

THE IMPORTANCE OF FIELD TRIPS FOR AT-RISK CHILDREN

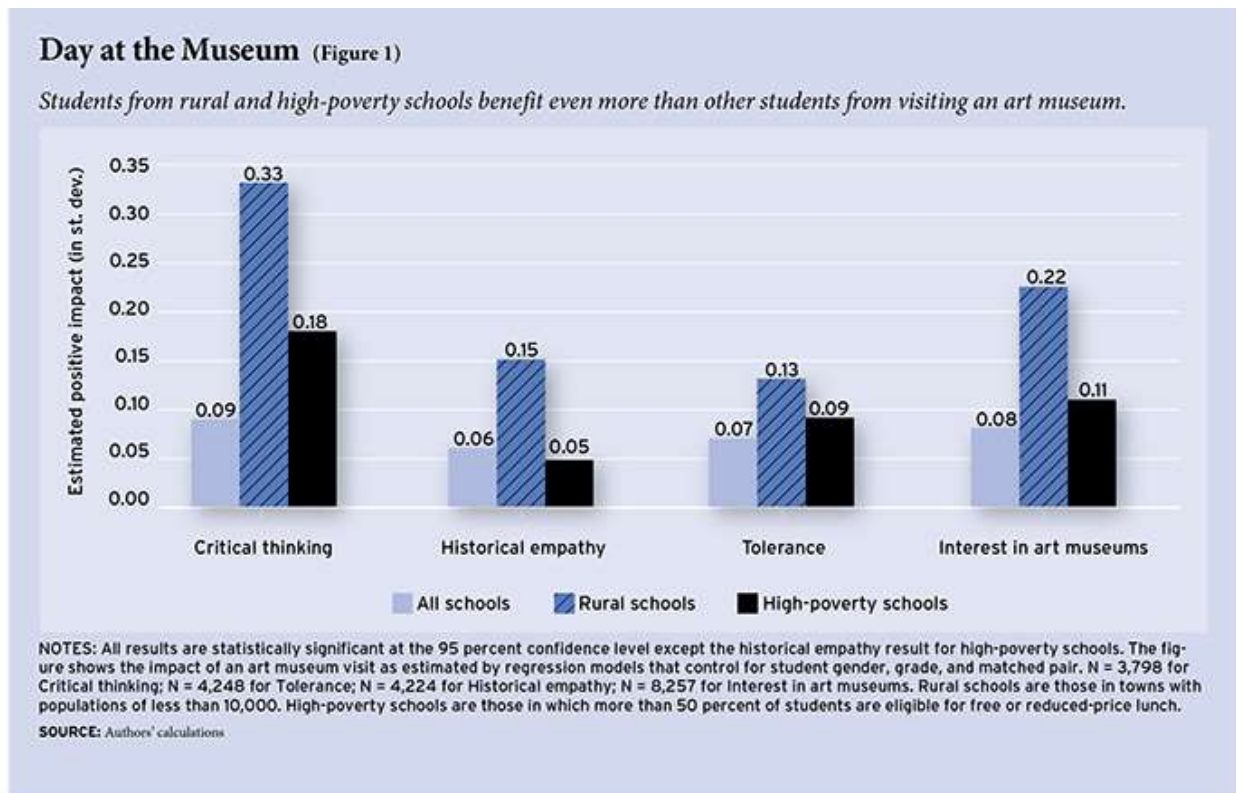
Field trips give students educational experiences away from their regular school environment. Popular field trip sites include zoos, nature centers, community agencies such as fire stations and hospitals, government agencies, local businesses and science museums. Not only do field trips provide alternative educational opportunities for children, they can also benefit the community if they include some type of community service. Field trips can result in greater achievement in all subjects.

<http://www.livestrong.com/article/127612-benefits-field-trips-children/>

"We try to reach kids here with different learning styles — audio, visual, and tactile, and having the opportunity here to hear, see and touch things provides different ways for different kids to learn."

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/hinsdale/news/ct-dhd-school-field-trips-tl-0225-20160222-story.html>

The chart below illustrates why field trips are so important for children from high poverty and rural areas in terms of long term benefits.



The benefit for disadvantaged groups is considerably larger (see Figure 1). Rural students, who live in towns with fewer than 10,000 people, experience an increase in critical-thinking skills of nearly one-third of a standard deviation. Students from high-poverty schools (those where more than 50 percent of students receive free or reduced-price lunches) experience an 18 percent effect-size improvement in critical thinking about art, as do minority students.

Overall, receiving a school tour of an art museum increases student tolerance by 7 percent of a standard deviation. As with critical thinking, the benefits are much larger for students in disadvantaged groups. Rural students who visited Crystal Bridges experience a 13 percent of a standard deviation improvement in tolerance. For students at high-poverty schools, the benefit is 9 percent of a standard deviation.



One consistent pattern in our results is that the benefits of a school tour are generally much larger for students from less-advantaged backgrounds. Students from rural areas and high-poverty schools, as well as minority students, typically show gains that are two to three times larger than those of the total sample. We don't just want our children to acquire work skills from their education; we also want them to develop into civilized people who appreciate the breadth of human accomplishments. The school field trip is an important tool for meeting this goal.

<http://educationnext.org/the-educational-value-of-field-trips/>

Field Trips help kids define real life goals, see careers outside the classroom, develop interpersonal relationship skills and gain experience-based learning.

Reachable Goals: “Students often have unrealistic career and personal goals based on what they learn from the mass culture. Particularly for students who are in disadvantaged circumstances, spending time in engaging settings both in school and after school is important. After-school settings linked to the school as well as community programs -- such as Boys and Girls Clubs, 4-H, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and faith-based youth groups -- provide more chances for students to build positive relationships with caring adults and, potentially, supportive peers.”- Professor of Psychology Dr. Maurice Elias, Director of Rutgers Social-Emotional Character Development Lab.

<https://www.edutopia.org/strategies-help-at-risk-students>

Socio-emotional Growth: Students who go on field trips become more empathetic and tolerant. A [study](#) conducted by the University of Arkansas found that students that participate in a field trip to an art museum show increased empathy, tolerance and critical thinking skills.

<https://www.explorableplaces.com/blog/the-benefits-of-field-trips>

Outdoor Learning: The July 2016 report, "[Student Outcomes and Natural Outcomes: Pathways From Evidence to Impact 2016](#)," was produced by Plymouth University in the UK and Western Sydney University in Australia.

Outdoor Learning Improves Well-Being by Creating 5 Outcomes:

1. Healthy and Happy Body and Mind
2. Sociable Confident Person
3. Self-Directed Creative Learner
4. Effective Contributor
5. Active Global Citizen

The new report highlights the wide range of benefits to children of learning in the natural environment. The benefits of outdoor learning go beyond improving academic prowess. Outdoor learning also improves social skills, behavior, physical and psychological [health](#), boosts [resilience](#), [confidence](#), and a sense of place. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-athletes-way/201607/5-ways-outdoor-learning-optimizes-childrens-well-being>

Grade Completion and Dropout Prevention Benefits: A recent report on California’s after-school programs found many positive impacts that resulted from the programs (Department of Education, 2002). Participating students demonstrated increased achievement, regular attendance, good behavior, and a reduction in grade retention. Those at-risk students in the lowest quartile on standardized test scores and English Language Learners showed the greatest improvement. Students also showed improved social skills and behavior which resulted in fewer disciplinary incidents at school and fewer suspensions. There was a 53.4% decrease in retention in the primary grades associated with the program. The cost savings to the state as a result of the decrease in student retention is substantial. Savings in 2001-2002 are projected at more than \$11 million. <http://dropoutprevention.org/effective-strategies/after-school-opportunities/>

Department of Education, University of California at Irvine. (2002). *Evaluation of California’s after-school learning and safe neighborhoods partnerships program: 1999-2001*. Sacramento, CA California Department of Education. Retrieved June 10, 2002. Available: www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ba/as/documents/execsummary.asp.

Field Trips –high quality Learning: The experience was successful because it engaged most of Gardner’s multiple intelligences, including the naturalist, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, verbal-linguistic, intrapersonal, visual-spatial and logical-mathematical. Teachers who routinely integrate the multiple intelligences into their lessons and assessments will engage the different types of learners, making the learning process successful for all.

There is no question that every field trip or experience requires more time and coordination, especially on the part of the instructor. But the benefits far outweigh the challenges. Students gain meaningful, hands-on experiences directly tied to course objectives and content standards. The best part of a well-organized field experience is that students will long remember the “what” and “why” even after the class has ended. <http://www.tolerance.org/blog/field-trips-help-make-learning-last>

Children in poverty often do not have access to experience-based learning. This is why the learning results are greater because the field trip has greater importance and meaning for a child who has never been to a museum, to a park, or to visit a local business.

As long as the field trip is connected to extending student learning, it is acceptable. Below are some educational connections for such a field trip.

Even a trip to an Amusement Park can provide a wealth of learning. Before the trip- have students anticipate the learning via a web based physics activity <http://www.learner.org/interactives/parkphysics/>

- [Acceleration](#). Objects that are changing their speed or their direction are said to be accelerating. The rate at which the speed or direction changes is referred to as acceleration. Some amusement park rides (such as roller coasters) are characterized by rapid changes in speed and or direction. These rides have large accelerations. Rides such as the carousel result in small accelerations; the speed and direction of the riders change gradually.
- [Gravitational force](#). Any two objects with mass attract each other with a type of force known as a gravitational force. The strength of this force depends upon the mass of the two objects and the distance between them. For objects with masses as large as the earth and the sun, these forces are strong and have tremendous influence upon the subsequent motion. For objects such as two persons sitting in a theater, the force of gravitational attraction is so small that it is insignificant. In order for such persons to increase the force of attraction between them, they must add to their mass (maybe by eating more popcorn). Objects on the earth experience noticeable attractions with the earth due to the earth's large mass
- [Newton's First Law of Motion](#). An object at rest or in uniform motion in a straight line will remain at rest or in the same uniform motion unless acted upon by an unbalanced force. This is also known as the law of inertia.

[NASA has also produced a great PDF around amusement park physics](#) that has fun activities and lessons about amusement park rides to help teach students physics.

STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL FIELD TRIP:

1) PLAN YOUR TRIP MONTHS IN ADVANCE

Let the children know WHERE you will be going. Talk about the learning they will experience. Create anticipation and excitement about the trip.

Do a MAP ACTIVITY- show children where they are on the map and show them where you will be going. How many miles will you travel? What sites will you see on your trip- there is a lot of learning in every single field trip.

Do a WEB ACTIVITY-show children the web site for your field trip destination. Talk about what you will see, why is it important, and what they will do when you arrive. Show any online videos or pictures the week or two before to build anticipation. Repeat this for any sights along the way.

Do a LIBRARY ACTIVITY- let the children find a book related to the field trip.

2) DESIGN A LESSON ABOUT THE FIELD TRIP

Help scaffold the children BEFORE the trip. Talk about the learning that you will gain from the field trip, what they will see, hear, touch, smell, or experience. Create an activity (drawing, library, web search) for the children to learn some things about the field trip before you go.

3) VIRTUAL FIELD TRIPS

A virtual field trip can help scaffold at-risk children before you go on a real field trip. A virtual field trip can help you to explore places that you cannot go to in person because of cost, distance or other factors.

Space, NASA, Pyramids, Dinosaurs, Exotic and far-away places or rare animals all make good choices for a virtual field trip.

Virtual field trips can be done with a webcam, or through watching recorded videos or even going to a web site and having a class discussion about what you are seeing and hearing and always stop and discuss what you are learning with the children.

EXAMPLE: You are doing a virtual field trip to a ZOO and you are watching a video about a Tiger. After the video, you can ask children what did they learn about the Tiger? Where does the Tiger live? Are Tiger's dangerous? What do Tiger's eat? Can you show me on a map, where Tigers are found today?

4) BEHAVIOR

Practice Good Behavior on your field trip. Review expected behavior with the children. Teach them how their behavior in public places should be. Review each aspect. The Bus ride, walking together, bathroom breaks, how to ask questions, respect for each other and other important good conduct tips you want them to observe.