

A professional learning program for informal (science) educators

Upcoming Coaching Workshop Dates & Locations

- March 22-24, 2017 University of Texas at Austin Marine Science Institute (750 Channel View Dr., Port Aransas, TX 78373)
 - 2.5 days; 8:30am-4:30pm Wednesday & Thursday, 8:30am-1pm Friday
 - Campus dorm lodging available (\$30 per night per person; shared rooms, T-Th)
 - \$100 per person (\$50 rebate upon completion of full workshop)
- August 29-31, 2017 Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center (4801 La Crosse Ave., Austin, TX 78739)
 - 2.5 days; 8:30am-4:30pm Tuesday & Wednesday, 8:30am-1pm Thursday
 - \$100 per person (\$50 rebate upon completion of full workshop)
- Jan/Feb 2018, Fort Worth, TX (just before or after ISEA) Location TBA

Reflecting on Practice is a professional learning program that immerses novice and experienced science educators in informal environments in discussions about, reflections on, and applications of research and theory in learning and teaching science. The ideas and tasks in the program create and strengthen a shared knowledge base and professional language among educators within an institution. It makes public the practices of all educators through greater understanding of, and reflections on, their beliefs, goals, and actions. There are three primary goals for the program:

- *Build shared language and understanding* through delving into the literature on learning and teaching;
- *Engage practitioners in habits of reflections* through observing their own teaching, as a means to develop their practice and make it public; and
- *Nurture a tradition of continued professional learning*, and thereby *build a professional learning community* within an institution.

The design of *Reflecting on Practice* (RoP) is informed by research on teaching science in informal environments and effective professional learning. It has been field tested nationwide, and is currently being used in over 40 institutions that include children's museums, natural history museums, science centers, botanical gardens & art museums, zoos, and aquariums. For example, the following institutions have adopted the program:

- Brookfield Zoo/Chicago Zoological Society - Chicago, IL
- California Academy of Sciences - San Francisco, CA
- American Museum of Natural History – New York City, NY
- Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center - Virginia Beach, VA

Though the RoP program was designed to focus on informal *science* teaching and learning, many of the fundamental elements are relevant and valuable to informal educators working in art, historical or cultural institutions.

What is the Coaching Workshop? The Coaching Workshop is designed for managers, coordinators or department leaders at an informal education institution who plan to implement *Reflecting on Practice* for educators (staff or volunteers) at their own institution. It is highly recommended that two “champion” educators from an institution participate in the workshop if at all possible. “Champions” are staff that will pursue and lead the initial and sustained implementation of RoP within their institution. During the two and half day workshop we will provide participants with:

- Opportunities to experience the sessions and activities in the program;
- A complete curriculum guide, implementation models and some supporting materials;
- Connections with other informal (science) educators who plan to implement RoP;
- Help customizing the implementation models for their institution and needs;
- Continental breakfast, lunch and snacks each day; and
- Follow up webinars and online discussions to explore additional content and provide continued connection with RoP peers.
- Bonus: extra support materials which may include books and technology!

Additionally, continued mentorship and guidance will be provided beyond the initial workshop to support the meaningful, and practical, implementation of *Reflecting on Practice* within your institution. Support will be provided primarily through distance learning/online platforms, but may include face-to-face assistance as well.

How does the program work? “Champion” educators participate in a Coaching Workshop to learn the program. These educators, in turn, use the *Reflecting on Practice* curriculum materials to implement the program with colleagues at their institutions over a period of 6 to 14 months. In the modular-based program, participants engage in 14 interactive sessions and numerous reflective tasks to explore the six foundational knowledge components of informal science educators’ practice. One essential component worth highlighting is the observation of practice through the videotaping of and later reflection on an educator’s teaching. During these tasks, educators will watch, think and talk about their practice with colleagues in a safe and constructive manner. *Each Coaching Workshop participant will be asked to bring a video of them teaching or engaging an audience. More will be shared with participants prior to workshop.*

The *Reflecting on Practice* program is a Learning Partner of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and the National Association for Interpretation (NAI). Earn credit (or continuing education credit) towards your NAI Certified Interpreter's Guide certification or AZA's Professional Development Certificate in Education and Interpretation. Credit offered for full participation in the RoP Coaching Workshop and implementation/participation in the RoP program at your institution.

To learn more and register, please contact:
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<http://missionaransas.org/reflection-practice>

