

# Teaching Tool: Fieldtrips

Created by Stan Kozak for the OTF *Going Green* Workshops, July 2008

Also Known As: **outdoor education, learning beyond the classroom**

## Description:

- fieldtrips take advantage of the many opportunities that support student learning that exist beyond the classroom
- they can range from the schoolyard to another part of the world

## Utility:

- Gather information (learn about local living things)
- Communicate to an audience (street theatre presentation to the public)
- Be subject to the fullness of an experience (a professional orchestra)
- Provide a service (rehabilitate a creek)
- Participate in a challenge (a wilderness winter campout)

## Misuses:

- Virtual fieldtrip is an example of contradictory terms. There is no such thing as a virtual fieldtrip. Use of the term is an example of professional misjudgment.
- A one-off event with no connection to classroom learning

## Challenges:

- Cost and preparation
- Safety concerns

## Examples

K to 3 -a Schoolyard Safari to identify the living things found there and to investigate how they get what they need to live

4 to 6 -a waling trip to a local natural area to learn what plants and animals live there

7 to 9 -service learning through tree planting in association with a local conservation authority

10 to 12 –a five day winter camping trip to Algonquin Park

## Menu of Fieldtrip Activities for Environmental Education Applications -K to 6

The following are some activities that can be selected and organized to create a meaningful learning experiences that supports biodiversity and broader environmental education goals. This list is not comprehensive.

Activity	Purpose	Description
Field guides	-learn to use these reference tools to identify common living things	-find an area in a natural setting and tie a ribbon or use a card with an arrow to point to a common living thing -provide relevant field guides so that students can look up the name and learn about its ecological role
Challenge Sticks	-get students to look for specific ecological components or have specific experiences in a natural area	-use tongue depressors and write the a different challenge on each one relevant to what is being studied -hand out to children and challenge to find and show someone in the group and then get another stick
Moment Silence	-create the setting for students to listen to all the sounds around them	-challenge students to see how long the group can go without making a sound of any kind -while doing so have them note the different living things etc that they hear -time how long they can go and challenge them to set the world record for group silence
Readings in situ	-link print with the actual experience in the field	-your collection of picture books may include those that beg to be read in a natural setting –there are so many titles that are appropriate
Journaling	-record the experiences in out of classroom settings	-setup specific times and locations for student journaling -set the dimension s of the activity, invite reflection, then recording, followed by group reflection if appropriate
Hoop Surveys	-define a small area for student to observe carefully to identify the living things that are there	Use a hula-hoop or skipping rope shaped in a circle to define an -students survey what they see, firs the animals, then the plants –were looking for evidence of living things
Pill bottles, Laundry Tubs and sip lock bags	-containers to put living things in found in the field that allows everyone to see	-groups can do their own judicious collecting forma small area -set the containers up and have brief presentations of their experiences and time to move about to see all
Chalk Messages	-communicate field trip experiences and insights to others in the community	-on the way back form the field trip students can lave messages to community members on the sidewalk using street chalk -yes spelling counts
Found Art	-artistic creations or technological challenges using found materials on site	-early spring golden rod stems make wonderful sticks to build structures and sculptures
Free play	-open exploration of a natural area just for the fun of it	-define the area and allow students to explore it as they wish -check out ahead of time -also works wonders in a stream with buckets and nets
Trust and co-operative Games	-physical activities in outdoor settings just to change the pace	-see the many co-op games and activity books available
Service Learning	-going into the community to participate in some service of value	-clean up of trash in a local natural area