



MODULE SEVEN

Beyond Programs: Other Ways to Work with Schools



Museums have much more to offer schools than just school programs. Here staff from Fisherman's Life Museum and Museum of Natural History promote the Nova Scotia Museum at the Social Studies Teachers Association Conference.

TOOLBOX
FOR
MUSEUM
SCHOOL
PROGRAMS



MODULE SEVEN

Beyond Programs: Other Ways to Work with Schools

This module will encourage museums to explore ways to work with schools beyond the museum school program. A variety of outreach methods will be presented in overview. Although detailed information is not provided, the previous modules of the toolbox can be used as a guide to developing these alternative programs.

Audience: Program Developers.

At the end of this module, readers will:

- Be introduced to a variety of ways they can work with schools.
- See additional ways they can use their on-site school program.
- Understand ways they can better engage their community through partnerships with schools.
- Recognize alternatives to on-site school programs, especially for sites not open to schools year-round.

Glossary:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Artifact | • NSM (Nova Scotia Museum) |
| • Building | • Object |
| • Chaperone | • Primary Source |
| • Collections | • Specific Curriculum |
| • Engagement | • Outcomes (SCOs) |
| • Exhibits | • Specimen |
| • Heritage Skill | • Student |
| • IMP (Interpretive Master Plan) | • Tangible |
| • Intangible Heritage | • Tour |
| • Interpretation | • Website and Online Initiatives |
| | • Working Collection |

Every museum should have a [school program](#), as defined in this toolbox. Working with schools however is not limited to the traditional school program. In fact, many museums in Nova Scotia have more success working with schools using products other than school programs. This module will explore some of these alternative methods and will share successful examples from the Nova Scotia Museum. Some of these idea will involve using components of a site's existing school program while others will involve creating something new. All of the alternatives to museum school programs presented in this module will not work for every museum. Museums are encouraged to be open to try something new and find options that meet their logistical realities.

Museums + Schools = Community Engagement

In order to remain relevant and sustainable museums must engage their communities. This influences everything a museum does from [exhibits](#) to governance. Working with schools is just one component but it is an important one. It is also one of the easiest method to [engage](#) a community's youth. Engagement is no longer just a best practice, it is essential to a museum's survival.

[Module One](#) stated that museum school programs have faced many challenges over the past decades. Today, museums must do more, and be more... often with less resources. Museums successfully responding to this new reality have created many exciting and inspiring alternatives to traditional school programs.

All of the alternatives to school programs presented in this module will not work for every museum. Museums are encouraged to be open to try something new and find options that meet their logistical realities.



Alternatives In the Museum: Working with Homeschool Groups

Other educational groups might be interested in taking advantage of the unique spaces and opportunities only a museum can offer. When a school program has been created, it should also be able to be modified to suit the needs of seniors, language learners (for example, English, French, Gaelic), recreational, or homeschool groups, among many others. In particular, home school groups are regularly looking for opportunities that can enrich their children's understanding of science and history.

Although the principles of program development and delivery will be much the same in many ways, there are certain considerations to take into account when offering programming to home school groups.

Networking with Homeschool Groups

Unlike a public school group, homeschool bookings will usually be an amalgamation of many families who coordinate with each other to attend programs and events. This can make it more difficult to contact an organizer and share information about a museum school program. However, there are local support organizations that are good initial contacts when trying to get the word out about the museum's offerings.

Maintaining contact with a homeschool group organizer over time can be a challenge as families may move back to public education, priorities change, or interest may drop off after a group has completed a program once. Maintaining regular correspondence with an organizer can help ensure that any changes in leadership will be relayed to the museum.

Due to the relatively limited numbers and the fact that much of the time [students](#) of all ages will participate in a given program, it is likely that homeschool visitation will occur sporadically, compared to the predictable flow of public school groups. However, due to this informal and fluid nature of homeschool networks, homeschool families have much more flexibility regarding the timing of their visit. That means a museum can offer these programs at times that a public school group wouldn't be able to attend, such as evenings, weekends, and during annual school breaks.



Museums might not recognize how often homeschool groups use their site as they might just appear to be family visitors, like this family visiting the Firefighters' Museum. Consider posting information for homeschools on-site or online as to how they can access museum school programs.

Learn more about some of Nova Scotia's the homeschool groups:
<http://hems-ns.ca/>
<http://www.nsfhsa.org/>



Many museums, including the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, offer their existing school programs to homeschool groups. This often means adapting the program to the specific needs of the group. It also requires the program presenter to be flexible as the students may have differing prior knowledge.



Alternatives In the Museum: Continued... Working with Homeschool Groups



Homeschool students can be accustomed to individual attention from their parent-teacher. Their parent in turn is used to being involved in what their student is doing. Museums may accommodate this different learning structure by involving the parent-teacher in what the student is doing, as seen here at the Museum of Industry.

Homeschool Students

When working with homeschool students, there are sometimes differences in their expectations about participation in a lesson as compared to public school students who are accustomed to working in large groups. These characteristics are not meant to be representative of all homeschool students, but can be valuable to keep in mind. Homeschool students may:

- Be accustomed to working in small groups, with an abundance of individual attention from the parent-teacher.
- Be accustomed to working independently, may find working in a group challenging.
- Tend to be very enthusiastic learners, eager to share their knowledge.
- Not be used to working in a highly structured classroom environment with large numbers. This might make them less familiar with behavioural expectations like raising hands, following a strict schedule, listening to group instructions, or asking permission.
- Each bring different previous knowledge to the program.

Homeschool Parent-Teachers

Parent-teachers ([chaperones](#)) are usually not “experts” in one or more areas of the curriculum and are appreciative of the support and specialized expertise that museums can offer through educational programs. A parent-teacher may have different expectations about how a program will be developed and offered, compared to a public school teacher.

- Homeschooling parents are very involved with the education of their children. They may focus attention on their own children if they are expected to lead a small group.
- Parents appreciate the opportunity for their children to interact with other homeschooled students, and for the opportunity to get together themselves with other homeschooling parents. Museum programs are a social time for both students and parents.
- Parents generally expect that all of their children will be able to accompany them to a museum program. Homeschool groups will likely consist of a wide-age range.
- Because homeschool groups rely on parental and public transportation, there may be issues regarding the consistency of arrival times as groups arrive independently. It is also more difficult to account for illness, absences and in rare cases, no-shows.
- The parent’s lessons are less constrained by the requirements of the provincial curriculum, giving more freedom when determining the material covered in a program.
- Overall, homeschooling parents recognize the challenges inherent with providing a program to such a diverse age group and are flexible with their expectations.



Alternatives In the Museum: Turning the Museum over to the Teacher

When museums think of a school coming to a museum for a program the tendency is to envision the formal museum school program. Museums however can offer much more than what students can experience in a two hour program. One way museums can do this is by supporting teachers in their lessons, and providing resources and space to create their own program or lesson. By supporting teachers and turning the museum over to them as their own classroom, museums can act as community spaces and become the catalyst for students to learn more about their own community and become engaged citizens.

Turning a museum over to a teacher can be a scary thing. It involves the museum's [building](#), beyond just the exhibit and public spaces, and requires maintaining a relationship with the teacher, over an extended period of time. The museum and teacher must have mutual respect and understanding of each other's resources.

How this looks in practice will vary from museum to museum, teacher to teacher, and year to year. There is no set of rules on how to ensure success other than ongoing communication and a willingness to try new things.

Examples of Turning the Museum over to the Teacher

A Case Study from the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic

This case study describes a program that was recognized in 2012 by the Canadian Museum Association (CMA) and the Canadian Teachers' Federation with an Outstanding Achievement Award in the category of "Museums and Schools Partnerships" for an innovative, and non-traditional partnership between the staff at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic and Grade 5 students at École Grosvenor Wentworth Park School. It began as an opportunity for the Maritime Museum to provide a "stage" for a teacher and his students that resulted in a working relationship over several years.



The partnership was initiated by a phone call from a grade 5 teacher at École Grosvenor Wentworth Park School wondering if the museum would be open to allowing students to film at the museum. Each year the teacher has students brainstorm, research, write, storyboard, and film their own projects that explore the heritage of Halifax. This project creatively incorporates filmmaking into daily classroom activities, through support from Panasonic's Kid Witness News Program (www.youtube.com/user/panasonickwnglobal), allowing the teacher to engage his students in meaningful learning opportunities and while creatively meeting multiple curriculum outcomes. Films have included:

- "Look What's in Our Backyard" based on the stay of Prince Edward in Halifax;
- "Titanic Halifax" dealing with the role played by Halifax in the wake of the sinking;
- "Pier 21: Gateway of Hope" dealing with the immigrant experience;
- "Black Snow" about the disastrous Halifax Explosion.

Several of these films won national and international awards. Anyone seeing them cannot but be impressed by their quality as well as their heritage and educational value, given the fact that the cast and crew for these films are comprised of eleven to twelve year olds.

Continued on Next Page.

Alternatives In the Museum: Continued... Turning the Museum over to the Teacher



The Maritime Museum of the Atlantic worked with students from École Grosvenor Wentworth Park School. Students made films at and with the help of the museum. This program was awarded the 2012 Canadian Museums Association “Museums and School Partnerships” prize. These photos show the students with the prize.

Case Study Continued.

From the beginning museum staff realized that this would be a different relationship. For it to be successful, staff would need to keep an open mind and be flexible. Rather than the museum “choosing” the methodology and content, staff listened to the teacher and his students and gave suggestions and choices when needed. The museum not only provided technical and physical resources critical to the films but also provided access and guidance in the use of primary research such as photographic archives, provision of ongoing access to key staff, other heritage experts, costumes, props, artefacts, and even a vessel, CSS Acadia.

What did this look like?

- Scheduling time for students to complete research and “location scouting” in early fall and filming in the late fall and winter.
- Giving access to the museum during non-public hours, and rescheduling due to nasty weather or unforeseen circumstances.
- Providing free admission to students and parents especially for research and scouting visits during weekends and after school.
- Coordinating with colleagues at other institutions such as Nova Scotia Archives or Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 for interviews, research, and film locations on behalf of the students.
- Providing a staff expert to be interviewed for a specific theme.
- Recognizing that it involves everyone from security guards, ship keeper, janitors, volunteers, collections staff, librarian, communication staff, interpreters and ensuring good communication between everyone.
- Drafting an abbreviated version of [NSM’s](#) (long and complicated) film agreements and talk about why they are important to museum work.
- Willingness to adapt.

More than just a one-time visit, this project helped students realize that a museum is a fun place to learn new things. It was challenging at times but it was also fun for staff to be a part of these projects and witness the enthusiasm and focus that that got these kids passionate about learning about their heritage. Students also got a unique look at look at other museum operations. These projects have inspired students to seek career opportunities in the various heritage and communications fields.



Alternatives In the Museum: Community Service and Work Experience

As students enter the higher grades there is an increased emphasis on preparing them for life beyond school with community service and work experience. Museums can offer a variety of opportunities for these students. By building relationships with teachers and the students, these projects can start small and/or evolve into larger class projects or students becoming regular volunteers.

Community Service Projects



Different courses and grade levels require students to do community service hours. Museums can provide a variety of opportunities for students to complete these hours including helping with public programs, working with the public, and assisting with behind-the-scenes work. Although these projects typically start when teachers or parents approach the museum to see what opportunities are available, museums can be proactive in seeking-out these volunteers.

Working with teachers, museums might find opportunities for whole classes to be involved in community service projects at the museum. This could include having a class develop an activity or regularly help present school programs.

Work Experience



As with interns, discussed in [Module Six](#), high school work experience is an opportunity for both museum and student to benefit, often during school hours. Work experience students can complete a project for the museum while gaining practical work skills and a work reference. Museums can explore these opportunities with their local high school 02 (Options and Opportunities), co-op or IB (International Baccalaureate) programs



The grounds of Uniacke Estate Museum Park are iconic in Nova Scotia. After the hard 2015 winter a class of grade nine students from the local school came to museum as a class community service project to help restore the grounds and help get the site ready for the 2015 season.



Students may first come to the museum looking for work experience, community service hour, or mentorship opportunities, but if they have a positive experience, they may stay on as permanent volunteers. This dedicated volunteer at the Museum of Natural History began as a co-op high school placement.

Alternatives In the Museum: Mentoring



Mentoring

As students prepare for their career they may wish to interview, job shadow or start a long-term mentorship with a museum professional. Museums should make sure local schools and guidance councilors are aware the museum is able to help students explore careers in a variety of different museum areas including [interpretation](#), [collections](#), visitor services (for example, tourism and retail), public relations, design, fabrication, and management. Additionally, museums can offer mentoring on the topics presented at their site, such as history, [heritage skills](#), or specific sciences.

For sites that have female scientists or interpreters with a scientific background, formal or informal mentoring of young women and girls may help to break down barriers to science and provide valuable work experience. Providing students with advice and guidance regarding career choices can have a lifelong impact. Many programs already exist in Nova Scotia, like Techsploration and WISE, but simple one-on-one engagement with youth that reach out can be very effective and rewarding.



Museums offer many opportunities to see people working in non-traditional roles, for example women in science. Here a female naturalist at the Museum of Natural History mentors two female students in entomology using the museum's beehive. The students learn not only about bees, but also interact with a successful female scientist.



The Black Loyalist Heritage Center, in partnership with Hillcrest Academy, provides weekly djembe sessions in the school to a group of students in grades 4, 5, and 6. A teacher from the school helps students learn the rhythms and techniques of the djembe. The Black Loyalist Heritage Center supports the group with an end of year celebration. The Hillcrest Academy Djembe drummers were invited to perform on stage during the Grand Opening of the Black Loyalists Heritage Center in June 2015.

Although teachers, parents or students will approach museums directly to establish mentoring relationships there are also opportunities to provide special events for students to job shadow museum staff. Consider offering the museum as a host venue on days such as “Take Our Kids to Work” day for students who are unable to go to work with their parent.

Another type of formal mentorship is through special classes. Working with small groups of students over an extended period of time, museums can mentor as they develop specific skills. This type of mentorship program has been particularly successful in Nova Scotia when it comes to museums mentoring students in [intangible heritage](#), such as language and music.



Alternatives In the Museum: Museum as Venue and Partner

As part of youth engagement, it is important for museums to be seen to be giving back to the youth in their community. Many times this can be done as part of regular programming however there are many examples in Nova Scotia of museums going above and beyond their call of duty in the service of schools and youth in their community.

Museum as Venue

Schools are often looking for places beyond their school to host events. Consider some of the following ways a museum could invite a school to use the site, at little-to-no-cost:



- Offer exhibit space to display projects.
- Host special events such as award nights.
- Encourage classes to use the nature trails, even during the off-season if it is safe to do so.
- Invite clubs or groups to host meetings at the museum.
- Offer the museum grounds for class picnics.
- Invite graduating classes and proms to take photos on the grounds.



The Highland Village Museum presented an exhibit in their church of posters created by students. Each poster represented an aspect of Nova Scotia Gaelic.

Providing Prizes and Sponsorship



Invite schools to approach the museum when they are looking for community prizes and sponsorship. Museums may not be able to provide financial support however there are many ways museums can support schools, including:

- Providing prizes for school fundraisers: free passes to the museum or items from the gift shop.
- Offering unique opportunities for silent auctions: behind-the-scenes [tours](#) or curator for a day.
- Donating prizes for students: free admission to special events.
- Hosting fundraising events: wine and cheese or family days.



Lawrence House Museum staff have supported a bursary at the local high school. It has been awarded annually to a graduating student who excelled in high school history courses. Preference is given to students who plan to pursue studies in history, museum studies, or related discipline.

Earn A Badge

Other than on-site programs, how could your museum support schools? The last seven pages are examples that have been proven successful at NSM sites. How can you make your own success story?

1. Search online for ways museums are inviting schools to use their museum beyond the traditional school program. Find at least five examples.
2. Based on examples in the last six pages and the ones you found online, write a SMART Goal for a new and alternative way your museum could support schools using existing on-site resources.



What is a SMART Goal? Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-Bound.


Alternatives In the School: In-School Programs

For various reasons some schools are unable to bring their classes to the museum. In order for museums to remain accessible to everyone, one option is to create in-class programming. Providing this option may lead to future on-site visits.

In-class programming can be thought of as a mini pop-up museum. Interpreters arrive at the school with programs that are either modified from the existing school programs or programs created specifically to be delivered in a classroom. Either way, teachers must still justify in-school programs, just like field trips, by demonstrating they relate to specific curriculum outcomes (SCOs). In-school programs must therefore still address the five principles of successful school programs ([Module Two](#)) and should follow a similar program development process as outlined in [Module Four](#).

In-School Programs also provide an opportunity for a more personal experience for the students. Teachers may wish to have less of a structured program and more of an opportunity for their class to interact with “an expert.” This can be particularly useful when students are working on research projects. Students can prepare questions which the expert can help them answer and/or teach them research skills.




 Nova Scotia Archives has actively sought out schools to which they can offer primary source document activities. Discussion with the teacher prior to the visit allows them to select a range of documents related directly to the community in which the school is located. They try to use many different types of documents including textual records, photographs, maps, film and audio clips and newspapers. Activities are currently aimed at Grade 5 social studies specific curriculum outcomes (SCOs) but they are able to adapt to address outcomes from other grades as well.



MODULE SEVEN



Mount Saint Vincent University  pre-service teachers and the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic form an annual partnership in which the museum visits schools during the pre-service teacher's placements. Together they a teaching with objects program. The museum uses objects like this sailor's valentine to help students learn about the lives of sailors.

The Highland Village's in-class program is titled Sgadan's Buntàta. This program provides opportunities for students to see, and interact with craft demonstrations. The program relates to many aspects of Nova Scotia curriculum and interpreters provide an educational encounter with the tangible and intangible past. 





Alternatives In the School: Heritage Fairs and Science Fairs

Some schools participate in heritage fairs and science fairs. The projects created by students in upper elementary, middle and high school can be compared to mini-museum exhibits. This makes museums an ideal partner. Participation in these fairs varies across the province and can include school, school board, provincial and national opportunities.

Heritage Fairs

In Nova Scotia, heritage fairs are for students in grades four to nine. Projects explore local and Canadian cultural heritage and allow students to showcase their research at a public event.

Learn about Heritage Fairs in Nova Scotia:

www.facebook.com/novascotiaheritagefairs

Science Fairs

In Nova Scotia, science fairs are normally hosted in grades seven to twelve. Projects can relate to any branch of science (for example, geology, biology, physics or chemistry) and aim to solve a scientific question through experiment, research, and finally presentation of results.

Learn about Science Fairs in Nova Scotia:

www.sciencefairinfo.ns.ca

How Museums Can Help

Heritage and science fairs are normally run by teachers and volunteers (parents and community members). There are many opportunities for museums to get involved.



- Offer to host a student workshop on how to do research or exhibits. For heritage fair this can include how to research with [primary sources](#). For science fair this can include how to follow the scientific method.
- Invite students to use any on-site resources, including archives or libraries for research projects.
- Volunteer to judge at local and regional heritage and science fairs.
- Host student projects, either for judging and/or display winners or projects relevant to the museum projects.
- Provide prizes, such as passes to the museum or special experiences.
- Offer a workshop for students to participate in on the day of the fair while other students are being judged.



(Above) Nova Scotia Archives does a workshop on how to use primary sources as part of heritage fair research.

(Left) At the 2014 & 2015 Provincial Heritage Fair, museums and archives assisted by helping students with projects, acting as judges, sharing experience, and supplying prizes.



Alternatives In the School: Museum Kits and Loans



When museums are unable to visit schools and schools are unable to visit museums, loaning a “museum kit” can act as an alternative experience. Kit programs are popular with teachers as it allows them to supplement their classroom experience with [tangible objects](#) and resources from a reliable source.

What’s in a Museum Kit?



In this digital age, teachers are excited about the opportunity to present “real things” for their students to interact with. Museums are able to create kits with museum quality reproductions, props, and/or [working collection artifacts](#) as well as museum approved resources such as maps, books, posters and images. Additionally, museums can provide lesson plans and suggested activities for how the teacher can use the kit in the classroom.

Logistics of Loaning Museum Kits

Kit programs might seem like a simple way to make the museum accessible when resources for in-person visits are limited. Museums kits however are still resource heavy programs. Museums should have a plan and budget to sustain a museum kit program before starting to develop kits. This includes ensuring there are staff available to arrange booking of the kits, plans to have kits shipped to and returned from teachers, checking kits back-in after use, and resources to replace and repair kit items that unavoidably will become lost or damaged.

Working with Partners



Due to the logistics of running a museum kit program, many museums have moved away from managing such programs on their own. Working with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development some museums, including the Africville Museum and Parks Canada, have had success creating kits to be placed in the schools. Museums provide the content expertise and objects, such as reproductions or props, and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development provides the lessons plans, curriculum links and training to teachers on using the kit. When working with the Department of Education, kits must be produced in high enough numbers so that one can be given to every school in Nova Scotia. Museums may wish to explore similar partnerships with their local school board. Kits placed in schools allows for increased access to the museum’s materials without a regular strain on museum resources. They do however require a large, one-time commitment of resources. Partnering organizations may be able to help with resources.



The Nova Scotia Museum, and later Museum of Natural History, ran a provincial museum kit program from 1950 to 2010. The popular program was ended as it was no longer sustainable. Resources from the kits were distributed to every NSM site. Some sites have chosen to use these resources as part of their on-site programs while others, like the Museum of Industry, continue to offer the resources as loans to local teachers.





Alternatives Online: Online Lessons (Including Pre– and Post– Visit Activities)

Using a [website](#) or other online tools, museums can provide teachers with pre-and post-visit activities that enhance a museum school program. These are activities that the teacher can do with their class to build on the experience students will have or have had at a museum. Attending a museum school program is a major investment for teachers – both financially and in terms of the limited time they have to teach each subject. The more benefit students receive from a program, the more the investment is of value to teachers. That being said, teachers have many curriculum outcomes to address and pre-and post-visit activities often fall to the wayside as there is not always time to incorporate them into their classroom lesson plans.

Additionally, museum interpreters often do not fully know what makes for a good classroom activity. Just as developing museum school programs requires different skills from designing classroom activities, pre-and post-visit activities require different skills than those used for developing an interpretive program at a museum. One way museums can increase the usability of their pre- and post- visit activities is to develop them in partnership with a teacher. This helps to create resources that are relevant and reflective of classroom logistics. In addition to accessing current teachers, museums may wish to work with recently retired or pre-service teachers (B.Ed. students), as they often have more time to work in partnership with a museum.

Tips for Pre- and Post-Visit Activities:



- **Keep the activities short**, 15-30 minutes maximum, so that teachers can easily fit them into their day.
- **Build on the knowledge and skills the students develop during the program.** Suggestions include providing vocabulary, reading a story, or spending time interacting with a virtual exhibit or museum's social media feed.
- **Don't make "busy work."** Although many students find them fun, activities such as word searches, crosswords or colouring pages have limited educational value.
- Provide instructions for an **activity that used to be part of a museum school program, but may be better accomplished in a classroom setting.** This could include crafts or watching movies.
- Provide a **simple activity that students could do on the bus ride to or from the museum**, such as visual bingo or scavenger hunt. This is especially useful when students have a long bus ride.
- **Don't assume teachers will do the pre- and post- visit activity.**



A good post-visit activity encourages students to take the information they learned during a program and apply it to their lives. Students will look at farms that they see as they drive along Nova Scotia's roads differently after a visit to Ross Farm Museum.

Alternatives Online: Virtual Exhibits



The traditional way of measuring museum attendance was to count the number of admissions. However, internet access lends an entirely new avenue for museum attendance. By interpreting a collection of [specimens](#)/artifacts and making it available online, a whole new audience can be reached. This “virtual attendance” creates an engagement opportunity for those unable to visit the museum site and extends its reach. These virtual exhibits are an excellent way of showcasing the resources available to visiting classes and could be used to create opportunities for pre- and post- visit activities.

Virtual exhibits can replace or supplement outreach methods traditionally used by museums, including in-school programs and museum kits. Online experiences are often an effective use of resources as they are able to be used by more schools, including those a great distance from the museum, and can be more sustainable to maintain with a museum’s existing resources.



Virtual exhibits can be supplemented with lesson plans, activities, links to curriculum and opportunities for students to learn more through a “For Teachers” section.



Partnering with other museums or education organizations is an excellent way to create a vibrant virtual exhibit. Partnering organizations can bring resources that museums might not easily have access to, including diverse perspectives, access to different mediums such as video, and interactive exhibit elements.



Three virtual exhibits created by or in partnership with Nova Scotia Museum sites. Each of these exhibits can be used in schools to gain access to museums, collections or stories that teachers and students might otherwise not be able to reach.

(Top Left) “Cape Breton Ceilidh” a Virtual Museum of Canada exhibit created by the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society.

(Right Top) “Nova Scotia Made, Used, Found” a virtual exhibit of the Nova Scotia Museum Collection created by the NSM.

(Right Bottom) “Black Halifax: Stories from Here” a webpage in which the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic was one of many partners.





Alternatives Online: Social Media

A great way to start and build relationships with teachers and schools is social media, especially as it is a place where many teachers are already. The benefit of maintaining a social media presence goes beyond advertising school programs. If a consistent and engaging strategy is used, a museum can reach a wide audience thereby opening up dialogues between learners and museum experts while providing interpretation.

Remember that social media is an official means of communication. Users are speaking for their site and therefore should avoid any personal statements or beliefs as well as statements that go against site mission or mandate. Nova Scotia Museum sites should follow the Province of Nova Scotia's Social Media Policy (www.novascotia.ca/treasuryboard/manuals/PDF/300/30609-02.pdf).

Using Social Media to Raise Awareness about What a Museum Can Offer Schools

By using popular social media platforms, a site can quickly get information into the right hands. Most social media tools have a way to target specific audiences, making it even more likely that it will be discovered by teachers. Facebook has open groups for teacher's unions, Twitter posts with strategic use of hashtags can provide updates to interested parties, and an Instagram account can be a great way of sharing images and videos of programs in action.

To widen following and provide a better chance of teachers coming across program information, museums need to provide a consistent social media presence that extends beyond advertising school programs. Dedicate some time each day to posting interesting information in order to increase following. Keep it light and positive and do not engage users who act inappropriately or overtly combative. ("Don't feed the trolls!")

Examples of Daily Social Media Posts:

- **"Behind the Scenes"** information on museum operations.
- **Interesting objects** from the collection.
- **Current events and research** related to the museum or its main subject matter (history, archaeology, biodiversity, etc.)
- **Upcoming museum or community events.**
- **Photos or videos of successful past events.**
- **Interaction with other social media users.** Answer questions promptly, engage in discussions, and interact in a professional but conversational tone (be personable, rather than official).
- **Links to your school programs webpage.** This outline should follow the template in [Appendix E](#), including a brief summary of the subject, curriculum outcomes, and activities.

Need an idea for a daily social media post? You can never go wrong with a picture of a museum cat. Check out this Instagram post from Ross Farm



Alternatives Online: Continued... Social Media



The Nova Scotia Museum is on a variety of social media platforms. Check them out:



Facebook: www.facebook.com/novascotiamuseum



Twitter: twitter.com/ns_museum



YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/NovaScotiaMuseum



Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/novascotiamuseum/

Social Media within the Nova Scotia Museum

Nova Scotia Museum sites do not need to do social media alone. All sites, especially seasonal sites, should consider submitting content to be used on the Nova Scotia Museum social media channels. This gives museums access to much larger audiences than they can easily build on their own.

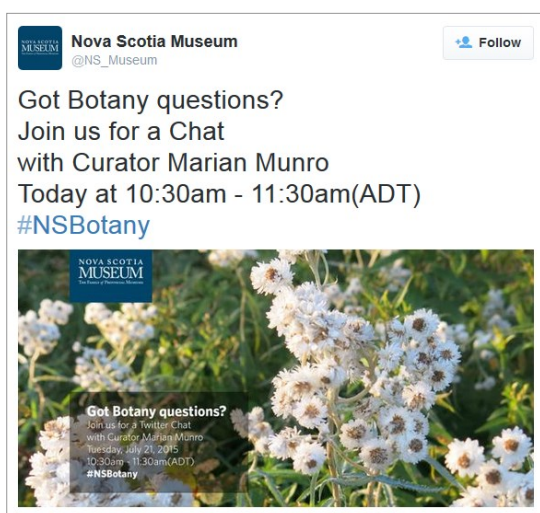
Using Social Media to Reach Schools That Can't Visit

The advantage of social media extends beyond its ability to attract potential class visits. It can also be a powerful tool to engage those schools who are too far away for a field trip. Although a full, hands-on program can't be delivered in the same way as a physical visit to the museum, there are strategies to offer these groups a program remotely. This kind of engagement can be approached in a number of ways. Here are just a few ideas:

- Create activities based on the museum's virtual exhibits.
- Have an interpreter or curator use Skype or Google Hangouts to video conference with the class for a demonstration or discussion.
- Use Twitter to create an 'Ask an Expert' day and respond to questions from students. This is a great way to engage multiple classes and schools at once.
- Create an Instagram account to act as an online exhibit that a class can build themselves from objects that students collect, photograph and interpret. Answer questions about museum collections and provide advice about how to write labels. Have classes share their "online exhibits" with each other.
- Live tweet public and special events so that schools and homeschool groups can follow along from their classroom.
- Create an age appropriate weekly/biweekly blog that has subject matter aligning with curriculum outcomes and the site's [IMP](#) mandate. Encourage classes to brainstorm and share comments and questions about each blog.



@AskACurator Day is in September and #MuseumWeek is in March. These are both international museum events on twitter that museums can participate in, either through their own twitter account or through the @NS_Museum account.



#NSBotany was a series of twitter chats which allowed the public to "ask an expert." Museums can host this type of event, targeting teachers and schools.

Remember when planning to use social media to deliver a program or experience to a school, check with the school to see which social media platforms the school can access. Many schools have firewalls that block specific websites, which can include Facebook and Twitter.



Alternatives In the Community: Professional Development for Teachers

The skills and experiences that museums can offer to students are also the same skills and experiences that teachers are looking for. They are always looking for ways to enhance their in-class experience. Museums can help teachers with this by offering professional development opportunities that “teach the teacher.” This helps to establish relationships with teachers and encourages them bring the museum’s resources to the classroom even if they can’t bring the class to the museum.

Workshops for Pre-Service Teachers

Nova Scotia has several universities that offer Bachelor of Education degrees. Working with the students in these programs, known as pre-service teachers, allows museums to ensure teachers starting their career are familiar with how they can use museum resources. Museums should work with the Bachelor of Education faculties to find ways to offer these workshops.

Professional Development for Current Teachers

Teachers regularly participate in professional development. There are several different opportunities for museums become involved.

- **Provincial Teachers’ Conferences:** Every October teachers in Nova Scotia attend a one-day conference. There are multiple conferences offered across the province that day, each relating to a different subject and organized by a different teacher’s association. Museums have traditionally participated in the AST (Atlantic Science Teachers) and SSTA (Social Studies Teachers Association) conferences however there are also opportunities to participate in conferences on teaching art, physical education, and literacy to name just a few. There are two primary ways museums can participate. Museums may wish to set up a display in the exhibitor’s hall where they can speak with teachers individually during breaks. Having an exhibitor’s display will result in increased awareness and promote the site’s products. Museums may also choose to offer a workshop to teachers during the conference. Workshops allow museums to create more interactive environment in which to build relationships with teachers, rather than just market programs.



The Maritime Museum of the Atlantic has fostered a successful partnership with the Bachelor of Education program at Mount Saint Vincent University. Working with professors, museum staff have conducted a teaching with objects seminar to give the university students some insight into using artifacts. The artifacts range from antique ice skates and snow shoes for oxen to reproductions of items from the shipwreck treasures exhibit.



The exhibitor’s hall at a provincial teachers’ conference is a great way to raise awareness. Although it may not immediately result in program bookings, it does introduce teachers to the different ways museums can support them. Here Ross Farm (above) and Haliburton House (below) participate in the Social Studies Teachers Association’s conference.



Alternatives In the Community: Continued... Professional Development for Teachers



Professional development for teachers can include both curatorial and interpretation staff. Pictured above are two workshops run for the Atlantic Science Teacher's conference. The workshops gave teachers access to both curators (expert on the workshop content) and interpreters (experts on engaging students.)

- **Local In-Service Days:** School boards have local in-service days. Some museums have had success working with principals or school boards to offer workshops to teachers on these days. Although they can be more difficult to arrange than participation in the provincial conference, they do provide a more meaningful opportunity to build relationships with local teachers, especially in smaller communities.



- **Hosting Workshops by Others:** There are many organizations who, like museums, can offer professional development to teachers but don't always have a venue in which to host their workshop. This includes partners from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development or special interest groups, like Project Wet. Museums can partner with these organizations by hosting the workshop.



The IMP suggests that museums work with teachers by:



- "Tie-in with university education programs to promote educators as interpreters – teach the teachers!"
- "Be present at teachers' conferences (for example, perform skill based exhibit and programming talks; market museums for PD days)."
- "Identify curriculum links for all levels of education." (IMP p. 100)

- **Support as Needed:** Just being available to answer teacher's questions, provide resources and discuss projects can have a positive impact. Museums can use social media or email to encourage teachers to contact them directly.

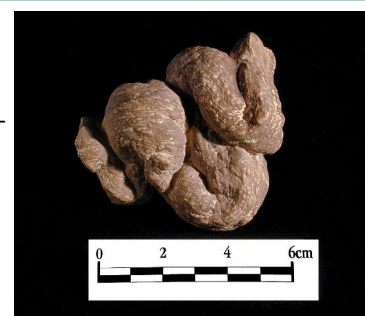


- **Special Events:** Invite teachers to be part of the museum by inviting them to special events, such as exhibit openings and public programs. Also consider offering special events just for teachers such as behind-the-scenes tours or coffee with a curator.

Working with Hospitals

Local children's hospitals, such as the IWK in Halifax, and some pediatric wards in local hospitals have teachers on staff to provide educational programming to short- and long-term patients. These teachers collaborate with the patient's community school and facilitate educational outings in the community as appropriate. Museums may wish to reach out to children's hospitals to provide programming or offer to provide museums as a venue for teachers to lead their own programming.

Museums can use working collections to bring museums to students in hospitals. This can create positive memories during stressful time. Imagine a student's reaction to getting to hold this coprolite (fossilized poop).





Alternatives In the Community: Participation in Special Day Community Events

Community organizations occasionally host special events and invite schools to attend the event. This provides an opportunity for museums to make contact with both the school and their community at the same time.

As there are often multiple groups participating in these events, students will often only have a few minutes to interact with the museum. Sites may choose to bring a component of a school or public program, marketing materials, and/or materials created for the specific event.

Participation in these events gives schools and teachers a taste of what they can expect if they were to visit the museum for a program. It is important that what they experience reflects the interpretation available at the site. Therefore, it is still good to the five key principles of successful school programs, as introduced in [Module Two](#).

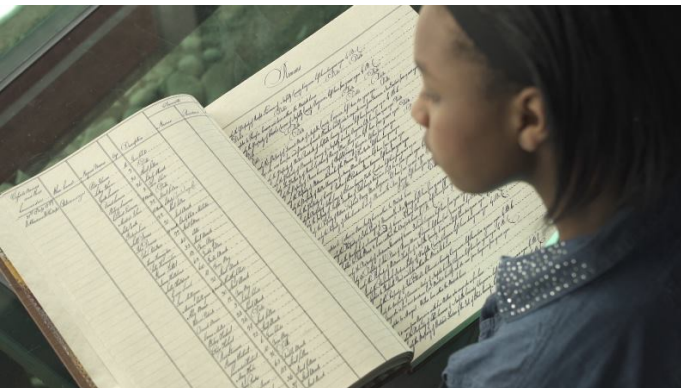
The following pages contain a list of possible special days museums could find opportunities to participate in.



The Maritime Museum of the Atlantic hosts World Oceans Day in June. This free day-long event brings together over 30 organizations, including the Museum of Natural History and Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic, with exhibits and displays. The event annually attracts over a thousand visitors, including school groups.



The Museum of Natural History has participated in events such as Kids in the Forest, Bio Blitz, and Science Literacy Week. These events are organized by community partners like the NS Department of Natural Resources, Saint Mary's University, and Ducks Unlimited. The museum's participation in these one-day events has not only given them opportunities to present components of their school program, it has also created partnerships for on-site program partnerships.



The official opening for the Black Loyalists Heritage Center in 2015 was a true community event. Not only was the community invited to participate on the big day, but the center included the local school by both having a special reading at the school and inviting students to the opening.

Alternatives In the Community: List of Special Days



The following list of possible special days was compiled for the Nova Scotia Library and reviewed by the Archives, Museums and Libraries Education Sub-Committee. It is by no means exhaustive.

January:

- New Year - January 1: New beginnings, Resolutions
- World Braille Day - January 4: www.brailleliteracycanada.ca
- Family Literacy Day - January 27: www.ns.literacy.ca/fld.php

February:

- **African Heritage Month:** ansa.novascotia.ca/African-Heritage-Month
- Random Acts of Kindness Week - 2nd Week of February: www.randomactsofkindness.org
- International Safer Internet Day - February 10: www.saferinternetday.org/web/canada
- World Radio Day - February 13: www.diamundialradio.org
- National Flag of Canada Day - February 15: canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1449158599459
- Pink Shirt Day - February 25: www.erasebullying.ca/resources/resources-pink-shirt.php
- Nova Scotia Heritage Day - 3rd Monday in February: heritageday.novascotia.ca

March:

- **March Break** - Dates Change Annually. Check your local school board.
- International Women's Day - March 8: www.internationalwomensday.com
- International Francophonie Day - March 20: www.francophonie.org/Welcome-to-the-International.html
- International Day for the Elimination of Racism - March 21: www.un.org/en/events/racialdiscriminationday
- World Theatre Day - March 27: www.world-theatre-day.org
- #MuseumWeek on Twitter - Mid-March: www.museumweek2016.org

April:

- **School Library Month:** www.ala.org/aasl/slm
- **Autism Awareness Month:** autismcanada.org
- National Volunteer Week - Mid-April: volunteer.ca
- International Children's Book Day - on or around April 2: www.ibby.org/1494.0.html
- World Health Day - April 7: www.who.int/campaigns/world-health-day/2015/en/
- Earth Day - April 22: earthday.ca
- Canada Book Day/World Book Day - April 23: www.un.org/en/events/bookday
- National Canadian Film Day - April 29: canadianfilmday.ca
- International Dance Day - April 29: www.international-dance-day.org
- Viewfinders Film Festival - Late April: <http://www.atlanticfilm.com/viewfinders>



Although schools may be out, March Break is one of the busiest weeks of the year for many museums. Here students participate in art projects at the Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic. This is a great chance to show students and teachers visiting with their families that museums are a great place to have fun while learning.



Alternatives In the Community: Continued... List of Special Days

May:

- **Asian Heritage Month:** www.cic.gc.ca/english/multiculturalism/asian/index.asp
- **Gaelic Awareness Month:** www.gaelic.ca
- **Speech & Hearing Awareness Month:** www.chs.ca/news/may-speech-and-hearing-awareness-month
- **Halifax Youth Week - May 1-7:** www.halifax.ca/youth
(Both National Youth Week and National Youth Arts Week take place during this time.)
- **National Mental Health Week - May 1st week:** mentalhealthweek.cmha.ca
- **Aboriginal Awareness Week - 4 days that follow Victoria Day:** www.pc.gc.ca/eng/agen/aa/saa-aas.aspx
- **Free Comic Book Day (first Saturday in May):** www.freecomicbookday.com
- **Music Monday - (first Monday of May):** www.musicmonday.ca/aboutus
- **World Press Freedom Day - May 3:** www.unesco.org/new/en/world-press-freedom-day
- **Star Wars Day - May 4:** www.starwars.com/may-the-4th
- **Nova Scotia Walk Day - Second Wednesday in May:** walkaboutns.ca
- **International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia - May 17:** dayagainsthomophobia.org
- **International Museum Day - May 18:** icom.museum/activities/international-museum-day

June:

- **National Aboriginal History Month:** www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100013778/1100100013779
- **Summer Reading Program Kick Off at Nova Scotia Libraries**
- **Nova Scotia Bike Week - Early June:** www.halifax.ca/bikeweek
- **World Environment Day - June 5:** www.unep.org/wed
- **International Archives Day—June 9:** www.internationalarchivesday.org
- **World Oceans Day – June 8:** www.worldoceansday.org
- **World Refugee Day – June 20:** www.un.org/en/events/refugeeday
- **National Aboriginal Day – June 21:** www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100013248/1100100013249
- **Canadian Multiculturalism Day - June 27:** canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1462818531019
- **International Hug a Museum Worker Day—June 29:** hugamuseumworker.org



Participation doesn't always need to be complicated. Here Nova Scotia Museum and Nova Scotia Archives get into the spirit of May the Fourth—Star Wars Day using Photoshop and social media.

Alternatives In the Community: Continued... List of Special Days



July:

- Canada Day – July 1: canadaday.gc.ca/eng/1399898650690
- Halifax Pride Festival - Mid-July: halifaxpride.com
- Canada History Week – July 1-7: canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1455910731459/1455910810005

August:

- International Day of the World's Indigenous People – Aug. 9: www.unesco.org/new/en/indigenous-people-day
- International Youth Day – August 12: www.un.org/en/events/youthday
- National Acadian Day – August 15: acadien.novascotia.ca/en/celebrations

September:

- **Back to School**—Dates Change Annually
- **Library Card Sign-Up Month:** www.ala.org/conferencesevents/celebrationweeks/card
- International Day of Democracy – September 15: www.un.org/en/events/democracyday
- @AskACurator Day on Twitter—September 16: twitter.com/askacurator
- International Day of Peace – September 21: www.un.org/en/events/peaceday
- Halifax Book and Magazine Festival – Mid-September: www.thewordonthestreet.ca/wots/halifax
- Meet Your Farmer Day—Mid-September: www.meetyourfarmer.ca/openfarmday
- Science Literacy Week—Late-September: scienceliteracy.ca

October:

- **Mi'kmaq History Month:** mikmaqhistorymonth.com
- **Women's History Month:** www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/commemoration/whm-mhf/index-en.html
- Earth Science Week: www.earthsciweek.org/about-esw
- Treaty Day - October 1: www.unsi.ns.ca/treaty-day
- World Teachers' Day - October 5: www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/events/prizes-and-celebrations/celebrations/international-days/world-teachersday-2014
- World Mental Health Day – October 10: www.who.int/mental_health/world-mental-health-day/en/
- International Day of the Girl – October 11: www.un.org/en/events/girlchild
- Nocturne Halifax - Mid-October: nocturnehalifax.ca
- World Food Day – October 16: www.worldfooddaycanada.ca
- International Day for the Eradication of Poverty – October 17: www.un.org/en/events/povertyday
- Persons Day – October 18: canadianwomen.org/node/1955
- Nova Scotia Teacher Conference Day (late Friday in October) - www.nstu.ca

Community events like Nocturne engage students and teachers who might not normally visit museums. Here a family examines an exhibit based on lobster tin labels at the Nova Scotia Archives during Nocturne.





Alternatives In the Community: Continued... List of Special Days

November:

- Media Literacy Week – November 2-6, 2015: www.medialiteracyweek.ca
- Veteran's Week – Week of Nov. 11: www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/get-involved/remembrance-day
- Remembrance Day – November 11: www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/get-involved/remembrance-day
- Canadian Museums Day—Mid-November: www.museums.ca/site/cmd
- National Child Day – November 20: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncd-jne/index-eng.php
- International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women – Nov 25: www.un.org/en/events/endviolenceday/
- International Games Day – (third Saturday of November): <http://igd.ala.org>

December:

- World Aids Day – December 1: www.worldaidsday.org
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities – December 3: www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/events/prizes-and-celebrations/celebrations/international-day-of-persons-with-disabilities/
- National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women – December 6: www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/commemoration/vaw-vff/remembrance-commemoration-en.html
- Human Rights Day – December 10: www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsday

Earn A Badge

How else can you use your existing school program in your community?

1. Look at the list of “special days” on the last few pages. Add any special days relevant to your museum’s theme or days important to your community.
2. Identify at least one day on your updated list which matches the themes and outcomes of your school program
3. Identify a community event or venue for your chosen day where school aged students will be present.
4. Write a SMART goal identifying how you could reuse your school program on your decided upon special day.



What is a SMART Goal? Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-Bound.