

The Value of Field Trips

Field trips are a key component of school instruction. They are not an add-on, not something that can be eliminated or reduced without serious consequences for the student academic achievement.

The value of field trips include:

- ❖ museums, zoos, aquaria, science centers, and natural areas offer resources that are simply not available in the classroom, including hands-on experiences, real artifacts, original sources, and more up-to-date information than textbooks
- ❖ well-designed field trips result in higher student academic performance in all subject areas
- ❖ students are motivated for classroom learning by their experience of the real world application of what they are learning
- ❖ low-income and English language learner students make connections between community resources and opportunities, and their family and culture, leading to higher involvement in the classroom
- ❖ the civic engagement mission of schools is met by allowing students to use their learning to benefit their community through service learning projects, and to practice the skills of citizenship
- ❖ experiences to match the variety of learning styles and intelligences allow all students to succeed

The professional staff available at many field trip destinations have a level of training equal to classroom teachers, but specializing in creating highly effective informal learning experiences. State and national professional organizations and conferences work to enhance nonformal programs to more effectively meet school objectives.

Using the Environment as an Integrating Context for learning (EIC) research

documents enhanced academic performance, and improved discipline, attendance, thinking skills, and interpersonal abilities through use of the community and natural environmental as a focus for learning in

Academic Performance	Student Motivation
Learning Styles & Intelligences	
Professional Staff	Hands-on Learning
	Connection to Community
Content Standards	Civic Engagement
	English Language Learners
Inquiry Science	Service Learning
	Discipline & Attendance
Real World Application	Higher Level Thinking



all subject areas.

Research on the benefits of field trips to informal learning environments such as museums and science centers demonstrates a positive effect on student's

scientific thinking abilities, documented in Gerber, 2001, and many others.

For more information on the value of field trips, including research links, field trip

destinations, and field trip grants, check <http://nnrec.org/programs/fieldtrip/>.

“The school science program must extend beyond the walls of the school to the resources of the community.”
 – *National Science Education Standards*
