



Inklings

Bulletin of Interpretive Ideas

June 2003 Volume 3, Issue 2

Current/Recent Project List

Interpretation

- Interpretive Staff Training, Bloomington (IN) Park and Recreation, Bloomington
- Interpretive Sign Design, Cataract Covered Bridge, Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources
- Interpretive Sign Design, Falls of the Ohio, Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources
- Interpretive Sign Design, Moores Hill Iron Bridge, Bloomington (IN) Parks and Recreation
- Interpretive Sign Design, Portage (IN) Park and Recreation
- Interpretive Brochure Design, Spring Mill Village, Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources
- Trail Sign Plan and Design, W. Lafayette (IN) Park and Recreation
- Interpretive Sign Design, Miller Showers Park, Bloomington (IN) Park and Recreation

GPS/GIS

- *GPS/GIS Coverage of Trails and Boundaries, Bloomington (IN) Park and Recreation*

What's Your Objective?

Keeping on Track with Objectives

Lise Schools

When I completed my Masters in Education, I vowed I would never write another objective again. Twenty years later, I begin every sign, brochure or exhibit by writing objectives.

Why Write Objectives?

1. *Objectives provide a focus.* Objectives answer the question: What should this sign accomplish? When the amount of space and text is limited to a 24" x 36" panel, you want to make sure that every item counts. Objectives ensure that you don't waste space on unrelated topics.

2. *Objectives organize your thoughts.* Objectives help you visualize the finished product. For example, if an interpretive theme is "Glaciers shaped this landscape", your objectives answer the question "How **did** glaciers shape the landscape?" An objective might be "After viewing this exhibit, 50% of the nature center visitors will be able to identify a moraine." A second objective would address another landscape feature formed by glaciers. The theme and objectives begin to form a project outline:

Interpretive Theme: Glaciers carved out the landscape at Happy Valley State Park.

After Reading the trail sign . . .

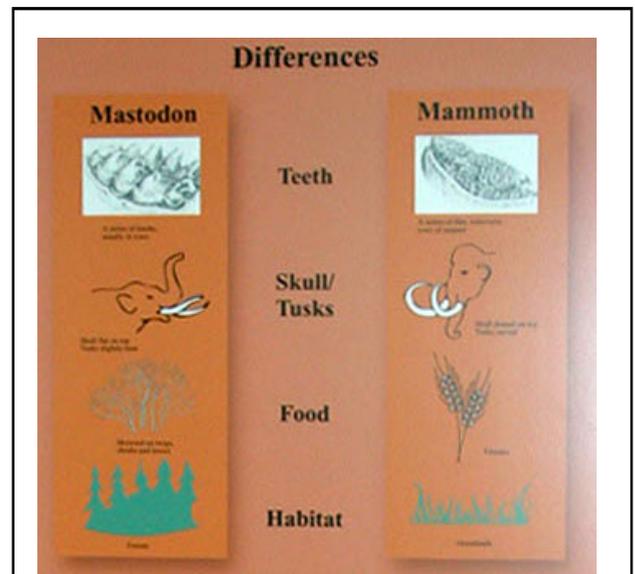
A. Objective: 50% of the readers will be able to identify a moraine.

B. Objective: three out of five readers will be able to define what an esker is.

C. Objective: 60% of the readers will be able to distinguish between glacial till and bedrock.

The objectives dictate the sign's text, graphics and layout. They bring coherency to the design.

3. *Objectives measure success.* Objectives are measurable. Using the earlier example, if 50% of the visitors *can* identify a moraine, then your exhibit is successful. Measurable objectives provide an important tool for evaluation.



*Lilly Nature Center, W. Lafayette, IN
Design by Interpretive Ideas*

One objective for this exhibit panel is: *After reading the panel, visitors will know four differences between the mastodon and mammoth 50% of the time.*

Common elements in objectives

There are many styles of writing objectives, but all contain some common elements:

1. *Who?* Who is your target audience?

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2. *What?* What do you want your audience to leave with? This could take the form of:

- a. increased knowledge (three types of glacial formations)
- b. changed behavior (climbing on the rock cliffs damages the ferns and is no longer acceptable)
- c. increased skill level (how to build a bat house)
- d. motivation to action (joining as a volunteer for the upcoming clean up).

3. *How much?* This is the measure of success. Using the previous examples, some measures could be:

- a. “. . . will identify three types of glacial formations 75% of the time.”
- b. “climbing on cliff faces will decrease by 25%”
- c. “three out of four can build a bat house”
- d. “ten visitors will sign up for the clean up.”

People are better learners when the materials are presented in a focused, organized manner. Writing objectives are the first step in achieving this.

Interpretive Ideas Owner Wins Award

National Association for Interpretation (NAI) presents Distinguished Professional Interpreter Award to Lise Schools

(from *FourThought*, newsletter of the Great Lakes Region of NAI) The Distinguished Professional Interpreter (DPI) Award is considered the highest regional honor, awarded to a person because of career achievement in guiding the interpretive profession through instruction, mentoring, research, writing and management, and to one who provides strong support for NAI.

DPI winner Lise Schools, owner of Interpretive Ideas, a successful private interpretive consulting business, has demonstrated leadership through the development of various interpretive products and her many NAI roles in the last 20 years. Lise designs interpretive signs, brochures, exhibits, master plans and numerous other nonpersonal interpretation products. IDNR Chief of Interpretation Ginger Murphy sums up her respect for Lise by saying, “I’ve seen her apply sound interpretive principles to design and watched her follow through to complete the projects in a timely fashion. If I have a trail project requiring interpretive signage, Lise is the first person I turn to because she knows the profession, she knows the design techniques and she knows the fabrication options.”

Lise also develops educational materials and presents interpretive training to college students and seasonal and permanent interpreters. Over the years she has served Region 4 NAI as a workshop chair, Deputy Director, secretary and member of most NAI committees.

Lise received her award at the Great Lakes Regional Workshop held in Ann Arbor, Michigan in April.