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FROM GUIDES TO INTERPRETERS LESSONS FROM HERITAGE INTERPRETATION TRAINING IN TERNATE, NORTH MALUKU, INDONESIA

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	With a perceived need to improve the interpretation quality of guiding in the 17th century Dutch-colonial Fort Oranje, six on-line workshops were conducted for professional guides and historical society members from Ternate, North Maluku. The workshops included sessions on historical context, fort features, guiding and interpretation good practice principles, tour planning and delivery. Self-assessment evaluations by participants revealed lack of confidence with their level of historical knowledge and in applying interpretive approaches that would enhance a tour of the fort more enjoyable and meaningful for tourists. Limitations of the on-line medium for training were identified by presenters relating to the need for practical on-site tutoring and integration of historical context and content with places, interpretive principles, and visitor expectations. Exposure of participants to novel ideas and approaches to guiding was constrained by language, participant experience of quality interpretation, and face-to-face mentoring. While the content of the training program can be adapted for improving interpretive guiding in geoparks, there is probably value in some restructuring to include a two-stage process that starts with training-of-trainers. *This is an open access article under the <u>CC BY-SA</u> license.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the 17th century, the volcanic island of Ternate, North Maluku, Indonesia was the center of world trade in spices. Island biogeography and volcanic soils saw the evolution of two significant endemic spices: clove (*Syzygium aromaticum*) and nutmeg (*Myristica fragrans*). These formed the basis of the largest private company the world has known. The VOC (*Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*: Dutch East India Company) employed 70,000 people world-wide and in today's terms was worth $7.9 trillion (Figure 1).
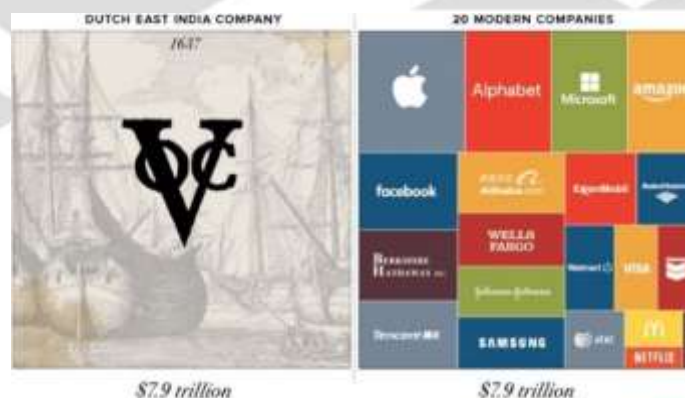

Figure 1: Comparative worth of the VOC and businesses of today (Solomons 2021)

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The VOC was under constant pressure from colonial rivals and local sultans to defend their monopoly. With other colonialists, they built at least 139 forts in Indonesia alone (Rinandi & Suryaningsih 2015). From 1613-1619, Fort Oranje on Ternate was the capital for VOC administration and the official residence of the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies. However, Fort Oranje is not just a relic of a sordid colonial history. It is symbolic of heritage links between island, biota, colonial trade, communities and building of a nation (Figure 2).
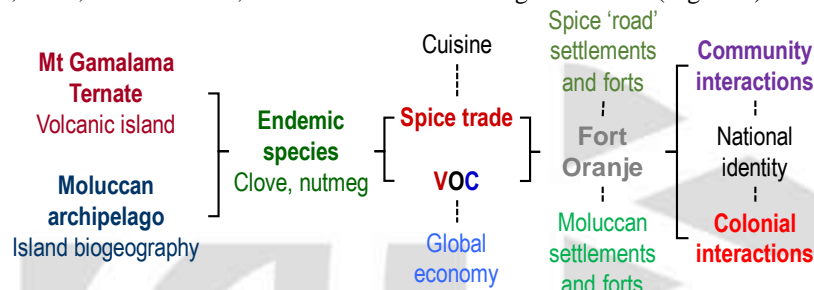

Figure 2: Some heritage links from volcano to nation via Fort Oranje

While not a UNESCO Global Geopark, Ternate meets the needed criteria, alone or as part an archipelagic nomination. Of the 'Top 10 Focus Areas of UNESCO Global Geoparks' (UNESCO 2021), five are particularly relevant to this paper: education, culture, women, and sustainable development. Our focus was on improving the interpretation quality of guiding through and around Fort Oranje through training of existing guides and history society members. Female participation was particularly sought, and instruction was based on developing interpretation skills linking the fort's historic heritage significance to local culture via a sustainable tourism product – the interpretive tour.

Desired outcomes were:

- a shared vision for the use and presentation of tangible Moluccan colonial heritage;
- consolidated knowledge of the role of the Spice Islands in World history and local community interactions with the colonialists;
- improved skills in heritage interpretation;
- increased understanding and appreciation by local communities and visitors of the historical role of heritage forts and settlements in the Moluccas; and
- increased government and community commitment to conserving and presenting the extant symbols of the heritage story of the Spice Islands.

At the completion of the training we expected to have:

- a community of resource people to support the presentation and protection of the heritage resources of the Moluccas; and
- a manual for planning the interpretation of North Moluccan colonial heritage and a basis for additional training programs.

2. DATA AND METHOD

An introductory and six on-line training sessions were conducted that consisted of three components: pre-and post-session readings and web-based material, lectures, and post session workshops. The aim was to build historical knowledge and improve interpretive guiding skills. The sessions were conducted monthly, leaving participants to develop and apply new skills between sessions. Lectures were of about 30 minutes each, making the formal component at least 2 hours long. With discussion and addressing workshop topics, most on-line sessions lasted three hours.

Principles of adult learning underpinned the program design (Figure 3), with feedback and evaluation based on self-assessment questionnaires. The first survey instrument sought self-evaluation of existing knowledge, skills, and experience as a benchmark. Post-session questionnaires sought feedback on historical knowledge and interpretation skills transfer, extent of appreciation, knowledge and understanding of concepts and information presented in the lecture session, and time spent out of session for self-learning and undertaking post-session tasks. These were administered at least two weeks after the training sessions to allow time for out-of-session attention to 'homework' and independent review of learning materials.

Question types were 'tick a response', provide a rank order, or respond to a Likert scale. An open feedback space was provided. Questionnaires were administered on-line in Bahasa Indonesia through the Google Forms platform. Analysis of responses is continuing after preliminary compilation of summative statistics.

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Figure 3: Principles and underpinnings of adult learning

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Philosophical underpinnings

In designing the training program, we sought to move away from the approach of the guide lecturing, to the guide structuring learning and facilitating enjoyable experiences. Inherent was the goal for the guide (the interpreter) to enable the visitor to self-interpret from evidence gained by observation, imagining, hypothesizing, and questioning. The guide's role was presented not to lead into the unknown but to facilitate a journey of discovery. Underlying this perspective was a desire to make the presentation of Fort Oranje different and unexpected, and we were able to draw on successful approaches to interpretive guiding in Australia, Canada, and the USA. These apply adult learning principles (Figure 3), focused by Tilden's (1957) principles for interpretation:

• interpretation that does not relate what is being displayed or described to something within the experience of the visitor will be sterile;
• interpretation is revelation based upon information;
• interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical or architectural;
• the chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation; and
• interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part.

The training program

The pre-session questionnaire confirmed that knowledge of the fort's history and heritage significance to the people of Ternate was limited. Thus, the design of the program included the development of a skills tool-kit for delivering interpretive activities and historical information about elements of the fort, the fort as a heritage symbol, and the context for the fort's establishment and long occupancy (Table 1).

Table 1: Training session final design

Lecture topics	Workshop focus	Self-learning materials
Session 1 Keeping history alive		
• The Spice Islands over time.	• Defining history & interpretive themes for the spice islands.	Readings on identifying & using historic themes (5)
• A brief history of Ternate & Fort Oranje: pre-, during-, & post the colonial era.	• Linking themes to places.	Examples (2)
• What is heritage?	• Knowledge gaps & strategy to fill gaps.	
• What is heritage interpretation		
Session 2 The story and features of Fort Orange		
• The strategic role of Fort Oranje.	• Defining the story & interpretive themes for Fort Oranje.	Reading on interpretive theming.
• The history & related features of Benteng Oranje & links beyond the fort.	• Linking themes to places/sites/elements of the fort.	On-line video on Dutch occupation & forts.
• An introduction to interpretive planning.	• Knowledge gaps, strategy to fill gaps & artefacts to support demonstrating the story.	
Session 3 Guided activities, not guided tours		

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Lecture topics	Workshop focus	Self-learning materials
• Principles of effective tours. • Using group structuring and questioning strategies	• Designing a guided activity at the Fort: the story, the facts, the audience, props, structures, questions.	On-line reading (1) YouTube videos on interpretive tours (5)
Session 4 Tour structure and adding color		
• 10 little known & thought-provoking facts about the Fort. • The structure of an interpretive tour. • Adding color to the tour.	• Planning and structuring an interpretive tour at Fort Oranje	On-line readings about interesting facts (5).
Session 5 Changing attitudes and evaluation		
• Changing attitudes: theory & practice. • Assessing & evaluating tour success. • Fort design & geology • The Geotourism potential of ternate & the Moluccan archipelago	• Preparation of a tour of Fort Oranje.	
Session 6 Pilot interpretive tours for mentoring advice.		

This was the program delivered, but it varied somewhat from what was initially planned. Participant feedback and reflection by the mentoring team called for adaptation. Key issues were:
• the difficulty of communicating new concepts for face-to-face communication when our delivery mode was not face-to-face;
• interpretation concepts, such as historical and interpretive themes, especially when applied to planning, appeared to be somewhat 'lost in translation' from English to Bahasa Indonesia;
• new approaches to guiding were difficult to appreciate by the participant audience with no experience of alternatives to the guide lecture; and
• participant concern for their lack of historical knowledge.

Our adaptive response was to add more historical talks, reduce the amount of interpretation 'theory' or go slower when presenting so relevance and application could be explained or inferred, and reducing the number of topics covered.

Participant profile

Thirty people registered to undertake the training (23 female, 7 male) from the Ternate Heritage Society (30%), the Indonesian Tour Guide Association (20%), Khairun University (27%), Government (3%) and others (20%). Of the 30 participants who responded to the questionnaire, most (53%) were in the 25-34 age bracket (Figure 4).
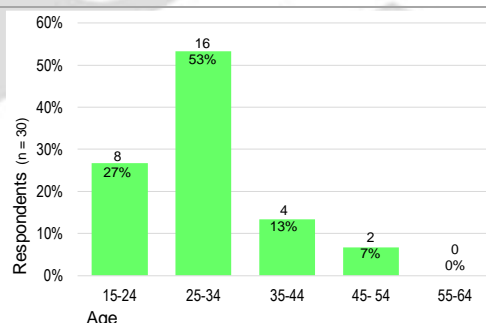

Figure 4: Participants by age brackets
(from Session 0 – training introduction)

Most were new to guiding (30%), with 47 per cent having only 1-4 years of experience (Figure 5); one respondent had 10-14 years experiences and two with more than 15 years' experience.
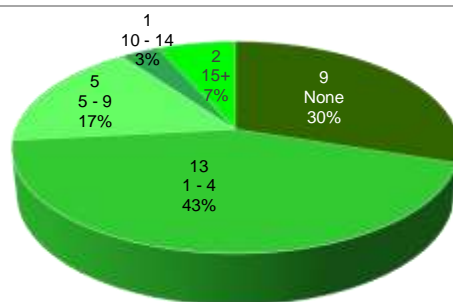
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Figure 5: Participant guiding experience (years)
(from Session 0 – training introduction)

Self-assessed guiding and interpretive skills

Most respondents' self-assessment of their skills in effective tour guiding was high, with 40 per cent in agreement with having very strong skills, although there was a high level of equivocation (Figure 6). Reported strong skills in effective interpretation was lower with 30 per cent agreeing that their skills were strong. The level of equivocation remained similar at 47 per cent, but with 23 per cent disagreeing that they have strong skills in effective interpretation.
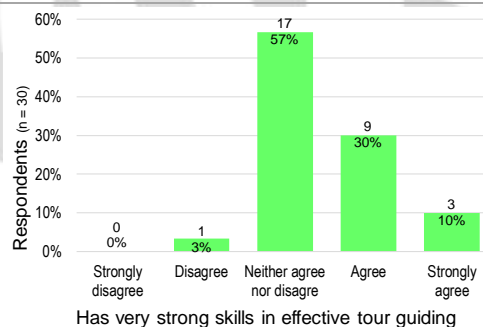

Figure 6: Agreement with having very strong skills in effective tour guiding
(from Session 0 – training introduction).

These results reflect the high level of guiding experience of many of the respondents (40%), with those with limited experience preferring to equivocate on the strength of their guiding skills. For effective interpretation, respondents are less confident in their skills suggesting there is recognition of the need to improve both guiding and interpretation skills.

Self-assessed historical knowledge

Self-assessed responses to questions about relevant historical knowledge again indicate a high level of equivocation, with 57 per cent reporting they 'neither agree nor disagree' with having extensive knowledge about Fort Oranje. Only 26 per cent agreed that they had extensive knowledge (Figure 6).
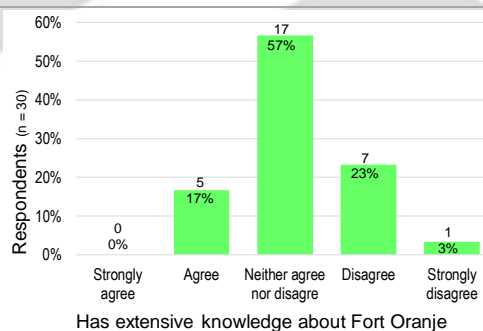

Figure 6: Agreement with having extensive knowledge about Fort Oranje (from Session 0 – training introduction).

A similar response was received regarding extensive knowledge about the colonial history of the province, and the Spice Islands as a whole. Around 60 per cent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that they had extensive historical knowledge, and 20 per cent disagreeing that they have extensive knowledge.

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These results suggest that participants lack confidence in their level of historical knowledge to effectively interpret the features and role of Fort Oranje in the context of the spice trade as well as its heritage significance.

elf-assessed training needs

Using a rating approach, respondents indicated a need for greater knowledge about effective (1) interpretation and (2) guiding, and (3) skills for effective interpretation. Gaining slightly lower ratings were the need for (4) knowledge about the history of Ternate, and (5) skills for effective tour guiding. Rated lowest was the need for certification that they had undertaken the training.

These results suggest that participants recognize the need to shift from the approach where the guide simply provides information, to the guide interpreting site features in the context of historical events. Of importance to assumptions inherent in adult learning is the low rating given to the need for certification. Respondents appeared to be motivated and interested to learn new concepts and approaches, rather than simply attending sessions to be rewarded with a certificate.

Selected responses to sessions

Across responses to the first three sessions, there was self-assessed agreement to improvement in knowledge, skills and understanding of topics presented. For example, after Session 1 there was considerable agreement that appreciation of the historical significance of the Fort had improved (Figure 7).
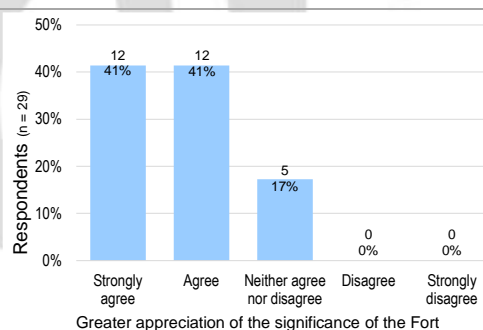

Figure 7: Agreement with having gained much greater appreciation of the historical significance of Fort Oranje (from Session 1).

However, after Session 4 and six presentations on the history of the Fort, there was still apparent concern for respondents' historical knowledge (Figure 8). Almost all agreed they needed more information.
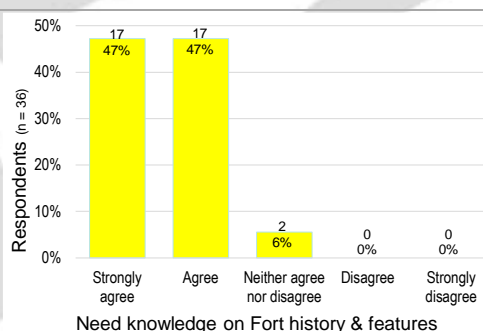

Figure 8: Agreement with needing much more knowledge about the history and features of the Fort (from Session 4).

It appears that the more historical information provided, the more participants appreciate their knowledge limitations. This concern was attempted to be addressed by introducing the interpretation planning principles of historical and interpretive theming, focused tour topics and facilitating activities that encourage self-interpretation. The response to lectures on interpretive approaches to tour planning and delivery were self-assessed as improving understanding and application (78%; Figure 9).

Given the strong view that participants need more historical knowledge (Figure 8), there is perhaps a lingering belief that to be an effective interpreter requires the knowledge of a professional historian, rather than someone with specialist knowledge about a specific site or feature.

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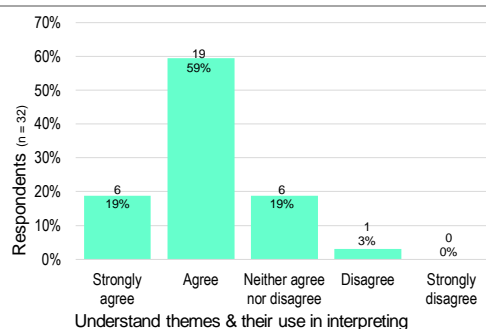
Figure 9: Agreement with understanding interpretive themes and how they might be used when interpreting heritage sites (from Session 2).

Grounding tours in engaging visitors in mind or physical activity, structuring groups, asking questions, and focusing on a theme was a novel concept for most participants. However, 71 per cent of respondents agreed that they knew how to use questions, for example, to maintain interest and encourage self-interpretation (Figure 10); but this response is not as strong as those relating to historical information provided in the sessions (cf. Figure 7).
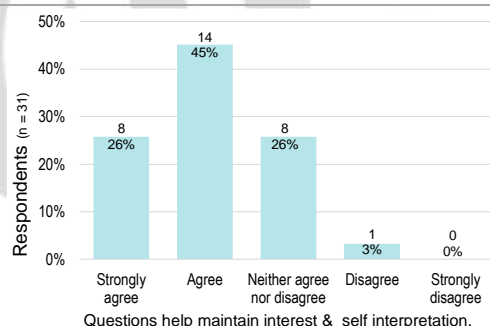

Figure 10: Agreement with knowing how to use questions to maintain interest and encourage self-interpretation (from Session 3).

This result reinforces the view that interpretive approaches to guiding are less understood by participants than communication of information.

Revision and self-learning

Lectures are the least effective form of teaching (Harrington-Atkinson, 2021). This is relevant both for the training and interpretive guiding practice. Active learning approaches foster retention of new information and ideas (Figure 11). Retention of lecture material can be enhanced considerably if revision occurs shortly after learning sessions and repeated intermittently, plus application to relevant tasks; in this case developing an interpretive tour.

| Teaching approach	Retention rate	Active v Passive
Lecture	5%	Passive learning
Reading	10%	
Audio-visual	20%	
Demonstration	30%	Active learning
Discussion	50%	
Practice	75%	
Teach others	90%	

Figure 11: Teaching approaches and retention rates of learning (after Harrington-Atkinson, 2021)

To improve learning, all lectures were presented in PowerPoint and made available to participants, but there was still reliance on passive learning.

To augment the lectures, readings and web-links were provided that had the potential to allow participants to reflect on the lectures in the context of the views of others. In addition, 'homework' tasks were provided to encourage application of lessons from the lectures towards developing a themed interpretive tour for Fort Oranje. Participants were encouraged to review all previously presented material before any forthcoming session. The effectiveness of these teaching strategies depended on the willingness of participants to make use of the learning materials, out of sessions.

To assess participant engagement with these suggested opportunities, the post-session questionnaires asked about the use of learning materials and revision. For example, after Session 3, 75 per cent of respondents reported

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reviewing the presentation PowerPoints at least once, with 90 per cent perusing at least one of the recommended readings. Time spent in undertaking workshop tasks and completing 'homework' tasks varied considerably. There appears to be a bimodal split in the dedication of participants to undertaking additional work outside of Session times. Around half (51%) put in no extra time or just one hour. In contrast, about a quarter of respondents put in 5-9 hours of extra work (Figure 12). These responses are relatively consistent in all post-session responses.

Figure 12: Hours spent on the Workshop/Homework topics (from Session 3).
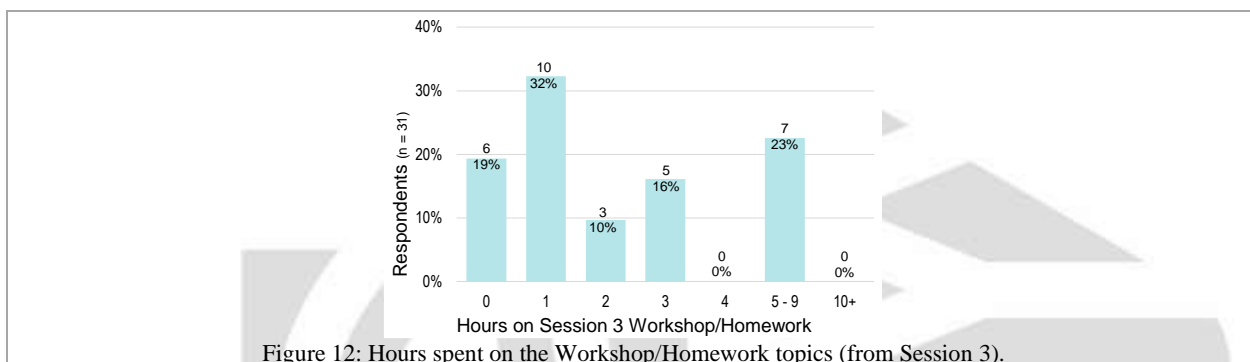
Good adult learning practices would suggest that the extra time most participants are putting into their learning is insufficient to reinforce lecture material, foster recollection, apply principles to guiding practice and precipitate a change in guiding behavior.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Every UNESCO designation (World Heritage Areas, Biosphere Reserves, Creative Cities, and Global Geoparks), and every national park and reserve has education and communication of the heritage values and significance of the site as a core management objective and obligation. So, there is a clear mandate for seeking to improve the interpretation of Fort Oranje as a heritage site it its own right, but also symbolic of the heritage linked to vulcanism, endemism, colonial history, and contemporary society. Our experience with, and lessons from, developing and presenting a series of seminar/workshop sessions on-line to experienced guides and enthusiastic history buffs may be of use to others. Fundamental to this reflection is the maximum use of adult learning principles and the validity of shifting focus from guided tours to interpretive tours.

Lesson 1: Use, enrich and build on what is known
The experience of the target participants is the starting point.
In our case, we had experienced guides and knowledgeable history enthusiasts. Together we had the basic ingredients for a successful guiding experience (content and process), but not necessarily an interpretive one. Understanding client expectations and interests can be gleaned from participants to form the basis for a professional guided tour in terms of welcome and introductions, visitor care, delivery, and summation and farewell. These carry over to an interpretive tour. Shortcomings of the guided tour versus an interpretive tour can be expected to emerge.

Lesson 2: Balance knowledge and process
The lack of confidence in our participant group of their content knowledge suggests that attention needs to be given to allaying fears that they must be 'experts'. This could have been done better by taking the step of getting them to become an expert, through self-learning, on a specific part of the story of the heritage place. This can then be aligned to the interpretive principle of being holistic in a tour, but not having to be comprehensive. That is, less can be made to be more! Tools (e.g. structuring and questioning strategies) to engage the tour audience can then demonstrate how the broader knowledge of a tour participant can be an asset, not an embarrassment, and used to enrich the tour.

Lesson 3: Effective face-to-face communication needs face-to-face mentoring
Effective adult learning demands mentoring of attempts to apply communicated principles with early feedback of performance. Given the constraints of on-line instruction in English to non-fluent English speakers, the seminar-workshop model remains valid, but far from effective. A solution would be to train trainers as mentors. With a preliminary 2-day lecture series, presenting all planned content to selected mentors (experienced tour guides and content specialists), the seminar program could be delivered as planned, supported more effectively by facilitated face-to-face workshops led by the trained mentors in Bahasa Indonesia. This would open the opportunity to demonstrate interpretation principles on-site and allow the possibility of the mentors delivering some of the lecture

components to the wider participant group. This would shift the teaching approach from passive to active learning (Figure 11).

Lesson 4: Strongly encourage effective self-learning through revision and application

Effective adult learning requires revision, application, and reflection. We could have better encouraged this by:
• including in the introductory session a lecture on adult learning, especially active learning;
• gaining commitment of participants to at least 8-hours of self-learning between sessions, including repeated review of presentations, study of supplementary reading/viewing materials, and attention to applying new ideas and principles to 'homework' exercises;
• providing a simple proforma for actively engaging with the supplementary learning materials with headings of:
   a. alignments with session presentations,
   b. conflicts with session presentations,
   c. additional concepts,
   d. practical examples of concepts,
   e. ideas for further discussion.

Lesson 5: Go slow when introducing new concepts and approaches

It emerged that the common experience of our participants was a tour where the guide led and spoke, and the audience followed and listened. A tour where the guide spruiked facts and amused, with only passive learning possible: a guided tour perhaps, but not an interpretive tour. The interpretive tour requires use of different approaches and communication methods that may challenge novices, because they require letting go of leader control in favor of controlling through stimulating interest. While introducing the rationale for an interpretive approach is important, providing associated tools and skills is essential. This requires examples and demonstrations and having participants use the techniques with appropriate feedback. This takes time and mentoring.

Lesson 6: Monitor and evaluate (M&E)

'Everyone' seems to agree that M&E is important for adapting programs and reporting, but it is often overlooked, done superficially and subjectively, not evaluated or not used to adapt practice. Our simple approach of using on-line tools provided feedback to facilitators and to participants through results reports. This resulted in program adjustments. Of use is Kirkpatrick's four levels of training evaluation (Kirkpatrick Partners 2021):
• Level 1 Reaction: participants find the workshops favorable, engaging and relevant;
• Level 2 Learning: post-workshop, participants acquire the intended knowledge, skills, attitude, confidence and commitment;
• Level 3 Behavior: participants apply what they learned when back on the job; and
• Level 4 Results: program objectives are achieved, sustainable partnerships are established, support exists for program continuation.

These can also be applied to interpretive tour evaluation, supplemented with elements and criteria from the IUCN-WCPA management effectiveness evaluation framework (Figure 13; see Hockings et al. 2009):
• Context – Are heritage values clear and the needs and expectations of clients understood?
• Planning – Are there clear themes and messages and maximum use of site features for demonstrating the story?
• Inputs – Is the interpretation supported by facts, props and use of original objects?
• Process – Does the interpretation engage with activities, stimulating questions and varying group structures?
• Outputs – Do clients respond with relevant questions, seek more information, and offer sincere thanks?
• Outcomes – Do clients return or engage in other related activity?

Figure 13: Evaluation elements and criteria
(IUCN-WCPA management effectiveness framework)

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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