
Field Trips as a Strategy to Enhance Community Scaffolding

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ABSTRACT

Schools are often a focal point for community involvement. The findings by Rogoff [1] emphasize community interpersonal and personal planes. The study focuses on the investigation done by the researcher, which highlights the social practices that promoted a student- centered approach to developing participative decision making and collaborative skills. This paper proposes a framework which focuses on a strategy through participation and interactions within a community experience. Social interactions with a skilful tutor allow the learner to observe and practice their skills. According to Vygotsky [2] much important learning by the child occurs through social interaction with a skilful tutor. In the light of the above evidences, communities are rich learning laboratories. Fieldtrips make the students more empathetic and tolerant. Educational field trips place children in a different social environment. Through this paper the significance of educational field trips, which are commonly conducted for students as an effective strategy to enhance community scaffolding is highlighted.

Keywords: *Scaffolding, instructional scaffolding, proximal, curriculum, strategy*

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Introduction:

Scaffolding is an instructional technique in which a teacher provides individualized support by incrementally improving learner's ability to build on prior knowledge. Within education, the social learning theory of Vygotsky is generally credited with providing theoretical basis for the practice, where he describes the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The concept refers to the difference between a learner's ability to perform a task independently versus with guidance. Vygotsky defined scaffolding instruction as the role of teachers and others in supporting the learner's development and providing support structures to get to that next stage or level. Community involves the social feature of the group that develops trust and contributes to learning a safe environment as well as the roles and responsibilities of members [3].

In education, scaffolding stands for a range of teaching techniques used to move the students progressively towards higher levels of reception as well as production and finally, greater independence in the learning process. Scaffolding theory was first introduced in the late 1950s by Jerome Bruner, a cognitive psychologist. Instructional scaffolding is the support given to a student by an instructor throughout the learning process. This support is specifically tailored to each student and this allows students to experience student- centered learning which tends to facilitate more efficient learning than teacher centered learning. The goal of the educator is for the student to become an independent learner and problem solver [4].

What knowledge is most worthwhile to be preserved and transmitted? How can it be acquired or transmitted? These are the two basic questions to be taken under consideration while planning the curriculum. Curriculum is broadly defined as the totality of student experiences that occur in the educational process. It should be planned and organized on the basis of some principles and norms set by society. It is essential that these activities (learning experiences) be selected, planned and executed carefully so that these learning experiences contribute to the development of the students.

The integration of cognitive apprenticeship and social apprenticeship enables systematic and consistent incorporation of learning resources inside and outside the classrooms and greatly facilitates into their disciplinary discourse communities. It calls attention to the need to carefully implement the sharing and production of various types of knowledge [5]. Through community scaffolding, this identity is developed collaboratively and is closely linked with the community. Importance of social awareness for students is a crucial element of a child's education. It enables a student to consider the perspective of other people and understand their needs. Community awareness helps children in improving their social skills by interacting with people from diverse backgrounds. Students who are socially aware, can recognize the resources available and use them to address the needs of society. It is also reflected in their behavior in the classroom and creates an environment that is ideal for learning.

According to Malcom Knowles [6], self-learning is defined as “a process by which individuals take the initiative, with or without the assistance of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, and evaluating learning outcomes”. Self- learning is anything that

a child learns outside a classroom environment by himself/ herself without a set curriculum or examinations. Unlike traditional methods of schooling, self- learning efforts are not measured by how well the learner performs in an exam. Instructed learning is that which involves remembering the instructions of the teacher and then using these instructions to self-regulate [2]. Instructed learning takes place only based on the purposeful directions given by the teacher through the learning process in the classroom. This type of learning is assessed strictly in written exams by means of grading system for class promotion. But self-learning and instructed learning can be blended together to have the maximum benefit for the learners. An instance of an instructional field trip is a visit to botanical garden. This aims at a scientific study of plants. A visit to a botanical garden is an outdoor recreation and education program for students. The teacher gives descriptions about scientific names and necessary details of different plants, trees and flowers which the learners observe directly. Together with this, self- learning provides a holistic model of the learning process that gives added value to the learners' appreciation and knowledge improvement.

Here comes the significance of field trips. Educational field trips which are commonly conducted for the students at secondary higher level are one of the major sources of providing knowledge to the students by giving opportunity for self-experience and observations and self-long lasting learning. It was introduced in 1827 by George Shillibeer [7]for a Quaker School at Abriy park in stoke Newington, London. A field trip is a school outing, which usually has some educational purpose. It can be a group excursion to a museum or the woods or some historic place for first hand examination. It is a way to bring the students and community closer. Many field trips combine educational content with team- building activities such as working together to clean a stream that has been polluted.

There are three types of field trips, they are:

- Instructional trips
- School contests or festivals
- Motivational trips

An instructional field trip is a visit by a class or group of classes to a location outside the regular classroom, which is designed to allow the students to achieve specific course objectives, which cannot be achieved as efficiently by other means.

School contest is an extra campus activity, which provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate knowledge and skills developed through subject area instruction. Contests, competitions, festivals, or evaluations may involve teams of students from more than one class or subject. An example of a school contest, festival, or evaluation is the school level essay competition.

A motivational trip is an extra- campus activity, which is not a part of a scheduled class. It provides a motivational incentive for the school, club, group or class and is related to improving the school climate. The procedures in this guide are for instructional field trips.

Advantages of Field Trips

- Real world learning: As teachers, a field trip is one of the best tools that we can use to provide every student with real world experiences.
- Access: Students are able to access tools and environments that are not available at school.
- Socio -emotional growth
- Academic impact
- To produce civilized young men and women who appreciate culture and arts.
- Observation for education
- Provide students with experiences outside their everyday activities
- Camping with teachers and their classmates
- Improvement of social relations

Field trips are most often done in 3 steps. Preparation, activities and follow-up activity.

Preparation applies to both the student and the teacher. Teacher often takes time to learn about the destination and the subject before the trip. Activities that happen on the field trips often include lectures, tours, worksheets, videos and demonstrations. Follow-up activities are generally discussions that occur in the classroom once the field trip is completed.

Population 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. Today culturally enriching field trips are in decline. Museums across the country report a steep drop in school tours.

Field trips enhance the curriculum. They are in educational possibilities as students learn from actual hands-on experiences, rather than by simply reading or hearing about something. Involvement in a real-world experience makes learning more meaningful and memorable, comparing to regular classroom instructional programs. Also, it increases student-student, student-teacher and social interaction.

Conclusion:

Field trips provide students with new opportunities for learning through experience. Students are exposed to new experiences hopefully to broaden their horizons. This provides students with the ability to learn by doing instead of just passively listening to the information being taught in the class. Students are motivated through increased interest and curiosity. By giving students experiential learning experiences, students get opportunity to involve in a real-world experience to make learning more meaningful and memorable. It is a way to bring the students and community together. Many field trips combine educational content with community activities. Undoubtedly it improves the quality of education.

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