

Field Trip in The Nursing Educational Programme

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The field trip may be defined as an educational procedure by which the student studies at first hand, objects and materials in their natural environment. Synonymous for the words 'Field Trip' could be tour, excursion, or educational trip. A well-planned field trip should have three important phases, namely (1) Preparation, (2) Actual Trip and (3) Follow-up and evaluation.

History.

The history of the field trip is rather interesting. It was used centuries ago by early Greek teachers. Socrates believed in gaining knowledge by direct contact with people, also by personal experience and observation. The methods of Confucius, the Chinese Philosopher and Teacher of the 4th and 5th century B.C. resembled somewhat the methods of Socrates. He walked from place to place accompanied by those who were absorbing his views. He desired that his students should see and reason for themselves the principles of his teachings.

There is an interesting saying that we would like to pass on to you,

"Learning without thought is labour lost

Thought without learning is perilous."

In ancient Athens most of the child's education came from actual participation in the activities of life. For example, civics was not learned from books, but through attendance where the activities were going on.

In the Bible we see that Jesus

taught his disciples as they walked about, directing their attention to the external world.

John Milton in the 17th century believed in education supplemented by travel.

In the 18th century Rousseau recommended that studying be done directly from nature.

There are many others who advocated the field trip down through the centuries. More recent experiments have proved that the learner must be active and not passive.

Fitting into Curriculum.

The educational objective must be kept in mind. It should be a group activity as it is an effort to make the subject more meaningful. It is essential to plan ahead. It could be best done, when the quarterly, half-yearly or annual curriculum is being planned by the tutors. There should be correlation between the trip and the subject matter. The teacher and students need to prepare and discuss the trip in advance. Reference material should be made available to the students. The local agencies should be contacted well in advance, agreements made and contracts signed.

Educational Value :

A well planned field trip is of great educational value. It helps us to develop and improve our powers of observation. It is a training of the mind to look for the desirable objective and try to achieve them.

Limitations.

The following are some of the limitations which restrict the free use of this teaching method.

1. The time factor is the most important one. As many of our schools are hospital controlled, it is very difficult to find time for such trips.
2. Transportation difficulties.
3. Difficulty of arrangement to fit in with the curriculum.
4. Difficulty of finding a time convenient to both the agencies and the school.
5. Size of the group—A large group is not good for effective observation and splitting up into small groups is expensive in money and time.

Follow-up and Evaluation.

This is the third important phase of a field trip; follow-up discussion and study should follow as soon as possible after the trip so that the student may digest and assimilate the benefits of direct observation. This may involve the student questioning the teacher and *vice versa*. The experience of the student and the information obtained should be carefully correlated with class subject and activities. All activity should be directed towards the adding up of students' knowledge.

The following is one method of how the follow-up may be done.

1. From notes and rough sketches made during the trip, the students should present reports. This may take many or one of the following forms:—discussion, question and answer, short talks or comments, black board work. The latter has an added advantage of improving skills of communication.
2. The reports may be critically considered by the instructor and other students. Errors of observation and misplaced values should be remedied.
3. The results may be compared, organized and correlated with the subject.
4. Finally the students may make some permanent records. They may be directed to do further work on it if necessary. They may do further

reading and write papers or reports. Educational values are many and important and can be determined by tests of various kinds.

The next step in the phase is evaluation. An overall evaluation should be done in terms of aims and objectives as well as an evaluation of the details of the trip and these should be recorded for future reference. There should also be specific suggestions for improvement of further trips.

The following are some points on which evaluation has to be made:—

1. The educative value of the trip.
2. The preparation that is made before hand.
3. The plans that have been made.

Here are some of the minor but important details:

- (a) Leadership
- (b) Transportation
- (c) Time agreement between the instructor and the agencies
- (d) Guides and the amount of explanation given and heard by the students.
- (e) Lunches
- (f) Expense money
- (g) Suitable dress
- (h) Punctuality both in arriving and returning
- (i) Safety of the group
- (j) Student conduct on the trip and any other details that would keep them happy and busy on the job.

The instructor should particularly note what appeared to be the motivating and vitalizing values, as they affect the individual students and may gather such evidence from her own opinion, students' expressions, comments and remarks during and following the trip.

Some of the field trips that could be useful in our teaching are:—

1. Water purification plant (Source, chlorination, filtration and delivery).
2. Disposal of waste and refuse—sewage pumping stations.
3. Industrial factories.
4. Dairy farm.

(Contd. on page 353)