



MODULE FOUR

Program Development Strategies



School programs development and filling out templates, like riding this penny farthing bicycle at Shand House Museum, might seem like a daunting task. This module breaks the process down step-by-step, which should make it as easy as riding a bike.

TOOLBOX FOR
MUSEUM
SCHOOL
PROGRAMS



MODULE FOUR

Program Development Strategies

Summary: This module will guide interpreters through the process of creating a school program by using a development template. The module will cover logistical considerations, and recommended activities and steps for program development.

Audience: Program Developers

At the end of this module, readers will:

- Know how to use the school program development template.
- Understand how logistical decisions can affect the success of a school program.

Glossary:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| • Artifact | • Lifelong Learning |
| • Chaperone | • NSM (Nova Scotia Museum) |
| • Exhibit | • Object |
| • Facilitation | • Primary Source |
| • Hands-on, Minds-On | • School Program |
| • Heritage Skills | • Specific Curriculum Outcomes (SCOs) |
| • ICI (Innovation, Collections and Infrastructure) | • Specimen |
| • IMP (Interpretive Master Plan) | • Student |
| • Intangible Heritage Object | • Student-Centered Learning |
| • IPP | • Tangible |
| • Interpretation | • Tour |
| • Landscape | • Website |

Just as museums have many different forms – big/small, urban/rural, cultural history/natural history, [exhibits](#)/historic spaces – [school programs](#) take many different forms. Despite these differences, all school programs share important characteristics. This module guides readers through the process of creating a school program, using the school program development template (available in [Appendix C](#)), while providing tips and tricks for each section.

Before starting the development process take a moment to remember the five key principles of successful school programs introduced in [Module Two](#).



Programs Address Specific Curriculum Outcomes.

Strong links to curriculum will help teachers justify their museum visit and make the learning experience more relevant for students.



Activities are Object-Based.

Activities that use objects to create an authentic experience are not easily reproduced in a classroom.



“Good Questions” are Asked.

Scripts help interpreters by including a variety of different types of questions rather than providing lots of facts.



Learning is Student-Centered.

Use a variety of active, cooperative and explorative learning experiences for students, beyond watching and listening.



Museums and Program Partners work Together.

Include teachers, other museum staff, volunteers, community groups and stakeholders throughout the development process.



Why Write Down Program? Why use this Template?

Programs are a creative, dynamic, and personalized experience for interpreters. A good interpreter adjusts a program and improvises their script based on the questions, discussions, interests and needs of a class. This does not mean that a good interpreter does not need a plan. Interpreters, like other professionals, need to take time to plan and write down programs. This can be compared to teachers writing daily lesson plans.

In addition to being professional and providing a better product, writing down a program is important for the museum. Completed templates can be used as training documents for new staff, and as part of succession planning for staff who may change positions or retire. The template in this toolbox was developed in consultation with museums from across the province. Using this template will help standardize how the NSM records school programs, help emphasize best practices, make applying for [Support 4 Culture](#) (S4C) interpretive renewal funding easier, and assist in marketing programs to teachers.

The image shows three pages of the Museum School Program Development Template. The first page, 'Program Overview Page', includes sections for Content and Outcomes, Basic Logistics, Program Structure, and Program Outline. The second page, 'Program Research Page', includes sections for Research and Sources and References. The third page, 'Activity Description Page', includes sections for Activity Logistics, Step-by-Step Procedures, and Additional Information.

The Museum School Program Development Template is available in [Appendix C](#). The first page of the template provides a program overview and each activity has its own description page. There is an additional page to record research and additional sources.

How to use the Program Planning Template

This module guides program development step-by-step. Program development is rarely a linear process. The steps can be used as a guide to make sure important information is included but program developers will find themselves moving back and forth between the steps.

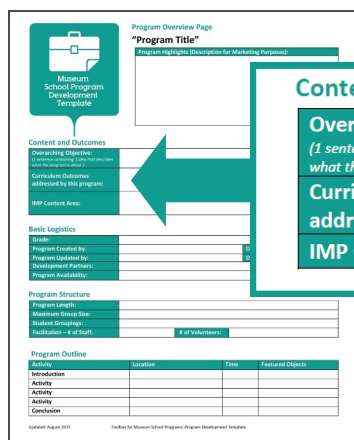
Once a program has been completed, it should not be considered a final product. Developers should regularly update the written template to reflect changes made to the program through experience and evaluation.

Remember, the advice given in this module is by no means the only way of developing school programs. Museums should continue to experiment and try new methods. [Module 7](#) discusses many alternative ways museums can work with teachers.



Does developing a school program from scratch seem overwhelming? Check out the “History Detectives” program in [Appendix I](#). This program, designed with the template, can be presented at any site and addresses the NS Grade Five social studies curriculum. In 2015, this program was adapted and successfully presented at the Museum of Natural History (seen above), the Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic, and a single historic house at the Highland Village Museum.

Step One: Identify Program Content and Outcomes



The screenshot shows the 'Program Overview Page' of the 'Museum School Program Development Template'. A red arrow points to the 'Content and Outcomes' section, which includes fields for 'Overarching Theme', 'Curriculum Outcomes', and 'IMP Content Area'. Below this, there are sections for 'Basic Logistics' and 'Program Structure'.

Content and Outcomes

Overarching Theme:
(1 sentence containing 1 idea that describes what the program is about.)

Curriculum Outcomes addressed by this program:

IMP Content Area:

Content and Outcomes section of the Program Overview page.

The first step in developing a successful school program is identifying outcomes that will be addressed. The template asks museums to identify outcomes from both the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development curriculum documents, and from the [IMP](#). [Appendix D](#) has a chart that shows where the IMP content distribution matrix overlaps with curriculum outcomes.

Once these outcomes are identified, museums can create an overarching theme statement to help remind the presenters of the program's purpose.

Overarching Theme: A list of [specific curriculum outcomes \(SCOs\)](#) and IMP content items can be difficult to remember. Write a one sentence overarching theme, that summarizes the identified curriculum and IMP outcomes. An overarching theme should be memorable. It should simply and clearly explain what the program is about.

Curriculum Outcomes addressed by this program: As explained in detail in [Module Two](#), all programs should be designed to address a few specific curriculum outcomes (SCOs) and skills from the most recent curriculum documents, published by the NS Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

“IMP Content Area: School programs are a great opportunity for museums to expand their [interpretation](#). The [IMP content matrix](#), as well as each museum's specific mandate and mission pages, provide an extensive list of topics that museums can address. Many of these topics mirror those addressed in the curriculum outcomes.

Curriculum Tips

- Focus on specific curriculum outcomes (SCOs) rather than unit titles or General Learning Outcomes (GLOs).
- Quote outcomes directly in documents. Don't forget to include the numbers shown with the outcome (for example, 4.3.1).
- Due to logistical reasons, it is often easier for elementary (P-6) classes to go on field trips than it is for junior and senior high classes (7-9). Therefore museums may want to focus on the P-6 outcomes.
- It is better to choose only 2-3 outcomes and address them completely, than choose multiple outcomes that can't be fully addressed.
- Choose outcomes that teachers will find difficult to meet in the classroom. This often means focusing on Social Studies and Science rather than Language Arts or Physical Education.
- Look at outcomes not just from the perspective of museum's content but from a broader skills perspective (for example, using a historical figure to teach the broader issues of social justice, peace making, and citizenship).
- Be sure to be working with the most current version of curriculum documents. There are changes made annually.



Access Curriculum Learning Outcome Frameworks Online

<https://sapps.ednet.ns.ca/cart/>

Example of a Completed Content Section

Although the main story at Balmoral Grist Mill is the operation and contributions of a grist mill, the IMP suggests “Geological Formations” and “Making Landscapes” as areas for development. Grade four science has a unit about geological formations and landscapes. A geology school program would meet both IMP and specific curriculum outcomes (SCOs).



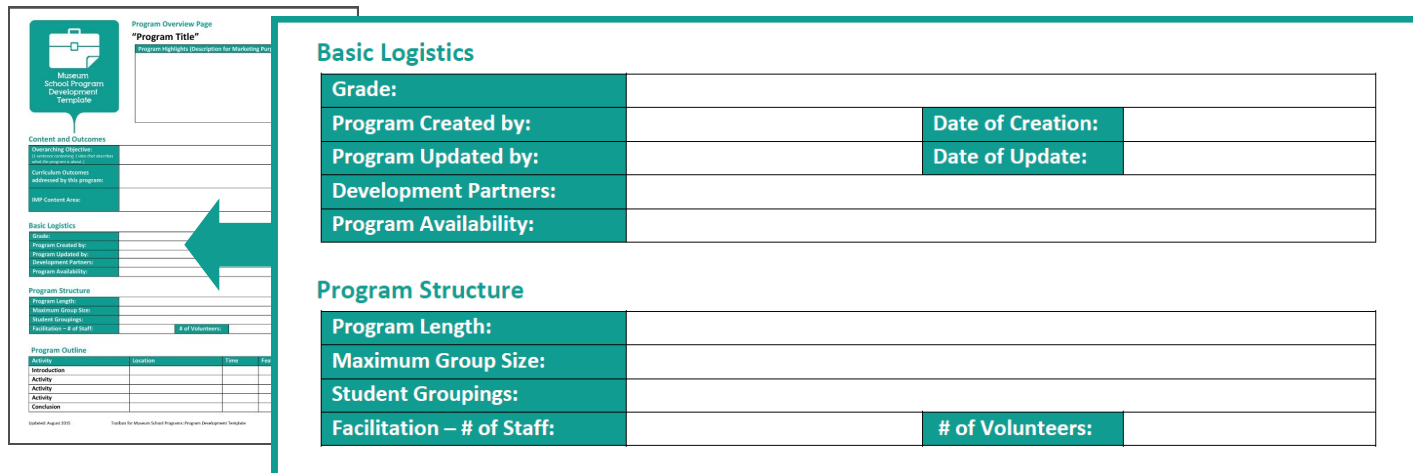
Overarching Theme:	Balmoral Grist Mill, both the actual mill and its surrounding landscape, has been influenced by the local geology.
Curriculum Outcomes addressed by this program:	“Grade 4 Science Students will... ...explore the characteristics of rocks, minerals, and fossils. (Outcome 7) ...explore how the Earth’s surface changes over time. (Outcome 8)”
IMP content area:	A.1 Geological Formation A.2 Making Landscapes



A geology program at Balmoral Grist Mill could examine the geological features in the landscape and the characteristics of rocks that make for good mill stones.



Step Two: Decide Basic Logistics and Program Structure



The screenshot shows the 'Program Overview Page' with a sidebar on the left containing a table of contents. A large green arrow points from the 'Basic Logistics' and 'Program Structure' sections in the sidebar to the corresponding sections in the main content area.

Basic Logistics

Grade:		
Program Created by:		Date of Creation:
Program Updated by:		Date of Update:
Development Partners:		
Program Availability:		

Program Structure

Program Length:		
Maximum Group Size:		
Student Groupings:		
Facilitation – # of Staff:		# of Volunteers:

The Basic Logistics and Program Structure sections of the Program Overview page.

The next step is identifying the constraints in which the program can be designed. Knowing this will help identify what types and how many activities can be included.

Grade: The grade(s) should be based on the curriculum outcomes. Museums might choose to design a program that accommodates more than one grade. This can be particularly beneficial for combined (or split) classes (for example, grades 3 and 4 in the same class with the same teacher).

Program Created/Updated by and Date of Program Creation/Update: It is best practice to include the name of the program creators so that future staff know who created/updated it. It is particularly important for school programs to include dates of creation and update, as curriculum outcomes change. Providing a date helps staff identify programs that might no longer meet curriculum outcomes and require updating.

Partners: [Module Six](#) encourages museums to partner with other museums, community groups, archives, libraries, volunteers, teachers, and [ICI](#) (including accessing [Support 4 Culture](#) funding) in order to develop and present school programs. Be sure to capture these partnerships in the template for future reference.

Things to remember when creating a program for more than one grade:



- Programs designed for more than one grade are easiest when the grades are in sequence. These programs will appeal to combined (or split) classes.
- Make sure the program fully addresses the curriculum outcomes for all grades listed.
- As more curriculum outcomes are being addressed, the program will often require more planning to ensure it is able to accomplish them all.
- Review [Module Three](#), “Getting to Know Your Audience” Remember certain skills, such as reading and writing, might be different between grades.
- Be open to adapting the program for teachers as required. Consider stating in marketing material that programs may be adapted to other grades.

It is more cost effective for teachers to bring a full bus of students. This might mean museums need to create programs that accommodate more than one grade.





Continued... Step Two

Program Availability: Many museums or activities are seasonal. Although this might seem obvious when the program is created, as years pass and things change this is often useful information to have recorded.

Examples of Program Availability

- A program that involves looking for tadpoles can only be done in the spring.
- A program developed for a specific exhibit might no longer be available once the exhibit leaves.

“Program Length”: The length of a program is based on many factors that are often beyond the control of the museum. Use the formula below to decide how long the program will be.



When deciding on a program length, remember to make sure that the program uses time wisely and doesn't focus too much on activities that the teacher could have done in the classroom. Also, be adaptive. Programs may need to be shortened or lengthened depending on the needs of the individual school groups.

Programs can also be extended to full-day or sleep-over programs. These programs have more flexibility, although they require significantly more resources from both the museum and teacher.



Many museums, like Prescott House, are open seasonally and therefore, can only offer programs to schools in June and September. Fortunately, June is the busiest month for field trips and the weather is still warm enough in September to do outdoor activities.

Formula for deciding program length:



$$\text{End Time} - \text{Start Time} - \text{Recess} = \text{Program Length}$$

- **Start time:** Take the time that [students](#) start school, add 30 minutes for teacher to take attendance at the school and get them on the bus. Add travel time from school to your museum. Consult with teacher s they might require a different start time.
- **Recess:** Leave 10-20 minutes for a snack break, bathroom lineups and recess. Students will be better able to focus on the program if they have a break after getting off the bus and before the program starts. Talk to the teacher about what works best for their class and your museum.
- **End time:** Time that the students need to be back on the bus to return to school. Add 15-30 minutes if the class can have free time to explore your museum and/or gift shop.
- **Result:** Museums normally have 90 minutes left to present a program. Programs may be longer or shorter depending on your location and the teacher you are working with. Remember this program length might include the time for any additional activities you added such as lunch, free exploration, or visit to the gift shop.

Continued... Step Two



Facilitation - # of Staff/Volunteers: It is important to have staff and, if possible volunteers, dedicated to [facilitating](#) programs. A good rule of thumb is to have at least one museum staff dedicated to the program for every class coming. Many activities, however, work best when students are divided into small groups. This will require more staff, volunteers or asking [chaperones](#) to assist.

Maximum Group Size: This number is most often decided by looking at the space a site has and how many staff will be dedicated to the program. Depending on the grade, classes normally have 25-30 students, however, due to the cost of buses, many teachers will want to bring two classes to fill the bus. Remember, a half-empty bus costs the same as a full one. Most school buses hold an average of 60 students.

Student Groupings: The size of student groups will depend on the number and types of activity the students will be doing. An ideal grouping is 6-10 students.

In addition to the type of activity, student groupings will depend on how many staff are available to assist and if chaperones can help facilitate activities. Remember, chaperones can be asked to help students, however, interpreters should never separate students from their chaperones. For more information about working with chaperones, see [Module Two](#) "Working with Program Partners."

Some ways to offer programs to large groups, even at small museums:



- Use outdoor spaces and "out buildings," such as barns, for activities.
- Install a large, outdoor tent to make an outdoor classroom space.
- Take part of the group on a walk that explores the local area – either [landscape](#) or neighborhood. Explain how the museum's story extends beyond four walls.
- Partner with a local library, archives or community museum if they are nearby. Split students' time between your museum and your partner institution.
- Explore activities where students can safely spend time in an exhibit or historic room.



Although the Old Meeting House doesn't have a lot of room for school programs, they have found creative ways to accommodate school groups by offering programs in which part of the class explores the nearby graveyard.



Step Three: Brainstorm and Determine Activities for Program

Program Overview Page
"Program Title"
Program Highlights (Description for Marketing Purposes)

Content and Outcomes
Learning Objectives (List the results students will achieve)
Contributor Outcomes (Identify the program's contribution to the field)
Self-Content Area

Basic Logistics
Date: _____ Date of Creation: _____
Program Created by: _____ Date of Update: _____
Development Partners: _____
Program Availability: _____

Program Structure
Program Length: _____
Maximum Group Size: _____
Student Groupings: _____
Materials: # of Parts: _____

Program Outline

Activity	Location	Time	Featured Objects
Introduction			
Activity			
Activity			
Activity			
Conclusion			

Updated: August 2015
Toolbox for Museum School Programs: Program Development Template

Program Outline

Activity	Location	Time	Featured Objects
Introduction			
Activity			
Activity			
Activity			
Conclusion			

The Program Outline section of Program Overview page.

The activities included will depend on logistics determined in the previous steps. In addition to determining the activities, consider where each one will happen and how long it will take. Remember to think about how activities might impact each other if students are rotating between multiple activities. Also, consider what [object\(s\)](#) will be featured in each activity.

Activity 1 – Introduction: It is good practice to start the program with an introduction activity. This is most easily done before the groups are broken into smaller groups, as it allows museums to make sure that the whole group gets the same introductory messages. Introductions not only set the tone of a program but also are used to assess what students know from their prior studies.

Examples of Introduction Activities:

- ★ Puppet Show
- ★ Short Theatrical Play
- ★ Storytelling
- ★ Demonstration
- ★ Group Brainstorming
- ★ Group Discussion
- ★ Asking questions that students can answer
- ★ Answer Yes/No questions by sitting or standing
- ★ Invite library staff to read a short story
- ★ Invite archives staff to explain what is a [primary source](#) and what is an archives



Tips for a Strong Introduction Activity



- **Welcome** students, teachers and chaperones.
- **Introduce** staff and volunteers.
- **Briefly summarize the program.** Explain to students what they will be experiencing, including a quick review of the program framework and overarching theme.
- **Review student expectations,** include museum rules and ways students can participate.
- **Do a quick activity or demonstration** that provides students with information that will help them in other activities. This could include vocabulary, facts or ideas.
- **Set the tone of [student-centered learning](#)** by encouraging participation. Ask students what they already know about the topic and what they want to know.



The "History Detectives" school program in Appendix I uses the introduction to assess prior knowledge, introduce the topic and establish expectations.

Continued... Step Three

Tips for Strong Program Activities



- **Focus on facilitation** rather than teaching. Students should talk more than the interpreter.
- **Provide clear instructions** at the beginning of each activity, both verbally with demonstration and written to be referred to during activity.
- **Provide objects** that encourage [hands-on](#), [minds-on](#) behaviour.
- **Allow students to respond in multiple ways:** verbally, written, drawing, with technology or kinesthetically (for example, dance, movement or theatre).
- **Encourage students to discover on their own.**
- **Allow all students to work individually, in pairs or in groups.**
- Ask **questions** and encourage **discussion**. Limit use of questions that have a “right answer”.
- **Allow for some noise** (organized chaos).
- **Be flexible.** Allow for unexpected questions and discussion but retain enough structure to enforce the program’s logistical constraints.
- **Incorporate technology** when appropriate.

Activities 2, 3, and maybe even 4, 5, 6: Museums should select their activities carefully, making sure they focus on experiences that are unique to a museum. These could include interacting with objects, experiencing [heritage skills](#), or engaging with significant landscapes. Remember, many museums find it ideal to break the large group into smaller groups, which rotate through a number of activities/stations.

Activities such as making crafts, watching movies, or listening to somebody speak, which historically made up a large part of museum school programs, aren’t a strong draw for field trips. Instead, these activities should be provided to teachers to do in the classroom as a pre- or post- visit experience or instead of a visit (See [Module 7](#)).



Fisherman’s Life Museum’s school program features a variety of activities, including the active “Go Fish” game, a role-playing on the wharf, and a visit inside the house.

Examples of Program Activities:



- ★ Trying heritage skills (for example, rug-hooking, blacksmithing)
- ★ Playing a game that introduces or reinforces program information
- ★ Doing experiments or research
- ★ Exploring with a minds-on scavenger hunt, followed by a group discussion
- ★ Trying simulated experiences (for example, archaeology digs)
- ★ Participating in, and maybe even preparing, a short theatrical experience
- ★ Interacting with an interpreter doing first-person interpretation
- ★ Going on a [tour](#) that involves a minds-on, hands-on component
- ★ Using objects to demonstrate facts (for example, create a timeline, exhibit, presentation)
- ★ Using objects to inspire the creation of artistic products
- ★ Reflecting and looking for bias in historical quotes
- ★ Trying ‘behind-the-scenes’ activities (for example, research, conservation, curation of exhibits)
- ★ Examining objects through discussion and worksheets (see [Appendix F](#) for worksheet ideas)
- ★ Need more ideas? Look at the [Periodic Table of Play](#).



Continued... Step Three

Conclusion: It is good to take some time at the end of the program to review with students what they experienced. A final review helps reinforce program messages, demonstrates to teachers that curriculum outcomes were addressed and acts as an opportunity for museum staff to informally evaluate the program. Most importantly, conclusions provide an opportunity for students to feel a sense of accomplishment and demonstrate what they learned during the program.

Examples of Conclusion Activities:

- ★ Discuss with students what they learned during the program as it relates to a larger issue or question (for example, now that they better understand how animals use water, what can they do to help protect water sources?)
- ★ Have students present what they did
- ★ Have a quick round of Jeopardy
- ★ Provide students with a simple follow-up task they could do at home or at school (for example, ask your parents about your family history; look for something specific in nature)
- ★ Provide students with time to freely explore the museum so they can learn more about topics that were of particular interest to them



Tips for Strong Conclusions



- **Keep the conclusion short and engaging.**
Students will be tired from the program and are often eager for lunch or a break.
- **Focus on having students share their experiences** with the rest of the group.
- **Re-emphasize curriculum outcomes addressed** by the program.
- **End on an upbeat-tone.** Don't make the conclusion feel like a test.
- **Encourage lifelong learning** by inviting students to return with their friends and family.



Students who feel a sense of accomplishment during a school program are more likely to return to the museum to share their experience with their family, as seen here at the Highland Village Museum.


Earn A Badge

The template's "[Program Overview Page](#)" highlights the building blocks of school program development. Completing this page will help ensure a program meets all the principles of successful school programs, as well as the logistical considerations unique to your museum.

1. Return to the work you did to earn your Curriculum Badge ([page 22](#)). Select 1-2 curriculum outcomes and corresponding IMP content. Write an overarching theme statement based on these outcomes.
2. Reflect on the logistical realities of your museum. Keeping the needs of teachers in mind, write out your site's logistical and structural realities.
3. Consider what objects you can feature in your museum. How can you make interacting with these objects into a student-centered activity? Write a program framework based on these experiences.



Step Four: Research



Museum
School Program
Development
Template

Program Research Page

"Program Title"

Research

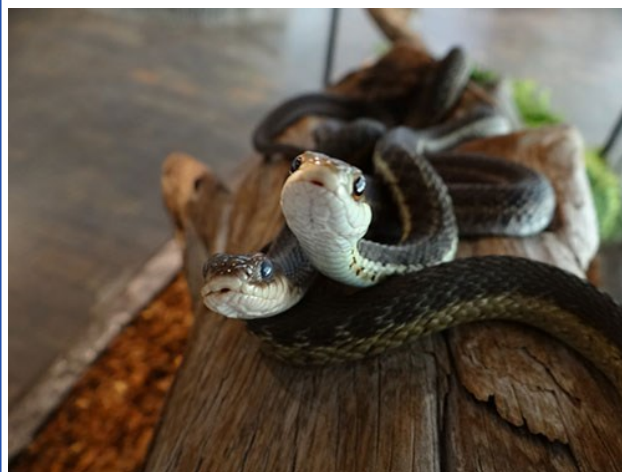
Background Information:	
Sources and References:	

The Program Research Page includes a place to record background information, sources and references. Research is not a single step in program development, but rather an ongoing process that should continually be added to.

Example of Audience Specific Research:



In a Primary science program that focuses on exploring nature with your senses, the background information would include basic details about the characteristics of the animals being presented in the program. The background information would not need to discuss the Latin names of the animals or technical terms, as these are not relevant to the audience or outcomes.



*Maritime garter snakes (Latin: *Thamnophis sirtalis pallidula* Allen) at the Museum of Natural History.*

Background Information: As activities are developed, research will be an ongoing process. Writing a background information section ensures not only that a program is based on accurate information, but also provides accurate information to future program presenters who might be new to the topic or program. Background information should be audience specific. This might mean reducing or increasing the amount of information included and using appropriate vocabulary.


Sources and References: The sources used to write the background information should be recorded both to authenticate the background information research and to provide interpreters with an opportunity to learn more. As the program is updated, this area should also be updated, especially to reflect new resources or to note when an internet resource is no longer available.

Suggestions for School Program Research Sources



- Grade/Subject specific text books
- Grade/Subject specific curriculum guides
- Websites by reliable sources
- Reference books written for children (age appropriate)
- Virtual museum exhibits or websites designed to introduce students to a topic
- Other museums or partners (libraries, archives, community groups) with similar content

Step Five: Develop Activities



Museum School Program Development Template

Activity Description Page

"Program Title"

"Activity Title"

Activity Highlights (Short Description for Marketing Purposes):

--

Activity Logistics

Location	Time	Materials

Purpose of Activity:

Curriculum Outcomes addressed by this activity:

Set-Up:

Step-by-Step Procedure

Timing	Instruction	Possible Script

Additional Information

Possible Discussion Questions for Extension:

Suggestions for Modifications:

Safety Considerations:

Updated: August 2015 Toolbox for Museum School Programs: Program Development Template

Complete an "Activity Description" page for each activity in the program, including introduction and conclusion. Activities should be developed in tandem with research in step four.



The Costume Talk is the first activity in Uniacke Estate Museum Park's program, Trip to the Past. This introduction activity acts as a launching pad for discussions about how life has changed for children since Uniacke's time.

Activity Logistics: During the previous steps, decisions about the types of activities, the location, and length (time) will have been made. Transfer this information from page one to each activity.

Look at the curriculum outcomes identified on page one. Transfer the relevant curriculum outcomes to the activity page. One way of addressing curriculum is to design one activity for each identified outcome.




The Black Loyalists Heritage Center uses technology to allow students to interact with tangible and intangible heritage objects. One exhibit component invites visitors to react to a real quilt by creating their own virtual quilt square.

Materials/Set-Up: As learning from objects is one of the key principles of successful school programs, it is very important to consider what objects the activities will use and how they will be presented to students. Remember [objects](#) can include both [tangible](#) and [intangible heritage objects](#). See [Module Two - Object-Based Learning](#) for a list of possible objects that could be used.

Working with the "real-thing" is one of the unique experiences museums can offer, but set-up is critical. An environment must be created that not only gives students access to the object, but also does so in a way that protects the object and follows the NSM's [Collections Policies](#).

Continued... Step Five



 Museum School Program Development Template

Activity Description Page
 "Program Title"
 "Activity Title"

Activity Logistics

Purpose of Activity

Curriculum Outcomes addressed by this activity:

Step-by-Step Procedure

Additional Information

Version: August 2012 Toolbox for Museum School Programs: Program Development Template

Step-by-Step Procedure

Timing	Instruction	Possible Script

The Activity Procedure Section of Activity Description page.

Step-by-Step Procedure: Use this section to explain how to do the activity. This includes instructions provided step-by-step, how long each step should take, and a suggested script. The procedures should emphasize flexibility, using “good questions” and student-centered learning while giving program presenters sufficient information to know how to teach the program just by reading the instructions and script.

Timing is included not as a strict instructions but rather as a guideline for how long each step should take.

Scripts are provided not as mandatory words all presenters must say but rather as a useful tool to help understand how to present each step to the program’s audience. Scripts remind program presenters of appropriate vocabulary, “good questions,” and level of instruction. Program presenters should be encouraged to personalize their script, while keeping in mind the possible script as an example.



Although this activity would have a set procedure, this first-person interpreter at Ross Farm is not following a script. Rather, she is interacting with students, engaging them in the role-play, and is prepared with possible discussion questions if she needs to extend the activity.

Earn A Badge

Coming up with activities can be lots of fun. Developing activities however, is more than coming up with fun ideas. It involves making sure outcomes are addressed and logistics are considered. Writing down the activity gives other staff (both future and present) all the information they need in order to present the activity as developed.

1. Complete the [activity description page](#) for an activity you’ve developed.
2. Have somebody who is not familiar with the activity read your finished page.
3. Ask them to describe the activity back to you. What information have you missed? What information could be clearer? What else could you include to help your activity description page to stand on its own?

Developing



Activities



MODULE FOUR

Continued... Step Five

The Additional Information section of the Activity Description page.

Additional Information

Possible Discussion Questions for Extension:

Suggestions for Modifications:

Safety Considerations:

Possible Discussion Questions for Extension:

In addition to the script, it is helpful to include additional questions for interpreters, especially as they become familiar with student-centered learning approaches and asking “good questions.”

Suggestions for Modification:

There are many reasons a program may need to be modified – change in the number of staff available to facilitate, increase or decrease in the length of the program, presenting it to a grade that it was not originally designed for, presenting it as a public program, or accommodating students on [IPPs](#) that need specific learning adaptations. As the program is presented more often occasions will arise that will require adaptations. Keep track of these adaptations in this section of the template so that future interpreters won’t need to reinvent them.

Safety Considerations: Keep note of any safety considerations foreseen in a program (for example, keep students at a safe distance from open flames in blacksmith forge). Also note any safety considerations that are discovered while presenting the program based on experienced student interactions.

Examples of Discussion Questions for Extension:

- What other [artifacts/specimens](#) in this exhibit do you see that are similar to the one we’ve been discussing? Why do you think they are similar or related?
- How does this relate to your daily life?
- If you could ask this artifact or specimen one question, what would it be? What do you think it would answer?
- What else would you like to know about this topic? How could you find out?

Examples of Modifications:

- A program developed for grade 5 and 6 students might ask the students to read or write. A modification for presenting this same program to grade 2 and 3 students might be to replace writing with drawing.
- A 90 minute program can be expanded with more hands-on, minds on opportunities to last longer and provide a more in-depth experience for a student workshop or sleepover.
- A program has an outdoors activity but an alternative activity is provided for days with bad weather.

Students visiting the Dory Shop Museum enter an actual workshop, complete with tools. Although this activity has more obvious safety considerations, all activities need to keep safety in mind.



Step Six: Test, Evaluate, and Adapt as Needed

Program development is a never-ending process. Once the program has been delivered, it should be evaluated and adapted as necessary. Be sure to record the adaptations in the school program development template so that the template always reflects the most current version of the program.

Piloting New Programs

The words of Scottish poet Robbie Burns “the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry” apply to school program development. This is why all programs need to be piloted. Piloting a program is when a class is brought in to try the program with the understanding that it is a program new to the site and/or staff. The class will be used to test if the program works and identify ways it can be improved. Classes participating in a pilot program should be offered the program at no cost as an incentive with the understanding that both the teachers and students will be asked to complete an evaluation at the end of the program. Programs may require multiple rounds of piloting before they are ready to be marketed and offered.



The “History Detectives” program in [Appendix I](#) was piloted five times. The first and last pilot were with the same class at Highland Village Museum. The teacher and students were amazed at how much the program had changed and improved.

Ongoing Evaluation of Programs

Programs should be evaluated on a regular basis. As museum staff and exhibits change, the effectiveness of a program might as well. Department of Education and Early Childhood Development curriculum also changes. Programs should be evaluated to ensure they are addressing current curriculum outcomes. Evaluation does not have to be complicated. The two lists below suggest ways to both formally and informally evaluate programs.

Suggestions for Formal Evaluation:



- **Have an evaluation meeting** with program presenters (both staff and volunteers) after the program has been offered several times. Ask how could the program more [engaged](#) students and better meet the outcomes.
- **Provide teachers with a formal evaluation form**, either to complete on-site during the program conclusion or digitally once they return to school.
- **Provide students with a formal evaluation form** to be completed at the end of the program or back in the classroom. Remember to keep the evaluation form accessible to the age of the students.
- Examples of a teacher and student evaluation forms are available in [Appendix E](#).

Suggestions for Informal Evaluation:



- **Ask program presenters how it went.** What worked? What needs refining?
- **Use program conclusion to talk to students.** Did they better understand the topic? What did they like?
- **Listen informally to students** as they get ready to leave. Ask staff working in the gift shop or other areas of the museum to share what they overheard the students talking about. What was their favourite part? What would they have liked to have done differently?
- **Talk to the teacher after the program.** Ask them what they thought of the program.



Step Seven: Write Titles and Highlights for Marketing

Program Overview Page
"Program Title"
Program Highlights (Description for Marketing Purposes):

Program Overview Page
"Program Title"
Program Highlights (Description for Marketing Purposes):

Program Title and Highlights for Marketing sections on the Program Overview page (above) and the Activity Description page (below).

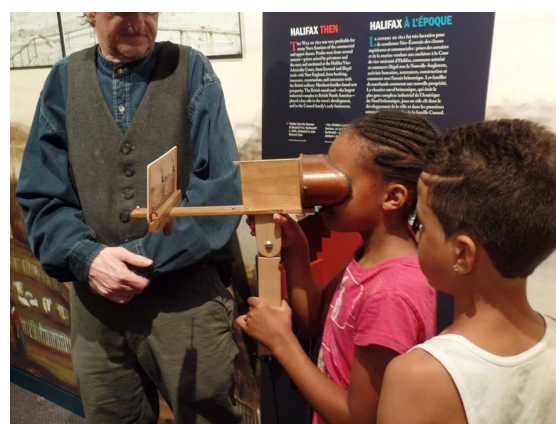
Activity Description Page
"Program Title"
Activity: "Activity Title"
Activity Highlights (Short Description for Marketing Purposes):

Activity Description Page
"Activity Title"
Activity Highlights (Short Description for Marketing Purposes):

Once the program is developed and piloted, it is finally time to package it for marketing to teachers. This includes giving the program and each activity a name and description. This information will be used on the "For Teachers" section of the museum's [website](#) (see [Appendix E](#)) as well as on any marketing materials prepared for teachers.

Program Title and Activity Name: The title for a school program should make the program sound fun and show that the program is creative and engaging. Most importantly, it should capture what the program is about. Titles that are too whimsical or "punny" might miss their mark as teachers don't immediately see how the program relates to their curriculum. One suggestion for titling a program is to echo the wording used in the curriculum outcomes.

Program Highlights and Activity Description: These short write-ups are what will be used for marketing the program. They should clearly, but briefly, explain what will happen during the program/activity and echo wording from the curriculum outcomes. The write-ups should demonstrate that the program is a good use of resources as the students will experience something difficult to replicate in the classroom.



Program titles and descriptions need to emphasize links to the curriculum and experiences unique to a museum setting. Here students at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic get a use to try objects from the past while learning how technology has changed.

Step Eight: Market the Program

Building Relationships with Teachers

A personal touch will go a long way in successfully marketing programs to teachers. There are many other experiences competing with museums as potential field trips and teachers may be more willing to visit a site that make the effort to engage with them on a personal level. The more teachers see that a museum will work with them to meet their needs, the more likely teachers are to consider that museum for a field trip. This helps explain why teachers return to the same field trips year after year.

Some successful marketing techniques include:

- Keep the “For Teachers” section of the museum’s website up -to-date and complete.
- Use social media such as, Twitter and Facebook, to highlight programs.
- Engage teachers in conversations on social media to invite them to, and thank them for, participating in a program. Encourage them to share pictures of their experience.
- Distribute printed program descriptions to teachers at conferences. (for example, Social Studies Teachers Association or Atlantic Science Teachers conference.)
- Get in touch with teachers who have previously visited to let them know what is available.
- Get in touch with teachers in your area who teach grades that the museum has programs for.

The earlier museums can contact a teacher the better, but remember that teachers' schedules and museums' schedules don't always match. Teachers are very busy in September and June and they might not have time to read information sent to them at this time.

Museums should get to know the teachers in their community. This goes beyond sending them marketing material, and includes working with them throughout the year. See [Module 7](#) for other ways museums can work with teachers. Teachers are also regular museum visitors and tourists, like those seen here on a beach walk at Fundy Geological Museum. It is not uncommon for teachers to visit museums during their vacations as unofficial professional development.

A Note About Marketing to Teachers via Email



As of July 1, 2014, the Government of Canada will enforce regulations that will help Canadians avoid spam and other electronic threat. Therefore, museums are no longer able to send unsolicited emails to teachers in regard to the programs they offer. For more information on this law see: fightspam.gc.ca





Continued... Step Eight

Working with Teachers Before the Trip

Teachers are more likely to book a program that they feel confident will meet their needs. Museums can help by ensuring all the necessary information a teacher might need is available on their website, including curriculum outcomes and logistical details. Remember, securing transportation and permission slips takes time, so teachers often need to book their field trips many weeks, and sometimes several months, before they actually plan on coming. Seasonal museums should make arrangements that allow teachers to book their trips before the museum opens.

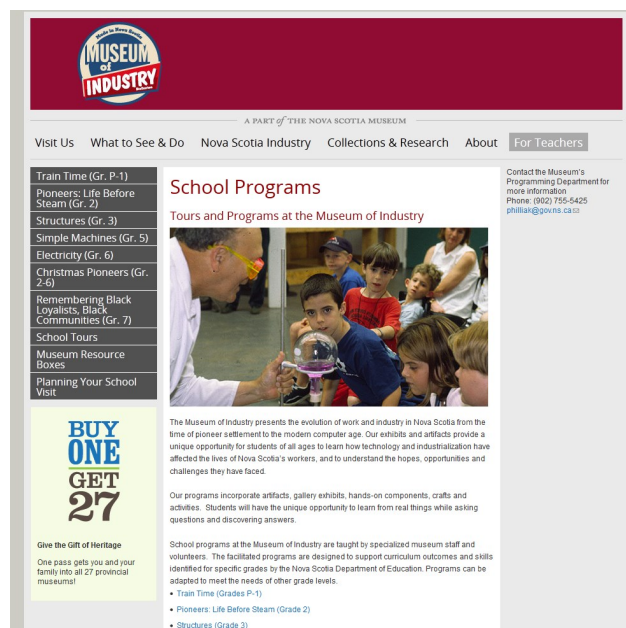
Earn A Badge

Get to know the teachers in your community.

1. Every school in Nova Scotia has a website. Using these websites, create a list of contact information for all of the schools within a 30 minute drive of your museum. You may focus only on the principals or on the teachers who teach the grades you currently offer programs for.
2. Develop a SMART goal to contact these schools— maybe by sending something in the mail, using social media, dropping something off at the school, or by hosting a social event at your museum for teachers.

Remember:

- Personalize what you are offering to teachers.
- Focus on more than "selling" school programs. Establish your museum as a resource for teachers.
- Choose your timing carefully—teachers are less likely to look at your materials at busy times such as the first week of school, holidays, and exam periods.
- What is a SMART Goal? Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-Bound.



The most efficient way to communicate with teachers is through the "For Teachers" section of the websites. The Education Sub-Committee has established a best practice template of what should be included.

For specific programs, it is important to include a title, the grade, program highlights, curriculum outcome links, duration, capacity, availability, a program outline, additional resources (when available), and contact information for reservations and questions.

Include logistical information in the "Planning Your School Visit" section. This includes information about group sizes, admission costs, lunch facilities, bathroom facilities, and gift shop.

The "For Teachers" webpage template is available in [Appendix E](#).

For examples of program and activity highlights/descriptions, look at the "For Teachers" section of these websites:

- Uniacke Estate Museum Park
- Museum of Industry
- Museum of Natural History

Communicating with Teachers Checklist

During Booking:

- ☐ **Get contact information for the teacher**
 - Name: _____
 - School: _____
 - Grade: _____
 - Phone: _____
 - Email: _____
 - Fax: _____
 - Personal Cell Phone: _____
(in case of emergency or last minute change)
- ☐ **Get logistical information:**
 - What program do they want?

 - On what date are they coming?

 - What time will they arrive?

 - How are they arriving - bus or walking?

 - How many are coming?
Students: _____
Chaperones: _____
 - Are they staying for lunch?

- ☐ **Offer to adapt program to meet specific needs:**
 - Ask about any special concerns or needs.
 - Ask what students are covering in class.
 - Ask if there are any learning or physical adaptations needed for specific students.
- ☐ **Other Notes:**

After the Booking – Before Arrival:

- ☐ **Send booking confirmation, which includes:**
 - Their contact information gathered during booking to ensure it is correct.
 - Program logistical information gathered during booking to ensure it is correct.
 - Program outline with curriculum outcome.
 - Museum's expectations for chaperones during the program.
 - Pre- and post- visit activities, if available.
 - Send booking confirmation to teacher to confirm contact and logistical information.
 - Logistical information about museum, including relevant information about washrooms, gift shop, and lunch area.
- ☐ **Share booking information program presenters and any other museum staff or volunteers who may interact with the group.**

During the Program:

- ☐ **Follow the program as outlined in the written program development template.**
- ☐ **Use presentation and engagement strategies from [Module Five](#).**

Post-Trip:

- ☐ **Follow up with teacher:**
 - Send a thank you.
 - Ask teacher to complete an evaluation (See a sample in [Appendix E](#)).
 - Re-send post-visit activity, if available.
 - Invite students and chaperones to come back for another visit.
 - Invite the teacher back the next year.

The “Communicating with Teachers Checklist” is provided as a resource in [Appendix E](#). Consider using one form for each booking and keeping all of these forms in the same spot, accessible to all staff and volunteers who deliver, develop and book school programs.





MODULE FOUR

Review of School Program Development Steps

Step One: Identify Program Content and Outcomes

Step Two: Decide Basic Logistics and Program Structure

Step Three: Brainstorm and Determine Activities for Program

Step Four: Research (Ongoing Through All Steps)

Program Overview Page

"Program Title"

Program Highlights (Description for Marketing Purposes):

Content and Outcomes

Overarching Objective: (1 sentence containing 1 idea that describes what the program is about.)

Curriculum Outcomes addressed by this program:

IMP Content Area:

Basic Logistics

Grade:

Program Created by:

Program Updated by:

Development Partners:

Program Availability:

Program Structure

Program Length:

Maximum Group Size:

Student Groupings:

Facilitation – # of Staff:

of Volunteers:

Program Outline

Activity	Location	Time	Featured Objects
Introduction			
Activity			
Activity			
Activity			
Conclusion			

Updated: August 2015

Program Research Page

"Program Title"

Research

Background Information:

Sources and References:

Step Five: Develop Activities

Step Six: Test, Evaluate and Adapt as Needed

Step Seven: Write Titles and Highlights for Marketing

Step Eight: Market the Program

Activity Description Page

"Program Title"

"Activity Title"

Activity Highlights (Short Description for Marketing Purposes):

Activity Logistics

Location	Time	Materials

Purpose of Activity:

Curriculum Outcomes addressed by this activity:

Set-Up:

Step-by-Step Procedure

Timing	Instruction	Possible Script

Additional Information

Possible Discussion Questions for Extension:

Suggestions for Modifications:

Safety Considerations:

Updated: August 2015

Toolbox for Museum School Programs: Program Development Template