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ABSTRACT

It is argued that field trips and related activities in and out of the classroom, especially when well-planned, have educational, social, and cultural value for students of English as a Second Language (ESL). They offer meaningful learning experiences, extra learning opportunities, and authentic language encounters with native English-speakers. Activities before, during, and after the outing enhance the experience. For example, pre-trip activities for excursions to an electronics factory and a planetarium included investigation of what occurs at the destination, vocabulary development, and speaking practice and comprehension activities using materials related to the destination. Activities designed for the trip itself, as implemented in trips to a history museum and a cemetery, include the gathering of specific information and reflection on student feelings as observers and participants. Follow-up activities used after a full-day visit to a city included sharing of observations and opinions both orally and in written form, and role-playing as a means of structured speech practice. Careful and thorough planning is seen as vital to successful field trips. Planning issues include student input in the selection of destination, researching the site, flexibility of scheduling, and student interests. (MSE)

SCHOOL FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAINING

ESL FIELD TRIPS: MAXIMIZING THE EXPERIENCE BOTH IN AND OUT OF THE CLASSROOM

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING DEGREE AT THE SCHOOL FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAINING, BRATTLEBORO, VERMONT

BY

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B.A. COLORADO COLLEGE-COLORADO SPRINGS 1983

NOVEMBER, 1992

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This project by Helen Elizabeth Buchanan is accepted in its present form.

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ABSTRACT

This paper emphasizes the educational, social and cultural value of ESL field trips and field trip activities for students both in and out of the classroom. The information is based on research, interviews with ESL instructors, and the writer's second teaching internship experience. A series of "PRE," "DURING," and "POST" field trip activities associated with six different field trip experiences are described in detail. Problems that can surface in planning for and working with field trips are addressed and suggestions on how to prevent those problems are offered. Teachers are presented with specific strategies for incorporating field trips into their curriculum more effectively. The purpose of this paper is to provide teachers with insight and tools for linking field trip experiences to in-class learning activities.

ERIC DESCRIPTORS:

FIELD TRIPS AND SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING
FIELD TRIPS AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING
EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS
EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND SECOND LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This paper offers teachers a practical picture of how to plan for and work with field trips and field trip activities in English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching situations. The format of this paper is organized into six chapters. Chapter One emphasizes the educational value of field trip experiences and discusses how they offer students valuable learning encounters and speaking opportunities with native English speakers. Chapter Two, Three and Four describe how I planned and implemented "PRE," "DURING," and "POST" field trip activities respectively. These chapters cover six different field trip sites. Chapter Five addresses important issues in program planning. Finally, Chapter Six concludes the paper with a summary of my findings and observations.

The content of this paper is based on my second teaching internship (July-August 1992), interviews with ESL instructors in the International Students of English (ISE) program at the School for International Training (SIT, Brattleboro, Vermont), and research articles from Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC). Information that I gathered from these three sources will be

discussed in greater detail before describing the activities in the chapters to follow.

My internship lasted four weeks and took place in Chester, New Hampshire. I taught English to 12 teenage students from Spain who had just completed four weeks of English study in Philadelphia, Penn. They were participating in an eight-week homestay summer program through the Experiment in International Living (EIL).[1] The field trips, with one exception, had already been selected and scheduled by the internship coordinator, without teacher and/or student input, before I began my internship.

The interviews occurred at the SIT campus. Several ESL instructors in the ISE program had extensive experience working with field trips and ESL field trip activities. The ESL teachers gave me invaluable information including useful strategies on ways to plan classroom activities around field trip experiences.

Field trips give non-native students authentic opportunities to communicate with native speakers in non-classroom settings. In real contexts, students encounter how English speakers use grammar, vocabulary, and idiomatic expressions and are likely to assimilate some of these

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[1]EIL changed its name one week after my internship ended in late August of 1992 to World Learning Inc. However, for purposes of this paper, I will use EIL to reflect the circumstance of the organization during the time of my employment.

language aspects into their own understanding of English.

Paul Zarbo, an ISE instructor at SIT, urges that ESL teachers ask themselves, "How might curiosity be awakened so that students will want to inquire?" [2] Zarbo suggests students will automatically be moved to use English or ask questions of native English speakers in any field trip situation where they intrinsically need or want to know more informaton. However, in order for teachers to prepare students for these kinds of communicative activities with native English speakers, teachers need to plan units that address coping techniques like courtesies, and seeking or asking for assistance.

According to another ISE instructor, Al Lynch, "There is a lot of value in the little everyday things that as teachers we tend to overlook." [3] Valuable learning happens in easily overlooked ways during field trips. For example, field trips foster communication between the students themselves because students often want to talk with one another about their experience afterward.

Not only do field trips offer a comfortable way for students to be with each other, but students can be with the teacher more informally as well. The teacher has the added opportunity to listen to the students on a one-to-one basis.

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[2]Paul Zarbo, English Language Instructor, SIT, personal interview, July 15, 1992.

[3]Al Lynch, English Language Instructor, SIT, personal interview, July 17, 1992.

This circumstance enhances interpersonal rapport while providing the teacher with added insight for planning linguistic lessons later in the classroom.

Teachers can also create lessons that focus on the cultural aspects of field trip experiences. For example, during field trips students can compare prices of souvenirs and concessions to similar items from their own countries, discuss the comparative quality of these products, comment on whether their buying habits as visitors in this country have changed relative to their habits in their own countries, or notice how and when native speakers use such rules of social discourse as courtesies and promixity to speaker during casual conversation.

Broader issues of culture can also be addressed. For example, my students from Spain did not find Strawbery Banke, a restored 18th-century village in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, particularly "old" since "old" villages in Spain predate North American ones by several centuries. This field trip experience provided an opportunity to explore the notions of "old" and "historical" from different cultural perspectives.

Finally, research illustrates that field trips benefit ESL students in several ways. For example, Petronio's theory of artificiality suggests that non-classroom settings offer authentic situations for learning about language. She states, "artificiality inherent in most conversation class

situations is imposed by the classroom setting rather than by any particular method."[4] Not only is the classroom an unnatural setting, but Petronio believes that language learning suffers by having to function within that unnatural setting.[5] Field trips can counteract the artificiality by providing exposure to an English language setting that is less contrived than that of most classrooms.

The literature on field trips also suggests a positive link between field trips and knowledge and attitudinal gains.[6] For example, besides increasing the students' knowledge about the culture in general, as well as their own, field trips allow students to see people as individuals instead of as stereotypes. Not only can this exposure help to reduce negative stereotypes, but positive images can get reinforced too.[7] For example, language students in the United States can observe native speakers helping strangers, recycling bottles, or wearing practical clothes and driving economical cars. By seeing such aspects of U.S. culture firsthand, the students can begin to challenge preconceived

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[4]Vivetta G. Petronio, "Tours of the Community as Part of the Converstaion Class," Foreign-Annals, Vol. 18, No. 2, (April 1985), p. 157.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Garry D. McKenzie, et al. "The importance of Field Trips: A Geological Example," Journal of College Science Teaching, Vol. 16, No. 1, (Sept./Oct. 1986), p. 18.

[7]Nina White Goldstein. "Vamos al Barrio: Presenting Spanish in Its Primary Context Through Field Trips," Foreign Language Annals, Vol. 19, No. 3, (May 1986), p. 217.

notions or media-influenced images they may have brought with them from home.

In summary, I felt excited about the many opportunities to work with field trips during my internship. I wanted to introduce my students to experiences beyond the classroom and learn more about my students by observing their perceptions of U.S. culture. As such, I viewed each field trip as an educational opportunity, not soley as a social occasion or outing. Too often, ineffective use is made of excursions or such outings tend to be avoided,[8] in part because teachers perceive them as a bad use of time. This paper is in response to that perception. I believe that field trips when viewed as effective extensions of classroom time, and when planned for carefully, can promote effective, communicative language use in and out of the classroom. Most of this paper demonstrates how "PRE," "DURING," and "POST" field trip activities can both broaden and enhance the classroom experience.

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[8]McKenzie, p. 17.

CHAPTER TWO

PRE-ACTIVITIES

This chapter will document activities that occurred in the classroom before taking field trips to HADCO [9], an electronics manufacturing company located near Chester in Derry, New Hampshire and the Christa McAuliffe Planetarium, located 50 miles north of Chester in Concord, New Hampshire. My descriptions will have two purposes: one, to share the thinking that went into my planning and preparations; and two, to detail actual "PRE" activities that worked for me during the internship experience.

"PRE" investigation and activities related to HADCO

Since I had not been given background information about the prearranged field trip to HADCO or about HADCO itself, I gathered detailed information beforehand. To accomplish this task without overly infringing upon my personal time, I decided to run my local errands in the rural areas of Chester and Derry. In Derry, I met a teenager working at a small private lake for town residents. I asked her about

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[9]HADCO as an acronymn stands for Horace, Al and Dana Company.

the swimming policies, and if by any chance she knew anything about HADCO. It turned out that her mother used to work there. She was certain her mother would be delighted to talk on the subject of electronics or her experiences at HADCO. She gave me her telephone number and encouraged me to call.

I called her mother and learned more about HADCO's circuitry board process. She also explained that it would be a time-consuming process to get specific information from the company because of high security and the many internal departments. The conversation ended with her offering to help me in three ways. First, she would use her name as a past employee to call the company directly to obtain firsthand information on what it was that we were going to see. She would also mention to the tour directors that the participants had limited English proficiency so that explanations for the pre-planned tour could be delivered with more analogies and less terminology. Second, she was willing to rummage through her house for old discarded electronic items that could be easily broken down to their circuit boards and components so that I could bring these pieces to class to show my students. And third, she invited me over for lunch to further discuss any remaining questions or concerns on how best to prepare the students for the field trip to HADCO.

It surprised me that I couldn't get information about

HADCO directly from the EIL coordinator and that it would be difficult to obtain from the company. However, getting information is an important step in researching a field trip site, and the process can be an enjoyable part of the teaching experience. In my situation, it was a fortunate circumstance to collect the information while also learning about the local folk ways and hospitality.

The following scenario reflects what an observer would have seen in our class before we visited HADCO. A circuit board was passed around from student to student. Each student could touch, smell, and examine the individual components or the complete board itself. Student-made posters created from cut-out magazine pictures hung from the walls. A full exhibit of electronic gadgets and goods known to contain circuit boards could be viewed in one glance. The posters clarified the concept of circuit boards and their importance in our lives.

The following activity maintained my students' motivation. As a group, we generated a written vocabulary list of electronic items that contained circuit boards using the student-made posters as a resource. Based on a game called "Categories,"[10] I wrote down six words from our list on an index card. For example, the card said, "Electronic items containing circuit boards: radio, car,

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[10]Raymond C. Clark, ed., Index Card Games for ESL, (Brattleboro, 1992), p. 47.

c.b., remote control, digital watch, and computer." I had someone keep time for one minute while I gave verbal clues. For example, for radio I said, "This is something you listen to...at home...in the car... for music...for news...it has AM,FM..." The students guessed the words on my list belonging to the category.[11]

The pre-session ended with a brief teacher-directed presentation on the different areas to be visited during the tour. I paid careful attention to details and transformed them into suitable analogies wherever appropriate. For example, multi-layered boards resemble "Big Macs." The "fabrication process" of circuit boards parallels the cost-savings and efficiency of making a whole pizza instead of one piece at a time. Food images built schema and created familiar concepts for the students. The lesson ended with questions, comments and field trip logistics.

To summarize the "PRE" process for HADCO, I discovered that it is important to continually consider how to best prepare my students for a field trip. I asked myself, "What can I find out and do beforehand to maximize the in-class experience that precedes the field trip?" I found out that researching a site can be enjoyable and also critical if background information is limited, vague or not easily available. Outside interviews, realistic visuals and/or

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[11]This game is easy to adapt to other topics and works well when students are divided into teams and give the clues to each other. Students can also mime or act out the clues.

student-made posters, authentic props, drama-related games, and enthusiasm on the part of the teacher and students are examples of what can enhance the outcome of and planning for "PRE" lessons. In my situation, meeting with an employee resulted in a fuller "PRE" HADCO experience because I obtained detailed tour information, actual circuit boards, and useful lesson ideas.

"PRE" investigation and activities related to The Christa McAuliffe Planetarium

Based on the brochure and background information I had been given on The Christa McAuliffe Planetarium, an official state memorial to Christa McAuliffe, I decided to focus the following "PRE" field trip activities on the themes of space, technology, and people in space.

For purposes of building upon student knowledge and their background vocabulary, I developed a grid game. Students wrote the letters "S," "P," "A," "C," and "E" across the top of a blank sheet of paper positioned horizontally. Vertically down the left hand side, they listed several class-generated categories which related to space: items found in the universe, names of planets, space shuttle missions, and famous astronauts. The objective was to think of space-related words that fit into the categories and began with the designated letters mentioned.

For example, Saturn and Pluto fit both into the

category "planets" and under the letters "S" and "P," respectively. Apollo works for the letter "A" and the category "space shuttle missions." The sheet resembled a Bingo card filled with vocabulary words related to space. The categories gave students the opportunity to attach language to their background knowledge about space. The vocabulary words also generated useful language for the next speaking activity.

A communication technique, "Narrative,"[12] gave me useful ideas on how to use short passages of information for speaking practice activities. The planetarium's brochure contained several short narratives with descriptive language. Specifically, I selected this three sentence paragraph from the brochure:

> The Christa McAuliffe Planetarium is the official State memorial to S. Christa McAuliffe, America's first "Teacher in Space." As a Concord, New Hampshire social studies teacher, Christa encouraged students to aim high and discover their potential. With that same spirit, The Christa McAuliffe Planetarium invites audiences of all ages to explore new worlds and learn more about the one in which we live.

The brochure's language served as a basis for the students to practice English in several ways: by talking about the passage, by using new vocabulary, and to a lesser extent, by focusing on specific grammatical features.

For this speaking activity, I first read the entire paragraph and then asked basic comprehension questions. I

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[12]Clark, Raymond C. Language Teaching Techniques, (Brattleboro, 1987). p. 19.

wanted to give the students practice in responding to questions. For example, here are two questions I used with my students:

Q. What is the Christa McAuliffe Planetarium?
A. An official state memorial.
Q. Where did she teach?
A. Concord, New Hampshire.

Next, I read the paragraph sentence by sentence, stopping at the end of each sentence to ask the students questions. My objective was to increase the students' ability to detect detailed information contained in each sentence. For example, I asked the following questions based on the first sentence of the paragraph:

Q. Who was Christa McAuliffe?
A. America's first teacher in space.
Q. Which teacher?
A. First teacher.
Q. To do what?
A. Be in space.

And finally, I employed a variation of the "Question-Word Analysis" format.[13] My intention was to draw attention to sentence meaning and word referents to previous phrases or sentences. I asked the students a question and then built successive questions around a specific sentence feature. They responded according to the question prompt. A short example follows:

Q. Who does the planetarium invite?
A. Audiences of all ages.
Q. Scientists of all ages?
A. No, audiences of all ages.
Q. What ages?

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[13] Ibid., p. 101.

A. All ages.
Q. Some ages?
A. No, all ages.

These activities are not intended to substitute or to replace exercises that focus on conversation skills nor is the passage meant to be memorized. The purpose is to demonstrate how short topical language passages can give students speaking practice, skills in comprehending sentences, and experience in using basic question words all of which include language content related to the field trip.

My last "PRE" planetarium activity had students cooperating in pairs, creating conversational language, and speaking spontaneously in role-play situations that I adapted from Zelman's role-play descriptions of famous people.[14] Since I had 12 students and wanted each pair of students to act out a different situation, I needed six role-play descriptions. Using Christa McAuliffe as the famous person, I wrote down on separate index cards the following six scenarios:

1. Talk to Christa McAuliffe. Ask her why she wanted to become an astronaut.

2. Ask Christa McAuliffe what it is like to be a heroine in the United States.

3. Imagine that your favorite teacher died in outer space. Tell Christa McAuliffe how it makes you

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[14]Nancy Ellen Zelman, Conversation Inspirations for ESL, (Brattleboro, 1986), p. 25.

feel.[15]

4. Talk to Christa McAuliffe about why space-travel and space-oriented research is important.

5. Ask Christa McAuliffe why she thinks she died in outer space. What does she think went wrong?

6. Ask Christa McAuliffe how she feels about being the first teacher in space.

In each case, one student of the pair was required to assume the identity of Christa McAuliffe.

I asked for two volunteers at a time to come up to the center of the room and improvise according to the situation I had written on the index card. The students had a chance to discuss any aspect of the scenario with me first, if necessary, outside of earshot of the class, before beginning the role-play conversation. Students experienced generating spontaneous speech in a conversation situation in an activity that stayed focused on Christa McAuliffe and space-related themes.

The rest of the class also had a task during the role-play. Divided into two groups, the students on one side of the room were asked to monitor the errors of one speaker and the students on the other side were asked to do the same for the other speaker. Specifically, they were to listen for

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[15]This scenario confused my students because it seemed odd for them to imagine. It is important to realize that this situation could trigger uncomfortable associations or memories as well. Also, I now recognize that the language thinking behind this situation demands complicated language structures and reasoning. I offer this example so that teachers exercise caution and carefully think through the formulation of their questions.

English that either seemed strange, incorrect, or in need of improvement. Everyone had an index card for each round of volunteers that spoke. The back side of the card was for phrases or responses that did work or that seemed extra clever and interesting. After the activity, I collected the index cards and later wrote their language observations on a piece of poster-sized paper for a grammar lesson the next day.

The students responded favorably to both the speaking and monitoring aspects of this activity. They seemed to enjoy speaking spontaneously and appeared comfortable with the task of creating a conversation with Christa McAuliffe. Although the speakers were slightly nervous in front of their peers, they handled uncomfortable silences appropriately. Overall they felt successful as speakers in a conversation situation. They experienced speaking as a creative act and listening as an attentive process. Plus, they also learned how Christa McAuliffe, as a teacher and female astronaut, represented highly valued characteristics in U.S. culture.

I have shared "PRE" activities that have worked for me in hopes that they can serve as springboards to trigger further lessons and ideas. The underlying motive for my presenting these suggestions stems from my belief that time and energy spent on "PRE" activities can positively influence the "DURING" experience itself. For example,

"PRE" activities help promote student security as they already will have some familiarity with the field trip. Plus, "PRE" activities create a sense of anticipation before the field trip, and help students value the educational aspects that occur "DURING" the experience.

CHAPTER THREE

DURING-ACTIVITIES

Being with students "DURING" actual field trip experiences helps keep the students on target and achieve the goals of the trip. The "DURING" aspect of a field trip offers opportunities for students to be with each other and the teacher more informally, to practice speaking with native English speakers, and to be exposed to many aspects of American culture. Many unforeseen learning opportunities for students can occur: the teacher has the opportunity to seize the moment by taking advantage of these unexpected situations as they arise.

This chapter will present "DURING" activities that I used for visits to Strawbery Banke, located about 70 miles northwest of Chester in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and to a local cemetery in Chester. I also discuss my role as teacher throughout these activities. I found I often assumed the role of guide and facilitator during these two field trips.

Strawbery Banke

Dreary weather resulted in a last minute change in plans from another site to Strawbery Banke, a history museum

in progress depicting over 350 years of social and architectural change. I learned how important it is to be flexible for field trips that depend upon good weather. However, the decison to go to Strawbery Banke meant I had only one hour of bus time to think through and assign a purposeful task for my students about a place that though historical to U.S. citizens, seemed of relatively recent origin to students from Spain.

I decided to assign students to small groups and have the groups go about separate tasks simultaneously. I limited the tasks to keep them focused and achievable. Each group understood that they were accountable for their task, and to each other as a group, and also to make a presentation in class the following day for the other groups. I also allotted each group some unstructured time to freely explore the village once they had completed their assignment. Each group had an obligation to complete the task and to handle the unstructured time responsibly.

My objective for the following activity was to have the students learn with and from each other about early American history and culture. I selected four furnished houses of different time periods between 1695 and 1920, houses which I remembered from a previous visit as particularly rich in detail. I divided the students into four groups of three students each. Each group had an assigned house and were instructed to take detailed notes, ask questions, and

compare their assigned house to a similar house in Spain.

I took on several roles during the activity. I first visited all four houses to make sure the groups had found their assignments. Next, I observed how and if the students were working together. Did one assume leadership? Was English or Spanish being spoken between them? Were they interacting with the costumed history interpreters? In other words, I was afforded the opportunity to see my students engaged in social action and to observe their linguistic and cultural strengths.

I made mental notes of their strengths and jotted down useful notes on language they were struggling with during the activity. Noticeable difficulties arose in the areas of English grammar, register of formality and politeness, and overall language appropriateness. I used these notes for future linguistic mini-lessons. I remained an observer while they were in the houses doing their task. I decided not to enforce English speaking or interact with the students until after the activity.

After observing each group, I sat in plain view at a set of picnic tables situated near the eatery. I wanted students to see me as an information resource rather than a language instructor. Although my intention was to be available for questions or non-intrusive help, I also ended up serving an unanticipated social purpose for the students. By my being approachable, the students found that they could

interact with me and with each other in an informal way that fostered a stronger sense of community in the group and later back in the classroom.

The activity promoted student cooperation both during the task at Strawbery Banke and later for the group presentations in class. Students practiced the skills of map-reading in finding their assigned houses, and note-taking. Some students used the task as a way to initiate casual conversation with the Strawbery Banke employees.

This activity prompted spontaneous speech "DURING" the task and led to group presentations in class the next day that revealed students had gathered detailed information. For example, one group learned about open-hearth cooking and presented an informational skit on early American food preparation and eating traditions. In summary, students learned about working together in small groups, made efforts to communicate with native English speakers, discovered historical aspects of U.S. culture, and made comparisons between early life in America and Spain.

The Chester Cemetery

This field trip was the only one that was not pre-arranged prior to beginning my internship. I decided to take the students on a field trip to the cemetery because I liked the idea of visiting something free, nearby, local in flavor, and of community significance. Not only did I want

students to explore their own cultural values and have an emotional experience, but I also wanted to further their skills in becoming more aware of their immediate surroundings and more observant of commonplace details. The cemetery as a field trip site coincided with these aims and provided an emotional situation for students to express themselves in English about something culturally meaningful.

At the cemetery gate, I explained the task. Each student was to enter individually with a pencil or pen and paper. For roughly twenty minutes, they were to look for three gravestones from three different centuries, choose one of the gravestones and observe it closely, and then describe in writing what they noticed around the gravestone itself.

My role was to monitor the time and be available to answer questions when they completed the assignment. I stayed outside of the waist-high stone wall boundary. Since I wanted each student to have a solitary experience, I asked them to keep silent and to themselves once inside, and to go about the task alone. Of the 11 students present that day, five entered without hesitation, one entered and soon afterward exited, and five refused to enter.

I chose to honor and respect the decisions of those who did not to enter. I felt it was important to understand their decisions. Two students were of particular concern to me. I noticed a distinct change in their body language, witnessed a seriousness in their facial expression, and

sensed a profound quiet in their manner. Naturally, I shifted the task for the students who opted not to participate. For these students, I asked them to sit quietly and write about why they had chosen not to enter the cemetery. When they had finished writing, I gathered those five students into a small circle and they talked about their reasons for not entering the cemetery.

Students used English to express deep feelings and thoughts about cultural issues, beliefs, values, and superstitions. Some students were confused by the task. "I think that I can not enter to the cemetery because it isn't a museum."[16] Others were uncomfortable with the associations that the cemetery triggered. "I thought to go at cemetery it is not good, because remember your family, and you cry." And others agreed that "it is disrespectful to take writing off the stones."

Counter viewpoints emerged for those who had entered the cemetery and these were shared with the whole group as a final part of this activity. Some felt that spending time in a cemetery was respectful. For example, one student mentioned how the visit prompted her to take a moment to think about her grandfather. "I remembered when my grandfather was died." Another student noticed how peaceful

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[16]Student quotes will remain anonymous and in their original form. I have chosen to retain errors for purposes of authenticity and in order to prevent a misinterpretation of the student's voice or intention.

and pensive she felt. "In this place you think about things you never think about before." I felt it was my duty to make sure that many perspectives were heard and considered. After both groups had had a chance to share their viewpoints, I left them with these questions to think about overnight for the next class session:

Q. Why do people go to a cemetery?
Q. What are some reasons for not entering a cemetery?
Q. Why do you think people spend money, send flowers, bring balloons, etc...for people who have died?
Q. When is visiting the cemetery a respectful thing to do?
Q. When is visiting the cemetery not a respectful thing to do?

This field trip to the cemetery forced me to become more aware of my assumptions and attitudes. My existing attitude about cemeteries prevented me from perceiving other reactions or anticipating other points of view. I was comfortable with going into a graveyard and overlooked the possiblity that others might not be. If I had had more time to prepare the students before visiting the cemetery, I could have explored cultural attitudes toward death and cemeteries. With more thorough "PRE" cemetery activities, I would have had a better idea of my students' reactions beforehand and would have been better equipped to work with those reactions "DURING" the actual experience.

In conclusion, the "DURING" activities for both Strawbery Banke and the Chester cemetery portray how "DURING" a field trip teachers and students can be with one another informally, and get to know each other in a way not

easily duplicated in the classroom. The many opportunities for social interaction that occur "DURING" a field trip can strengthen the sense of community both in and out of the classroom. Furthermore, field trips provide students with firsthand exposure to English language and offer much to see and explore culturally.

CHAPTER FOUR

POST-ACTIVITIES

This chapter will describe "POST" field trip activities I used in class after full day visits to Boston, Mass. situated about 60 miles south of Chester, and Water Country located in Portsmouth, New Hampshire (near Strawbery Banke). Field trips provide teachers with many opportunities to engage students in follow-up activities. The immediate in-class session after the field trip also offers students a chance to share their observations and opinions with one another. "POST" activities also bring closure to the field trip experience. Finally, well-planned "POST" activities connect the classroom experience to a situation that is both familiar and fresh in students' memories.

Boston, Mass.

The Boston field trip experience provided my students with ample opportunities for speaking English. My students used English to buy food and gifts, and to interact in a wide variety of situations. Therefore, I decided to help my students reiterate the language they used with native English speakers during their day in Boston.

For the following activity, students worked together in

pairs. They asked each other about specific speaking situations that occurred during their day in Boston. Partners wrote down each other's responses on index cards to the following set of questions:

Q. When did you use English?[17]
Q. Where did you use English?
Q. Who did you speak with?
Q. What did you say?

Next, as a whole group, I asked students to read one of their partner's responses so that everyone could listen for common and uncommon expressions used. The students enjoyed noticing that several of them had experienced similar encounters and had used the exact same English expressions. For example, many students said, "One coke please" at some point while on the Boston field trip.

I asked students to chart their various responses onto what became one large poster. As they did so, I asked the class if they observed comments or expressions that could be improved upon or stated better. For example, "You can boring in there" or "I like relaxing me" were statements that could be understood in context, but they needed error correction. The chart consisted of 12 columns and four rows. Students' names headed the columns and each of the

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[17]This question provoked confusion. I did not want responses like "in the morning" or "in the afternoon." My intention was to invite the kind of response that would be more descriptive of the entire situation. I offer this aside as a suggestion for teachers to formulate their questions carefully. It can be helpful to anticipate how students might respond as a way to make sure the question is formulated unambiguously.

four questions above labeled one of the four rows. A grid of 48 spaces contained English responses generated by students.

I used the chart as a tool to provide students with structured speaking practice. I made sure to call on all students so that each had an opportunity to respond to the short oral prompts I gave. For example, I shortened the questions from the row, selected a student name from the column and called on a different student to respond. The following teacher-student exchange serves as an example:

T. "What did," "Juan"[18]
S. "Juan said, 'One coke please.'"
T. "Who did," "Rosalba"
S. "Rosalba spoke with the store person."

A rhythmic roll of speech that contained rapid utterances and natural pauses resulted. The students were motivated and alert, and using language actively. An element of anticipation mixed with a hidden tempo turned this exercise into a speaking activity that reviewed expressions, provided practice for answering questions, and highlighted intonation patterns. Articulation problems and grammatical errors surfaced during the activity, but I simply took notes and addressed them afterwards. I wanted students to experience speaking itself without worrying about errors.

Two variations of the above activity follow. In one

[18]The student names represented here reflect my choice to not use names that were part of my direct classroom experience.

instance, I replaced my oral prompts with silence and a pointer. I tapped the chart twice, first on a student's name, then on a specific question. With eye-contact and a nod, I motioned for a student to respond. This slight change in the activity shifted the focus away from me and placed it closer to the task itself.

My second variation involved more students and required minimal teacher direction. I stepped back altogether and watched different volunteers perform the entire practice exercise. Students took turns assuming the role of "teacher" to prompt other students for a response. The student as "teacher" prompted in one of three ways: voice, no pointer; pointer, no voice; or voice, and pointer. Any combination was allowed and every combination occurred.

In summary, the Boston field trip offered students several different encounters in a big city with English speakers. This "POST" activity provided students with an opportunity to fine-tune their self-selected expressions. They recalled the English they used during their day in Boston and learned how to express themselves better back in the classroom. The follow-up in the classroom not only worked with student-generated language but also gave students an opportunity to examine their expressions with one another for purposes of speaking more confidently with native English speakers in future situations.

WATER COUNTRY

Since I felt strongly versus apathetic about water amusement parks in general, I was determined to create a lesson that explored students' values and opinions. I decided to develop a set of questions as the basis for the following "POST" activity. My intent was to design a writing exercise. I believe that writing practice frees up thought processes and increases access to inactive vocabulary. Once activated, the vocabulary becomes available for communication purposes.

The follow-up class session began with a silent block of time during which I stressed writing for ideas and thoughts over accuracy. Specifically, I asked the students to respond to the following questions:

> Q. Why do you think water parks were invented?
> Q. List some positive and negative cultural values associated with water parks.
> Q. Does a place like Water Country reflect U.S. capitalism? Explain.
> Q. Which do you prefer? Water parks with people, action and excitement or natural water places where you do your own activity, and have peace and quiet?

After the students finished writing, I collected their papers. That evening, I examined their responses and looked for common gramatical errors and thought-provoking comments. Since I support the use of student-generated language, the next day in class I used their written responses for lessons to work on grammar, to discuss cultural values, and to encourage them to talk about their opinions and values.

I used the following responses in two different lessons

which worked on grammar and cultural values respectively:

"You can use English when you're waiting in line."

"Is very rude to think you need to pay for have a good time and be happy."

"I think that somebody invented the water park to earn money and to the people enjoy."

"You go there and have fun, you stay with your family (if you go with your family), you meet other people.

"Yes, because you have to bring money to a place like that if you want to have a good time, and the idea of a water park is to make money more than having fun."

My first lesson focused on grammar. I wrote the above sentences on the chalkboard. I told the students that although their sentences communicated their ideas, they needed to be written better. Students were motivated to rework and rewrite their sentences: they appreciated how I used their sentences on the board for English grammar lessons plus, they enjoyed working on sentences that expressed their ideas and opinions.

For the second lesson, I used the same responses for discussing cultural issues and probing opinions. I wanted the students to notice and talk about the values inherent in their responses. For example, I used the student responses and incorporated them into a discussion about money, family values and leisure time. Students were interested in each other's opinions and actively engaged in conversation to express their own ideas. They were eager to learn more about issues and ideas of their classmates. These two activities demonstrate how student-generated responses, both

written and spoken, can be recycled for grammar lessons and cultural discussions.

In summary, the "POST" field trip activities for visits to Boston and Water Country illustrate how teachers can follow-up with students. The field trip, as a commonly shared out-of-class experience, can serve as the basis for promoting communicative language use in the classroom. I offered descriptions of activities that used the field trips as a way to explore students' values and to examine students' use of English. I had many opportunities to incorporate student language generated from the field trip experience into relevant writing and speaking activities. If teachers utilize field trips for "PRE," "DURING," and "POST" activities, they can extend the educational value of what students experience both in and out of the classroom.[19]

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[19]Teachers who need or want a wider variety of accessible activities for more general kinds of field trips will find a list of other field trip options and related lesson ideas in Appendix A and Appendix B, respectively.

CHAPTER FIVE

PLANNING ISSUES

This chapter addresses important issues when planning for and working with field trips and their accompanying activities. Field trip activities can be extremely valuable for students especially when "PRE," "DURING," and "POST" activities are all well-planned before the actual field trip.

I was not always able to plan our "PRE," "DURING," and "POST" field trip activities adequately ahead of time. However, I learned when planning for a field trip it is critical to consider the following issues: participant input in the selection of field trips, the importance of researching the field trip site, and the ability to negotiate when and how often field trips are scheduled. Finally, teachers and coordinators should find out beforehand about students' interests and previous field trip experiences so that repeat experiences can be replaced or substituted with more suitable field trips.

Participant input means that teachers, students, and program coordinators going on a field trip should be actively involved in the selection of that field trip. In my situation, I did not have any input and it did cause some

problems because I did not intrinsically value or agree with several of the choices that had been made. Plus, the students did not have any input either which meant that they were not whole-heartedly motivated for and during some of the field trips. With all participants assisting in the selection process, there is a better chance that students will benefit from the field trip. Students will naturally be more interested in and motivated about sites they help to select. Also the teacher is more likely to develop creative "PRE," "DURING," and "POST" activities if the teacher and student see the educational value of the field trip. Overall, participant input into the selection of field trips influences both the participants' satisfaction and the value of the experience. However, if such input is not possible, the careful teacher can still generate interest and value by pre-planning "PRE," "DURING," and "POST" field trip activities related to each trip, whenever possible, beforehand.

Researching a field trip site entails more than obtaining a brochure; information can be misleading and it is often incomplete. Teachers should carefully research any site or show beforehand because researching helps to guard against unanticipated problems. For example, it is useful to talk with someone at the site first, in person or over the telephone, to confirm details, tour arrangements or program content. Interviewing people who work at a site can

be another way to gather information. Not only are interviews informative, but they can be insightful and enjoyable too.

Finally, teachers need to consider when they want field trips scheduled. Schedules should leave enough time available for class sessions between field trips so that students can benefit from in-class preparation and follow-up activities. Field trips that are scheduled on either side of a weekend make it more difficult to maintain a sense of immediacy in the "PRE," "DURING," and "POST" activities. For example, at one point in my internship three separate field trips occurred back-to back three days in a row: Thursday afternoon, all day Friday and all day Monday respectively. Not only did two of those days sandwich a weekend, but the tight spacing between those field trips meant that it was not always possible to create links between classroom activities and field trip experiences. Therefore, I urge teachers to negotiate for schedules that suit their classrooms' needs so that field trips and their accompanying activities can be adequately explored and processed both in and out of the classroom.

In conclusion, as a result of my internship experience, I suggest teachers consider these planning issues carefully before selecting sites to be visited, making schedules, and planning "PRE," "DURING," and "POST" field trip activities. I have discovered that planning for a field trip involves

knowing about potential problems and ways to address those problems ahead of time. My suggestions are intended for teachers who might encounter similar problems or situations while working with or planning for any aspect of a field trip experience. Teachers who are more informed and who are prepared to anticipate what could go wrong are more likely to be successful in how they plan for field trips and their accompanying "PRE," "DURING," and "POST" activities.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

The previous chapters have illustrated how field trips and their accompanying activities--especially when they are well-planned and implemented--can offer students meaningful learning experiences, can provide for extra learning opportunities, and can help to ensure authentic language encounters with native English speakers. Specifically, I have discussed a series of "PRE," "DURING," and "POST" field trip activities associated with six specific sites. I have also addressed issues that affect program planning and presented ways to prevent some potential planning problems.

Looking back on my internship experience, I feel strongly that field trips offer students valuable ways to practice and learn about language both in and out of the classroom. I believe field trips also provide teachers with many opportunities to create meaningful language learning activities directly related to what students learn and experience with one another both in class and on the field trip itself.

For example, I recycled student-generated language from field trip activities and was surprised to observe how much could be done with the written and spoken responses they

produced. I was able to design lessons for error correction, conversation practice, and writing activities. Whenever possible, I reused students'responses, opinions and observations and spiraled them into new lessons. Student language generated from field trips, both spoken and written, provided ample opportunities to further students' understanding and use of English.

The field trips and the "PRE," "DURING," and "POST" field trip activities also strengthened the sense of community in our classroom. I am convinced that field trips promote group cooperation, stimulate meaningful communication, and foster personal interaction both in and out of the classroom. I believe students see the educational value of field trips in situations where field trips are perceived as a part of-- rather than apart from-- the classroom learning experience.

Before concluding this paper however, it is impossible for me to not mention some grim aspects of my internship experience. It would be a great disservice to teachers if I have led them to believe that my actual "PRE," "DURING," and "POST" field trip activities were more than the separate entities they were described to be. I was not able to successfully implement a complete "PRE/DURING/POST" activities sequence for the same field trip. I had to make compromises. It would have been ideal to have created a complete set of "PRE/DURING/POST" activites that revolved

around the same field trip.

However, the real world is less than ideal. I was working with a group of teen-agers who for the most part came to the U.S. with a vacation mind-set to a program that occurred during their summer school-vacation months rather than during their school-work months. Student motivation was a problem. In addition, I was working with a set of pre-arranged field trips that did not fully represent my interests nor the interests of the students. And the lack of sufficient time between field trips for ample preparation activities and follow-up created gaps and left aspects of each field trip unfinished. My actual experience of planning for and working with field trip experiences left me discontent way too frequently. I did the best I could.

Nevertheless, I hope I have planted a seed that leads to new ideas and renewed energy for fine-tuning field trip experiences. I hope I have helped teachers to see more clearly how well-planned field trip activities can potentially have educational, social, and cultural value for students both in and out the classroom. I offer these last comments so that teachers may approach planning for and working with field trips and field trip activities believing there is value in thinking about field trips as useful for the classroom learning experience. I am not apologetic for the contents of this paper, but I felt a need to be true to my readers, to myself, and to what I have written.

APPENDIX A

FIELD TRIP OPTIONS*

LOCAL SCHOOL TOURS/UNIVERSITIES

LOCAL TV STATION (view taping, interview on local news...)

FIRE OR POLICE STATION

LIBRARY

MUSEUMS

CITY HALL

VISITORS CENTER

NEWSPAPER OFFICE

RADIO STATION

HOSPITALS

COMPUTER LAB

MILITARY BASE

SUPERMARKET

RESTAURANT

BANK

MANUFACTURERS (cars, boats, food, beverage...)

POST OFFICE

FAST FOOD OR DONUT SHOP

AIRPORT,BUS OR TRAIN STATION

*Source: Adapted from materials of
The U.S. Experiment in International Living
25 Bay State Road, Boston, Massachusetts 02215
Telephone 617/247-0350 or 1-800-662-2967
Fax: 617/247-2911

APPENDIX B

ADAPTABLE LESSON IDEAS*

PICTURE STORY--Have students create stories from pictures cut from magazines, newspapers, brochures, etc.

TRIVIAL PURSUIT--Can be done in teams, use categories such as: verbs, geography, famous people, songs, etc.

REACTION--Describe a real life situation and have students tell how they would respond to it.

CURRENT EVENTS--Have students discuss a news item with the host family and then bring it to class for discussion.

JOURNALS

LETTER TO EDITOR

FORMULA POETRY

WIN, LOSE, or DRAW

WHO AM I?

WORD SEARCHES

CRAFT FAIR

COMMERCIAL SLOGANS

AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

POSTER CONTEST

THANK YOU LETTERS

TRAY GAME--MEMORY TEST

ROLE PLAYS (lost, sick, etc.)

ROUND ROBIN STORIES

CONCENTRATION

TIC-TAC-TOE

HOLIDAY AWARENESS DAY

20 QUESTIONS

SCAVENGER HUNT

WHAT'S MY LINE

NAME THAT TUNE

SENTENCE SCRAMBLES

DEBATE

COMPUTER PROGRAMS

BIOGRAPHIES

MAKE A BUMPER STICKER

ORAL READINGS

WRITE A RAP SONG

BOOK BINDING

BINGO VOCABULARY

HANGMAN

VENN DIAGRAMS

*Source: see Appendix A

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