



Saint Louis Zoo Fall 2005 Docent Training Pre-Evaluation Report

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Program Profile	
Program Description:	The Docent Training Program is intended to provide trainees with a basic understanding of ecology and zoology and the skills necessary to conduct education and interpretive programming. The training program is 13 weeks long and offered twice a year. The trainees can get 3 hours of graduate credit for the training through four local universities.
Program Goals:	To prepare the docent trainees to successfully implement programs to participants and interpretive opportunities to general zoo visitors. After completing the program, trainees should have a basic understanding of the science needed to implement programs and the knowledge of ecology and zoology needed to interpret exhibits. They should also have the skills needed to conduct education programs and on-ground interpretations.
Program Funding:	Docent training is offered at no cost to the Zoo volunteer as it is an internal training and the docents will be providing services for the Zoo as a Zoo Docent.
Program Links:	http://www.stlzoo.org/education/zoodocents/
Evaluation Profile	
Evaluation Goals & Questions:	<p>To determine if the training program was 1) accomplishing its goals and objectives, and 2) what improvements can be made in the way training is delivered.</p> <p>Evaluation questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Did trainees increase their knowledge of course concepts? 2. Do we have the right balance of information and pedagogical presentations? 3. Did the variety and different types of assessments help trainees achieve the training's objectives? 4. Did the training manual meet trainees' needs to master course content, beyond providing information? 5. How can basic training be improved to meet personal learning styles while helping prepare for conducting docent activities? 6. Did trainees receive adequate support during training from mentors, assistants, and staff to help them succeed in docent training?
Evaluation Methods:	<p>Data was collected using the following measurement methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant feedback, both oral and written, during the course of training that examines balance between content and pedagogy and if the pedagogy used is appropriate for different learning styles • Weekly assessments of trainees' knowledge of course content • Observation of trainee interpretations delivered during the training course • A take home course final • Feedback from the docent mentors regarding trainees' expectations and attitudes about training • Final interview with trainees regarding training manual, support by mentors,

	assistance and instructors, and perceived preparedness to become an active docent
Evaluation Instruments:	A complete set of evaluation instruments is available in the report.
How were results used?	The results were used to improve docent training (formative evaluation component) and to gauge if docent training provided the skills, experiences and support for new docents to be fully integrated into the docent organization and participate in educational activities. (summative evaluation component)
Evaluation Cost:	This evaluation was conducted internally by Zoo Education Staff and docents. It was part of the Department's program evaluation goal and work time was provided to carry out the evaluation.
Evaluation Insights:	<p>What worked well? Not appropriate</p> <p>What were important evaluation "lessons learned"? Not appropriate</p> <p>What could have been done differently? Not appropriate</p>
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