-term education activities for visitors in protected areas encourage visitors to be involved and to participate in an enjoyable way. They are related to the visitor's world in a meaningful way, addressed to the whole person (head, heart and hand), respect potential barriers and suggest changes of perspective.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to involve visitors as whole people (head, heart and hand), and to encourage encounters and changes of perspective, giving phenomena a meaning beyond facts, and inspiring visitors to support their protection.
1.5. Themes Short-term education activities for visitors in protected areas are directed to themes or larger truths. Themes offer links by way of intangibles such as universal ideas, and by use of other stepping stones whose messages provoke internal or external involvement. An important criterion for selecting facts is their ability to support these themes.	The interpreter can distinguish topic, theme and message. Based on an original site or object and without any assistance, s/he can create a theme to facilitate access through intangibles such as universal ideas and other stepping stones, and to select facts to support this theme.
2.1 Interpretive Talks Interpretive talks (lasting about ten minutes) inspire and enhance firsthand experiences with natural or cultural phenomena. They are guided by a theme and related to the visitor. Prevailing conditions like sun/rain, summer/winter or day/night must be taken into account. Interpretive talks play a major role in training the interpreters of an area.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to prepare and to give an interpretive talk (lasting about ten minutes) related to one phenomenon, encouraging the visitor to participate, and taking account of prevailing conditions such as sun/rain, summer/winter or day/night.
2.2 Interpretive Walks Interpretive walks are guided walks, using the principles of interpretation. Within the framework of a main theme, they sequentially connect several phenomena and themes, following one theme line, and are related to the visitor. Prevailing conditions like sun/rain, summer/winter and day/night must be taken into account.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to prepare and to conduct an interpretive walk with five interpretive talks along one theme line, encouraging the visitor to participate, and taking account of prevailing conditions such as sun/rain, summer/winter or day/night.
2.3 Roving Interpretation Within the framework of one main theme, roving interpretation links several phenomena and themes inside one theme circle but in a dispersed way. The interpretive process is partly conditioned by dialogue with the visitor. Prevailing conditions like sun/rain, summer/winter and day/night must be taken into account.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to prepare and to conduct roving interpretation by developing one theme circle within a natural or cultural area (Ø about 10 metres), encouraging the visitor to participate, and taking account of prevailing conditions (see left column).
2.4 Live Interpretation Within the framework of one main theme, first- or third-person-interpretation, with one or more interpreters, is based on carefully researched and structured biographies. Live interpreters bring a real site or phenomenon to life, while integrating the visitor into the performance.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to prepare and to conduct first- or third-person live interpretation, to be achieved alone or with several interpreters/roles. Part of the preparation is the investigation or development of real or fictional historical biographies.
2.5 One-Day Programmes for School Classes One-day programmes for school classes are centred on phenomena and themes. They are target-group oriented and based on learning by doing. Aligned to current formal curricula, they aim to improve cooperation with educational institutions and highlight the relevance of the protected area in terms of educational value.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to prepare and to conduct one-day programmes for school classes, aligned to target groups and formal curricula. S/he can debate with the teacher about preparation and follow-up activities, content and organisation, in a competent way.

Comparison of ParcInterp Standards for Interpretation and for Interpreters – Subject Areas 3 and 4

Standards for Interpretation in Protected Areas	Standards for Interpreters (Competence Level III)
3.1 Interpretive Text Written or spoken interpretive text which is prepared in advance, deals at any one time with only one phenomenon on site. It reveals a limited number of facts that illustrate and explain one theme which is aligned to the phenomenon. It is short, illustrative, well-structured and stimulating and related to the visitor's own 'world'.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to prepare a short text which follows the principles of interpretation, for panels and brochures (amounting to about 50 words) as well as for audio recordings (lasting about 80 seconds).
3.2 Interpretive Elements Interpretive elements combine text, illustration, audio, interactive or art elements. They deal at any one time with only one phenomenon on site, directed by one theme and related to the visitor's own 'world'. Interpretive elements are core parts of interpretive trails, interpretive areas and interpretive centres.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to combine text, illustration, audio, interactive or art elements in an exhibit plan which follows the principles of interpretation, and which is ready for implementation.
3.3 Interpretive Trails Interpretive trails are educational trails, guided by the principles of interpretation. Within the framework of one main theme, they sequentially connect several phenomena and themes, following one theme line, and relate to the visitor's own 'world' at each stop.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to develop a main theme, a theme line building on that main theme, a preliminary plan, a design plan and a construction plan encompassing the contents of an interpretive trail consisting of five interpretive elements.
3.4 Interpretive Areas Within the framework of one main theme, interpretive areas connect several phenomena and themes inside one theme circle in a dispersed way. They relate all phenomena to the visitor's own 'world' and allow visitors to decide their own sequence of interpretive experience without losing their focus.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to develop a main theme, a theme circle building on that main theme, a preliminary plan, a design plan and a construction plan encompassing the contents of an interpretive area consisting of five interpretive elements.
3.5 Interpretive Centres The whole focus of an interpretive centre is on a specific site and its phenomena, and it is guided by thematic interpretation. Within the framework of one main theme, media support and explain the site and phenomena without outdoing them. They aim to create a close relationship between the site and its visitors.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to develop a preliminary plan, a design plan and a construction plan encompassing the contents of an interpretive centre (ground area about 100 m²), related to the phenomena on site and following one main theme.
4.1 Interpretive Planning Interpretive planning is an essential component of the management planning process for a protected area. There must be a comprehensive interpretive strategy – as well as a regularly-updated interpretive plan – on which all current visitor-related interpretive and educational activities must be based.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to fulfil all tasks connected to an interpretive planning process in a responsible and comprehensive way, and to develop interpretive project briefs for the commission of planning and achieving all interpretive services.
4.2 Evaluation There must be an assessment plan for all interpretive activities which is directly related to the interpretive aims and objectives included in the management plan. The evaluation assesses the level achievement of these aims and objectives. Unless justified to the contrary, all assessment takes place at all stages of evaluation.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to develop an assessment plan for all interpretive services, considering front-end, formative and summative evaluation. S/he knows how to implement this plan, and how to analyse and utilize the results of the research.
4.3 Peer Coaching As an essential tool of personnel development, peer coaching must be an integral part of the management of a protected area, with the necessary staff time resources provided. In personal interpretation, peer coaching is used to allow staff members to support each other in the improvement of their abilities.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to accompany a colleague within a peer coaching process during an interpretive talk, an interpretive walk, or roving interpretation, and to assess the interpretive service by sharing a competent review.
4.4 Accessibility Interpretation is generally understood as a multi-dimensional process. For people with any kind of disability, at least one typical site in each landscape category of the protected area must be accessible. This principle is applicable to all types of interpretive services.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to select natural or cultural phenomena that allow universal access, to process them for different interpretive services in a multi-dimensional and barrier-free way and to suggest ways to overcome barriers in the surroundings.
4.5 Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) All landscape categories that are typical of the protected area must be represented by at least one key phenomenon that relates to global justice, and to the responsibility towards future generations in terms of ecological, economic and socio-cultural aspects.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to select and present ESD key phenomena (see left column), according to the principles of interpretation. Considering the state of research, s/he can clarify how interpretation should be designed to meet the needs of ESD.

Quality Standards in Heritage Interpretation

Competence Levels for Interpretive Training - Subject Area 1: Basics of Interpretation

Level I - Basic Knowledge	Level II - Working Knowledge	Level III - Professional Knowledge
1.1. Principles and Models of Interpretation		
The interpreter knows the purpose and the origin of heritage interpretation. S/he can explain the process of interpretation by using the interpretive triangle. .	The interpreter can explain and illustrate the purpose, the origin and the process of heritage interpretation; the last by using the interpretive triangle and transferring it to a common personal or non-personal method.	The interpreter is aware of the origin and purpose of heritage interpretation. S/he knows the elements of and the interdependencies within the interpretive triangle, and is able to transfer them to different personal and non-personal interpretive methods without any assistance.
1.2. Natural and Cultural Phenomena		
The interpreter can explain the meaning of original objects and sites for heritage interpretation.	The interpreter can explain the meaning of original objects and sites for heritage interpretation. S/he is able to select natural and cultural phenomena according to their interpretive potential.	The interpreter can explain the meaning of original objects and sites for heritage interpretation. S/he is able to select natural and cultural phenomena according to their interpretive potential, and to share and reveal specific aspects in an exciting way without any assistance.
1.3. Interpreters		
The interpreter knows about the influence of the ranger service as the genesis of the interpretive profession and can briefly describe the mission of park rangers.	The interpreter is familiar with the profession of the park ranger. S/he can describe her/his own role within the interpretive process and some of her/his own strengths and weaknesses.	The interpreter is familiar with the mission of the ranger service. S/he is committed to the protection of natural and cultural heritage, aware of the role s/he is playing within this task, and able to emphasize her/his strengths and to plan her/his career in a well-directed way.
1.4. Visitors		
The interpreter can explain why active involvement of visitors is important for the success of interpretation. .	The interpreter can explain why the active involvement of visitors is important for the success of interpretation. S/he can distinguish facts from meanings and give some examples for stepping stones into the visitor's world.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to involve visitors as whole people (head, heart and hand), and to encourage encounters and changes of perspective, giving phenomena a meaning beyond facts, and inspiring visitors to support their protection.
1.5. Themes		
The interpreter can explain the difference between topic and theme.	The interpreter can explain the difference between topic and theme. S/he can give an example for an attractive theme and illustrate its potential effect.	The interpreter can distinguish topic, theme and message. Based on an original site or object and without any assistance, s/he can create a theme to facilitate access through intangibles such as universal ideas and other stepping stones, and to select facts to support this theme.

The following shadings are connected to the following sessions:

Basic Course	Prof. Training I	Prof. Training II	Prof. Training III

Competence Levels for Interpretive Training - Subject Area 2: Personal Interpretation

Level I - Basic Knowledge	Level II - Working Knowledge	Level III - Professional Knowledge
2.1. Interpretive Talks		
Within personal interpretive services the interpreter is able to specify the characteristics of an interpretive talk. S/he can assess where this service could be applied in her/his own working field.	Under guidance, the interpreter is able to prepare an interpretive talk (lasting about ten minutes) related to one phenomenon, and encouraging the visitor to participate. S/he can give this talk under reasonable prevailing conditions (weather, time of day/year) without any assistance.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to prepare and to give an interpretive talk (lasting about ten minutes) related to one phenomenon, encouraging the visitor to participate, and taking account of prevailing conditions such as sun/rain, summer/winter or day/night.
2.2. Interpretive Walks		
Within personal interpretive services the interpreter is able to describe the structure of a theme line for an interpretive walk. S/he can assess where this service could be applied in her/his own working field.	Under guidance, the interpreter is able to develop a theme line and an interpretive walk with five interpretive talks, encouraging the visitor to participate. S/he can guide this walk under reasonable prevailing conditions (weather, time of day/year) without any assistance.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to prepare and to conduct an interpretive walk with five interpretive talks along one theme line, encouraging the visitor to participate, and taking account of prevailing conditions such as sun/rain, summer/winter or day/night.
2.3. Roving Interpretation		
Within personal interpretive services the interpreter is able to describe the structure of a theme circle for roving interpretation. S/he can assess where this service could be applied in her/his own working field.	Under guidance, the interpreter is able to develop a theme circle for roving interpretation within a natural or cultural area (Ø about 10 metres), encouraging the visitor to participate. S/he can provide this service under reasonable prevailing conditions (weather, time of day/year) without any assistance.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to prepare and to conduct roving interpretation by developing one theme circle within a natural or cultural area (Ø about 10 metres), encouraging the visitor to participate, and taking account of prevailing conditions such as sun/rain, summer/winter or day/night.
2.4. Live Interpretation		
The interpreter is able to specify live interpretation with its different varieties. S/he can assess where this service could be applied in her/his own working field.	Under guidance, the interpreter is able to prepare a first-person live interpretation, to be achieved alone or with several interpreters/roles. S/he can conduct this service without any assistance.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to prepare and to conduct first- or third-person live interpretation, to be achieved alone or with several interpreters/roles. Part of the preparation is the investigation or development of real or fictional historical biographies.
2.5. One-Day Programmes for School Classes		
The interpreter is able to explain, what has to be taken into consideration in terms of the particular target group, while preparing and conducting one-day programmes for school classes.	Under guidance, the interpreter is able to develop one-day programmes for school classes, aligned to target groups and formal curricula. S/he can conduct these programmes and resolve organisational issues with the teacher without any assistance.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to prepare and to conduct one-day programmes for school classes, aligned to target groups and formal curricula. S/he can debate with the teacher about preparation and follow-up activities, content and organisation, in a competent way.

The following shadings are connected to the following sessions:

Basic Course	Prof. Training I	Prof. Training II	Prof. Training III

Quality Standards in Heritage Interpretation

Competence Levels for Interpretive Training - Subject Area 3: Non-Personal Interpretation

Level I - Basic Knowledge	Level II - Working Knowledge	Level III - Professional Knowledge
3.1. Interpretive Text		
The interpreter is able to explain the difference between informative text and interpretive text. S/he can specify some points that have to be taken into consideration to make interpretive text clear and catchy.	Under guidance, the interpreter is able to prepare a short text which follows the principles of interpretation, for panels and brochures (amounting to about 50 words) as well as for audio recordings (lasting about 80 seconds).	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to prepare a short text which follows the principles of interpretation, for panels and brochures (amounting to about 50 words) as well as for audio recordings (lasting about 80 seconds).
3.2. Interpretive Elements		
The interpreter is able to refer examples for interpretive elements, and to explain how their constituents like text, illustration, audio, interactive or art elements can be combined against the background of the principles of interpretation.	Under guidance, the interpreter is able to combine text, illustration, audio, interactive or art elements in an exhibit draft which follows the principles of interpretation.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to combine text, illustration, audio, interactive or art elements in an exhibit plan which follows the principles of interpretation, and which is ready for implementation.
3.3. Interpretive Trails		
The interpreter is able to describe the development of a theme line for an interpretive trail. S/he can assess where this non-personal interpretive service could be applied in her/his own working field.	Under guidance, the interpreter is able to develop a main theme, a theme line building on that main theme, a preliminary plan and a design plan for the contents of an interpretive trail consisting of five interpretive elements.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to develop a main theme, a theme line building on that main theme, a preliminary plan, a design plan and a construction plan encompassing the contents of an interpretive trail consisting of five interpretive elements.
3.4. Interpretive Areas		
The interpreter is able to describe the development of a theme circle for an interpretive area. S/he can assess where this non-personal interpretive service could be applied in her/his own working field.	Under guidance, the interpreter is able to develop a main theme, a theme circle building on that main theme, a preliminary plan and a design plan concerning the contents for an interpretive area consisting of five interpretive elements.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to develop a main theme, a theme circle building on that main theme, a preliminary plan, a design plan and a construction plan encompassing the contents of an interpretive area consisting of five interpretive elements.
3.5. Interpretive Centres		
The interpreter is able to describe the characteristics of an interpretive centre, point out ideas for its realisation in a natural or cultural setting, and specify the differences between an information centre and an interpretive centre.	Under guidance, the interpreter is able to develop a preliminary plan and a design plan concerning the contents of an interpretive centre (ground area about 100 m^2), related to the phenomena on site and following one main theme.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to develop a preliminary plan, a design plan and a construction plan encompassing the contents of an interpretive centre (ground area about 100 m^2), related to the phenomena on site and following one main theme.

The following shadings are connected to the following sessions:

Basic Course	Prof. Training I	Prof. Training II	Prof. Training III

Competence Levels for Interpretive Training - Subject Area 4: Interpretive Planning and Improvement

Level I - Basic Knowledge	Level II - Working Knowledge	Level III - Professional Knowledge
4.1. Interpretive Planning		
The interpreter knows all planning levels and stages as well as the different aspects of planning. S/he can effectively support planners in their search of suitable phenomena and themes.	The interpreter is familiar with all interpretive planning processes. Under guidance, s/he is able to represent the concerns of interpretation in a planning team and to develop interpretive project briefs.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to fulfil all tasks connected to an interpretive planning process in a responsible and comprehensive way, and to develop interpretive project briefs for the commission of planning and achieving all interpretive services.
4.2. Evaluation		
The interpreter is aware of the significance of evaluation for heritage interpretation. S/he can use examples to explain, how the success of her/his own work can be assessed during planning and realisation as well as subsequently.	The interpreter knows under which circumstances evaluation processes are reliable. Under guidance, s/he is able to plan and to adopt specific assessment measures.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to develop an assessment plan for all interpretive services, considering front-end, formative and summative evaluation. S/he knows how to implement this plan, and how to analyse and utilize the results of the research.
4.3. Peer Coaching		
The interpreter is aware of the particular importance of peer coaching for the advancement of the quality of interpretive work. S/he can specify significant criteria for the assessment as well as basic principles of critiquing.	Under guidance, the interpreter is able to accompany a colleague within a peer coaching process during an interpretive talk, and to assess this interpretive service by sharing a competent review.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to accompany a colleague within a peer coaching process during an interpretive talk, an interpretive walk or roving interpretation, and to assess the interpretive service by sharing a competent review.
4.4. Accessibility		
The interpreter is familiar with the principles of universal access. S/he can characterise the different types of barriers and give examples, how heritage interpretation can be designed in a barrier-free way.	The interpreter is familiar with the principles of universal access and can characterise the different types of barriers. Under guidance, s/he is able to plan and conduct the interpretation of appropriate natural or cultural phenomena in an acessible way.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to select natural or cultural phenomena that allow universal access, to process them for different interpretive services in a multi-dimensional and barrier-free way and to suggest ways to overcome barriers in the surroundings.
4.5. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)		
The interpreter is aware of the meaning of sustainable development in the current, widespread use of the term, and s/he knows about the characteristics of key phenomena within education for sustainable development (see right column).	Under guidance, the interpreter is able to select and to present ESD key phenomena that make global justice and the responsibility towards future generations in terms of ecological, economic and socio-cultural aspects comprehensible.	Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to select and present ESD key phenomena (see left column), according to the principles of interpretation. Considering the state of research, s/he can clarify how interpretation should be designed to meet the needs of ESD.

The following shadings are connected to the following sessions:

Basic Course	Prof. Training I	Prof. Training II	Prof. Training III

Quality Standards in Heritage Interpretation

ParcInterp Basic Course - Certification Standards and Criteria Subject Areas 1 and 2

Standards	Criteria
1.1 Principles and Models of Interpretation The interpreter is aware of origin and purpose of heritage interpretation. S/he knows the elements of and the interdependencies within the interpretive triangle, and is able to transfer them to different personal and non-personal interpretive methods without any assistance.	The interpreter is able to ▪ connect the purpose of interpretation with the genesis of the ranger profession, ▪ illustrate and compare some of John Muir's and Ernst Rudorff's important ideas, ▪ explain the six principles of interpretation as set out by Freeman Tilden, ▪ describe the interpretive triangle and apply it on site.
1.2 Natural and Cultural Phenomena The interpreter can explain the meaning of original objects and sites for heritage interpretation. S/he is able to select natural and cultural phenomena according to their interpretive potential, and to share and reveal specific aspects in an exciting way without any assistance.	The interpreter is able to ▪ identify natural and cultural phenomena and distinguish them from themes, ▪ describe the relationship of facts and phenomena, ▪ obtain secured facts from different sources, ▪ reveal phenomena or specific aspects of phenomena in an exciting way.
1.3 Interpreters The interpreter is familiar with the mission of the ranger service. S/he is committed to the protection of natural and cultural heritage, aware of the role s/he is playing within this task, and able to emphasize her/his strengths and to plan her/his career in a well-directed way.	The interpreter is able to ▪ explain the mission, as an agent of natural and cultural heritage, in a decisive way, ▪ represent the institution s/he is standing for to visitors, ▪ play different roles – especially in personal interpretation, ▪ emphasize his/her strengths and plan his/her career in a well-directed way.
1.4 Visitors Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to involve visitors as whole people (head, heart and hand), and to encourage encounters and changes of perspective, giving phenomena a meaning beyond facts, and inspiring visitors to support their protection.	The interpreter is able to ▪ demonstrate different ways of determining the needs of visitors, ▪ open and close talks in a way that is compatible with the visitors, ▪ explain and use, systematically, universal ideas and personal meanings, ▪ select and apply stepping stones into the visitors' world.
1.5 Themes The interpreter can distinguish topic, theme and message. Based on an original site or object and without any assistance, s/he can create a theme to facilitate access through intangibles such as universal ideas and other stepping stones, and to select facts to support this theme.	The interpreter is able to ▪ describe the differences between topics, themes and messages, ▪ connect meanings and facts within attractive themes, ▪ draw out themes from natural or cultural phenomena, ▪ explain the potential value of specific themes.
2.1 Interpretive Talks Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to prepare and to give an interpretive talk (lasting about ten minutes) related to one phenomenon, encouraging the visitor to participate, and taking account of prevailing conditions such as sun/rain, summer/winter or day/night.	The interpreter is able to ▪ define the term "interpretive talk" and switch from information to interpretation, ▪ change consciously between different roles and manage controversies, ▪ use active listening, ask open-ended questions and respond to unexpected answers, ▪ form up visitor groups in different ways without direct instruction.
2.2 Interpretive Walks Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to prepare and to conduct an interpretive walk with five interpretive talks along one theme line, encouraging the visitor to participate, and taking account of prevailing conditions such as sun/rain, summer/winter or day/night.	The interpreter is able to ▪ describe the planning process for a compehensive interpretive service, ▪ explain the terms "interpretive walk", "main theme" and "theme line", ▪ define the topic and main theme for an interpretive walk, ▪ select appropriate phenomena in relation to a coherent theme line.
2.3 Roving Interpretation Under guidance, the interpreter is able to develop a theme circle for roving interpretation within a natural or cultural area (Ø about 10 metres), encouraging the visitor to participate. S/he can provide this service under reasonable prevailing conditions (see above) without any assistance.	The interpreter is able to ▪ explain the terms "roving interpretation", "main theme" and "theme circle", ▪ define the topic and main theme for an activity in roving interpretation, ▪ select appropriate phenomena in terms of a coherent theme circle, ▪ switch seamlessly between selected phenomena according to visitors' responses.
2.4 Live Interpretation Under guidance, the interpreter is able to prepare a first-person live interpretation, to be achieved alone or with several interpreters/roles. S/he can conduct this service without any assistance.	The interpreter is able to ▪ research facts for living history interpretation in diverse ways, ▪ describe the planning process for live interpretation, ▪ explain different manifestations of live interpretation, ▪ list advantages and disadvantages of live interpretation with more than one person.
2.5 One-Day Programmes for School Classes Under guidance, the interpreter is able to develop one-day programmes for school classes, aligned to target groups and formal curricula. S/he can conduct these programmes and resolve organisational issues with the teacher without any assistance.	The interpreter is able to ▪ list advantages and disadvantages of standardised programmes, ▪ describe children and young people as distinct target groups. ▪ become familiar with the school curricula of the particular federal state. ▪ explain characteristic elements of programmes for school classes.

ParcInterp Basic Course - Certification Standards and Criteria Subject Areas 3 and 4

Standards	Criteria
3.1 Interpretive Text Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to prepare a short text which follows the principles of interpretation, for panels and brochures (amounting to about 50 words) as well as for audio recordings (lasting about 80 seconds).	The interpreter is able to ▪ demonstrate basic knowledge of the readability of fonts and text, ▪ relate phenomena to the visitor's own 'world' through use of text, ▪ use text for provocation of thought and exciting revelation, ▪ incorporate a theme into text according to the principles of interpretation.
3.2 Interpretive Elements Under guidance, the interpreter is able to combine text, illustration, audio, interactive or art elements in an exhibit draft which follows the principles of interpretation.	The interpreter is able to ▪ list the advantages and disadvantages of universal layout grids for panels etc., ▪ suggest appropriate locations and panel formats, text and illustrative elements, ▪ distinguish formats of, and develop scripts for, audio elements, ▪ offer reasonable suggestions for interpretation through interactive or art elements.
3.3 Interpretive Trails Under guidance, the interpreter is able to develop a main theme, a theme line building on that main theme, a preliminary plan and a design plan for the contents of an interpretive trail consisting of five interpretive elements.	The interpreter is able to ▪ explain the term "interpretive trail", ▪ define the topic and main theme for an interpretive trail, ▪ select appropriate phenomena in relation to a coherent theme line, ▪ select appropriate interpretive elements relating to the phenomena (see 3.2).
3.4 Interpretive Areas Under guidance, the interpreter is able to develop a main theme, a theme circle building on that main theme, a preliminary plan and a design plan concerning the contents for an interpretive area consisting of five interpretive elements.	The interpreter is able to ▪ explain the term "interpretive area", ▪ define the topic and main theme for an interpretive area, ▪ select appropriate phenomena in relation to a coherent theme circle, ▪ select appropriate interpretive elements relating to the phenomena (see 3.2).
3.5 Interpretive Centres The interpreter is able to describe the characteristics of an interpretive centre, point out ideas for its realisation in a natural or cultural setting, and specify the differences between an information centre and an interpretive centre.	The interpreter is able to ▪ specify the differences between an information centre and an interpretive centre, ▪ describe a best-practice example of an existing interpretive centre, ▪ show, at a specific natural or cultural site, how an interpretive centre could work, ▪ list stakeholders that should be involved in the planning team of an interpretive centre.
4.1 Interpretive Planning The interpreter knows all planning levels and stages as well as the different aspects of planning. S/he can effectively support planners in their search of suitable phenomena and themes.	The interpreter is able to ▪ outline the management objectives that are relevant to interpretive services, ▪ recognise and research on-site deviations in fulfilling the management plan, ▪ describe and justify different planning levels and stages, ▪ explain her/his own role as an interpreter in the planning process.
4.2 Evaluation The interpreter is aware of the significance of evaluation for heritage interpretation. S/he can use examples to explain, how the success of her/his own work can be assessed during planning and realisation as well as subsequently.	The interpreter is able to ▪ explain the advantage of assessing her/his own work, ▪ distinguish the different phases of evaluation and describe their specific value, ▪ show examples where evaluation resulted in improvement, ▪ suggest an evaluation activity which can improve her/his own work.
4.3 Peer Coaching Without any assistance, the interpreter is able to accompany a colleague within a peer coaching process during an interpretive talk, an interpretive walk, or roving interpretation, and to assess the interpretive service by sharing a competent review.	The interpreter is able to ▪ encourage a colleague to give her/his own assessment first, listening actively, ▪ compliment a colleague about a specific observation without adding constraints, ▪ criticise a colleague in an empathetic way, pointing out potential for development, ▪ agree upon specific and achievable objectives together with the colleague.
4.4 Accessibility The interpreter is familiar with the principles of universal access and can characterise the different types of barriers. Under guidance, s/he is able to plan and conduct the interpretation of appropriate natural or cultural phenomena in an acessible way.	The interpreter is able to ▪ explain the characteristics of universal access, ▪ assess different types of physical and intellectual disabilities, ▪ show how interpretation can help to overcome barriers, ▪ provide, under guidance, barrier-free access to natural or cultural phenomena.
4.5 Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Under guidance, the interpreter is able to select and to present ESD key phenomena that make global justice and the responsibility towards future generations in terms of ecological, economic and socio-cultural aspects comprehensible.	The interpreter is able to ▪ list the parameters of sustainable development, ▪ distinguish ESD key phenomena from other natural or cultural phenomena, ▪ merge ecological, economic, socio-cultural and global aspects, ▪ make connections, even abstract ones, without losing reference to the local site.

Quality Standards in Heritage Interpretation

Examples for ESD Key Phenomena

	Insulation of a Swiss mountain house	Beleaguered cherry tree
Situation	We are standing among the snow-covered Pennine Alps in front of a multi-storeyed chalet, the timber house characteristic of this region. The sunlit larch facade's reddish shingles are worn by wind and weather so much that parts of them are lost and you can see layers of a French newspaper. At a point where the shingles are missing, you can even read "Vendredi 12 Juin 1903" – Friday 12 June, 1903. At this time, the North and South Poles haven't been explored yet, Mount Everest hasn't been climbed and the Wright brothers were just preparing for their first powered flight. However, the predominant fact was that this remote mountain valley was where the construction of the Simplon tunnel began and its Swiss entrance was to be built a long way below the house. An elderly resident explains why the newspapers were used: while the panels of fir kept the warmth in, and the outer larch shingles kept the weather out, the newspapers stopped the wind blowing through the gaps. And they've been there for more than a hundred years.	In the German Eichsfeld, we are standing opposite a castle hill, which is surrounded by a small village. From the edge of this village, grazing land and old orchards extend along a smooth saddle up to our hill. Behind us, the orchards trail away into mixed forest. More than twenty years ago, Germany's internal frontier crossed the site and so lots of aerial photographs were taken between 1950 and 1990. They show that, some decades ago, the village was surrounded by gardens while the saddle was covered by fields and – where the slope became steeper – by field terraces. Where agriculture was no longer possible, orchards were set out and only the very top of the hill behind us was forested. Obviously, the people in the village were largely self-sufficient. Documents show that the forest is steadily extending towards the village, growing over the orchards, terraces and fields. Just behind us, an old and forgotten cherry tree is under threat of being forced out of the ground by an overbearing sycamore maple.
Theme	**Three layers keep this chalet warm.**	**That cherry tree is living beyond its time.**
Facts	▪ The insulation of this chalet consists of several layers. ▪ Three types of wooden product protect it from rain, snow, wind and cold. ▪ As long as it stays dry, newsprint is a suitable building material.	▪ The sycamore maple is forcing out the cherry tree. ▪ In former times, the orchard extended far up the hill. ▪ The distance to the site, where fruit was processed and eaten, was short.
Stepping stones	Historic references (newspaper reports in the wall), site references (larch, fir), experiments with paper, protective layers for people (clothing against cold, wind and rain), animal (different layers of fur, wool or feather) and plant (bud, bulb or bark), comparison with surrounding houses from the 1970s	Historic aerial photos show the new displacing the old, fruit experiences from childhood, experiences from buying fruits in supermarkets, view from the village to the forest – and vice versa, description of the old orchard by means of further remains (neglected fruit trees, terracing of the slope)
Questions	▪ Where did the building materials for this house come from? ▪ Which factors are relevant for the economic life of this house? ▪ Where did the money come from to pay the builders? ▪ Why has the chalet design been exported since the 19th century?	▪ Where does the cherry tree show traces of human impact? ▪ How could its fruit be eaten all year round? ▪ Where is the borderline between natural and cultural landscape? ▪ How did this cherry tree get into the forest?
Revelation	This windbreaker made from newspaper worked for three generations.	The cherry tree once grew in the middle of an orchard.
ESD key topic	**Energy**	**Consumption**
Protection of natural assets	Past: Short distances, timber stays in the biological cycle – and can regrow Today: Material is often modified (energy) and from far away (transport)	Past: Growing and preserving food on small space, almost CO_2 neutral Today: Little impact on site – but further away (growing, processing, transport)
Equal share of natural assets	Past: Typical regional building for wealthy people, income from trading Today: Cheap imports, income shared nationwide, houses more affordable	Past: Rural daily-life culture, planted for own children, no relation to others Today: Knowledge about the global community, but low-wage work elsewhere
Careful use of natural assets	Past: Almost only natural material, durability preserves hill slope Today: Larch is exported, exploitation (people, nature) in low-wage countries	Past: Tree husbandry throughout the year, no machines, low capital turnover Today: Money making essential to allow global trade, reforestation on site

The aim of ESD key phenomena is not simply the appreciation of natural and cultural heritage. They encourage visitors, in particular, to consider the balance between conservation and development, inspiring them to seek viable solutions for the future.

ParcInterp

During the three-week Basic Course in Heritage Interpretation, participants will learn how to create interpretive walks, trails and other visitor services for national parks, biosphere reserves and nature parks.

As an essential part of the ParcInterp programme, interpretive quality standards and certification criteria have been developed and aligned to the needs of education for sustainable development.

This publication is an extract from the basic course trainer manual, explaining the structure of ParcInterp as well as the definitions of qualities and standards, criteria and competences within the system.

ParcInterp was initially developed for German protected areas. It was established by the German Association for Natural and Environmental Education, the German Ranger Association and EUROPARC Germany.

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interpretation