



Field Trips

What are Field Trips?

Field trip/field work is a learning activity that involves students travelling from their normal place of study (e.g. classroom, laboratory) to different outdoor locations that provide practical activities or experiences which are not available at the normal study location.

Structure of Field Trips

Field trip can be a fundamental, core part of a course (i.e. course targeted at teaching practical field work skills), or can be a component of the course which aims at offering optional learning enhancements to students. It can be observational visits to the natural environment for non-experimental research, such as a survey of geological or geographical features of a landscape; collection of biological data/samples in natural sites; or it can be visits to other educational or non-educational establishments such as industrial sites and museums.

	Declarative	CHARACTERISTICS
Y	Functioning	
	Take Time to Set	
	Take Time to Answer	
	Take Time to Correct	
Y	Take Time to provide Feedback	
Y	Suitable for Large Class	
	Can substitute with Computers	
	Passive	
Y	Active	
Y	Process Oriented Method	
Y	Product Oriented Method	

Advantages of Field Trips

- Allows the concepts and techniques taught in class to be illustrated in the real world situation, bringing the subject into life which helps deepening students' understanding
- Hands-on field activities offer great opportunity for students to practise and be familiarized with a range of practical field skills and try them out in action
- Allows students to become familiar with their teachers and peers in the course in an informal and relaxing context to facilitate learning
- Collaborations among students in field work can develop their communication, teamwork and analytical skills



Disadvantages of Field Trips

- Logistic issues such as travelling time, costs, and the coordinator's preparation at the field site can be very resource-consuming
- Despite having the best preparation, the actual conditions may turn out to be not as good as planned. Variable factors such as bad weather, injuries and other potential dangers may not result in a good learning experience and a comfortable learning environment to the students
- Safety and insurance need to be taken into account

How to design a good Field Trip Assessment?

One critical issue to consider when planning field trips and outdoor visits for a course is to reduce all possible risks and unnecessary expenses. Therefore, it is important for course coordinators to consider carefully the entire trip from planning and scheduling (e.g. transport, equipments, communication, and insurance), to the actual trip activities. Identification of resources in case of emergency circumstances (e.g. location of medical facilities, police stations and fire stations, contact details of students' family members, transport routes, mobile communication device coverage, food, water and power supplies etc.) should be fully undertaken prior to the field activities.

The field activities should be led by appropriately qualified staff members, who are responsible for ensuring the adequate safety arrangements are in place. The staff-to-student ratio should not be too large, in order to make sure that effective instruction and supervision can be conducted. Risk assessments regarding the potential dangers and hazards (e.g. biological – dangerous and aggressive animals, insects; chemical – toxic or poisonous chemicals and gases, contaminated water and soil; environmental – extreme physical landscapes such as steep mountains, fast-flowing rivers; hygiene, weather etc) should be carefully taken in advance of the activities. The staff should also make sure that all students participating in the field activities should have received appropriate training (if necessary), in suitable physical conditions, and have well understood and observe all the safety instructions to avoid putting themselves and other people at risk.

Marking Rubrics

MARKING RUBRICS	Excellent	Proficient	Average	Poor
Application of knowledge and techniques	Competently applied the knowledge and techniques learnt from class in working on the given field trip tasks and problems; critical analysis and reflection of the field experience	Satisfactorily applied the knowledge and techniques learnt from class in working on the given field trip tasks and problems; reasonable analysis and reflection of the field experience	Have some difficulties in applying the knowledge and techniques learnt from class in working on the given field trip tasks and problems; poor analysis and reflection of the field experience	Failed to apply the knowledge and techniques learnt from class in working on the given field trip tasks and problems; no analysis and reflection of the field experience
Participation, and compliance to instructions and procedures	Actively involved themselves with other participants through collaboration and communication with	Tried to involve themselves with other participants in the field trip; generally followed most of the given	Involved themselves with other participants in the field trip at the least effort; only complied to the few	Did not involve themselves with other participants in the field trip at all; did not follow to the given



	the instructors; carefully complied to the safety instructions and given procedures	safety instructions and procedures	most important instructions	instructions
--	---	------------------------------------	-----------------------------	--------------

Web References and Resources

- Field work risk assessment guidance, University of Wolverhampton
<http://www2.wlv.ac.uk/hs/guidance/RSH%20Guidance%20-%20Field%20trip%20risk%20assessment.pdf>
- Field Work Risk Assessment Form, Royal Holloway, University of London
http://www.gg.rhul.ac.uk/for-students/Risk%20Assessment_GG1011.pdf
- Field Work, Department of Geography, University of Northampton
<http://www2.northampton.ac.uk/portal/page/portal/geography/geography/fieldtrips>

To Reference these pages

Copy and paste the text below:

Chan C.(2009) Assessment: Field Trips, Assessment Resource Centre, University of Hong Kong
[http://arc.cetl.hku.hk]: Available: Accessed: DATE