



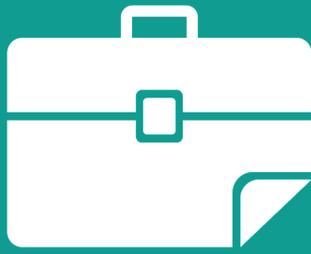
MODULE TWO

Five Key Principles of Successful Museum School Programs



In the First Peoples of Nova Scotia grade 5 school program at the Museum of Natural History students set out on a self-directed adventure to discover how the Mi'kmaq used their environment to meet their needs. This activity exemplifies curriculum-based, student-centered, and object based learning.

TOOLBOX FOR
MUSEUM
SCHOOL
PROGRAMS



MODULE TWO

Five Key Principles of Successful Museum School Programs

This module will explain the five key principles of successful museum school programs, provide examples on how to implement them, and demonstrate why it is important for both program developers and presenters to use these principles.

Audience: Program Developers and Presenters.

At the end of this module, readers will:

- Understand the five key principles of successful museum school programs.
- Know how to apply the five key principles of successful museum school programs.

Glossary:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| • Accessioned | • Intellect |
| • Archival Records | • Interpretation |
| • Artifact | • Interpretive Working Group |
| • Building | • Landscape |
| • Chaperone | • Object |
| • Collection | • Object-Based Learning |
| • Critical Thinking | • Open-Ended Questions |
| • Engagement | • Primary Source |
| • Exhibit | • School Program |
| • Facilitation | • Specific Curriculum Outcomes (SCOs) |
| • Formal Learning | • Specimen |
| • Hands-on, Minds-on | • Student |
| • Heritage Skills | • Student-Centered Learning |
| • ICI (Innovation, Collections & Infrastructure) | • Tangible |
| • IMP (Interpretive Master Plan) | • Website and Online Initiatives |
| • In Situ | • Working Collection |
| • Intangible | |
| • Intangible Heritage Objects | |

Although there are no guaranteed methods to make sure museum [school programs](#) are always successful, the following five principles provide a solid foundation.



Programs Address Specific Curriculum Outcomes.

Put curriculum first. Subject matter and activities are chosen based on the provincial curriculum.



Activities are Object-Based.

Use objects when ever possible. Museum programs are different than classroom experiences through interaction with objects.



“Good Questions” are Asked.

Interpreters ask questions that allow students to discover answers for themselves and think critically about what they learn.



Learning is Student-Centered.

Museums provide students with the tools, context and activities but allow the students to take ownership of their learning.



Museums and Program Partners Work Together.

Museums build relationships with teachers and community groups in order to meet specific needs.

Need a reminder? Watch for these icons throughout the toolbox. There is also a “Five Key Principles of Successful Museum School Programs” pull-out poster in [Appendix B](#). Consider putting it somewhere visible before presenting or developing programs.



Programs Address Specific Curriculum Outcomes

More than ever before, teachers must justify field trips by proving that the experiences relate directly to the curriculum. Therefore, school programs at museums that clearly demonstrate that they align with specific curriculum outcomes have higher attendance.

Assistance with curriculum is available in [Appendix D](#). Additionally, Nova Scotia Museum sites can contact the [ICI](#) Interpretation Team and the Interpretive Working Group's (IWG) Education Sub-Committee. Both are good resources and can access teachers and curriculum consultants.

What is a Curriculum?

What is a Specific Curriculum Outcome?

A curriculum is a set of outcomes for teachers that address out the knowledge, skills, and attitudes, that a [student](#) should obtain within their course of study. [Specific curriculum outcomes \(SCOs\)](#) are approved by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for student learning. The performance indicators attached to outcomes are "I can" statements that students can know and do. These are attached to the 21st century competencies that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development have approved. Museums should choose a few (ideally one to three) outcomes to address during their program.

Curriculum documents can be updated annually. Before developing new programs, museums should ensure they are working with the most up-to-date version of curriculum. If unsure, museums should check with the Interpretive Working Group's Education Sub-Committee or [Appendix D](#).

The IMP "encourages stronger connections to the provincial school curriculum, attracting more school groups and building a stronger constituency for the NSM in the future." (IMP p. 35)



Watch for this icon in the toolbox as a reminder to address curriculum outcomes.



Every subject in school has its own curriculum document with specific curriculum outcomes (SCOs). Many museums focus on science and social studies, but there are also ways to incorporate other subjects such as math, languages, art, music, physical education and health. Some activities, like this sleigh ride at Ross Farm Museum, can even address multiple subjects at the same time. Integration of outcomes is helpful for teachers to provide a positive experience for students.

Continued... Address Specific Curriculum Outcomes

How to Read Curriculum Documents

The curriculum documents are organized by grade and subject, and go from general to specific curriculum outcomes (SCOs). When choosing a curriculum outcome to meet, focus on a specific curriculum outcome (SCO) rather than general learning outcome (GCO). Specific outcomes are measurable and address the learning and teaching that teachers are required to follow.

Remember, when recording specific curriculum outcomes (SCOs) to copy them exactly, word for word, from the curriculum documents, including any accompanying numbers. See [Module Four, Step One](#) for more information on working with curriculum documents.

How to Choose Specific Curriculum Outcomes to address in a Program

There are several aspects to consider when choosing curriculum outcomes to address:

- Can this outcome be fully addressed through an activity at the museum?
- Is this an outcome teachers will want help addressing?
- Is this outcome one that is better addressed at a museum or in the classroom?
- Does it relate to the [IMP](#)?

For help selecting curriculum outcomes, see [Appendix D](#) for a chart that links curriculum outcomes to items in the IMP content distribution matrix.

Rather than addressing many outcomes poorly, a program should address one or two specific curriculum outcomes well.

Learning Outcomes Framework

January 7, 2014

Grades Primary–6

Grade 5 Specific Curriculum Outcomes	Students will be expected to:
Unit One: Introduction	5.1.1 Develop an understanding of how we learn about the past
Unit Two: Environment	5.2.1 Explain how environment influenced the development of an ancient society
Unit Three: Social Structure	5.3.1 Explain the importance of social structure in a society from the middle ages
Unit Four: Decision-Making	5.4.1 Demonstrate an understanding of the diverse societies of First Nations and Inuit, in what later became Canada
	5.4.2 Examine decision-making practices in First Nations and Inuit societies in what later became Atlantic Canada
Unit Five: Interactions	5.5.1 Examine interactions between British and French and First Nations and Inuit in what later became Atlantic Canada
Unit 6: My Society	5.6.1 Illustrate the similarities and differences of past societies and your society

Curriculum documents can be found online (sapps.ednet.ns.ca/cart). Be careful to use the most current version, which is often released to teachers before being made publically available online. A full list of outcomes for every subject and grade can be found in the “Learning Outcomes Framework” documents. Museums that want to learn more about a specific outcome can refer to the Curriculum Guides for each subject, which provide information such as identifying skills, elaborating on the outcome, performance indicators, resources for teachers, and sample assessment strategies (activities).



Continued... Address Specific Curriculum Outcomes

Earn A Badge

Identify the curriculum outcomes that relate to your museum.

1. Look at the chart in [Appendix D](#) that shows links between the IMP and Curriculum Outcomes. Find the ones that relate to your site.
2. Read each curriculum outcome carefully, considering what it means, what grade/age appropriate skill and/or knowledge it is trying to develop, and how this relates to your museum.
3. Brainstorm what museum objects could be used to support each outcome. It might be helpful to first read the "[Activities are Object-Based](#)" principle to better understand what an object is.



21st Century Skills & Competencies

Education in Nova Scotia is part of an international movement which advocates teaching 21st century skills. These will be the skills essential to thrive in the 21st century. This shifts the focus from what students know to what students can do with what they know.

Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education 2015 "The 3 Rs: Renew, Refocus and Rebuild" is in the process of integrating these skills into the curriculum. This is reflected in the curriculum released in 2015 for primary to grade three and will be reflected in the refocused curriculum for grades four to eight to be released in 2016 and grades nine to twelve in 2017. The competencies used in the NS curriculum are:

- Citizenship
- Personal-Career Development
- Communication
- Creativity and Innovation
- Critical Thinking
- Technological Fluency

A description of these competencies can be found in [Appendix D](#).

21st century skills is not a movement limited to [formal education](#). In 2009 the Institute of Museum and Library Services began the Museums, Libraries, and 21st Century Skills project. This project aims to combine the well-positioned strengths of libraries and museums to help students build these skills.

[Appendix F](#) has additional resources about 21st Century Skills from C21 Canada and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Example of identifying and addressing a curriculum outcome



Curriculum outcome from Grade 2 Social Studies

"Students will demonstrate an understanding of sustainable development and its importance to communities (local)." (Outcome 4)

Activity

Working in small groups, students are given a modern item that they could purchase at a store. They look around the museum to find how the same need would have been met historically. They compare how they could use methods inspired by what they see in the museum to more sustainably meet the need that they are currently meeting by going to the store.



Although students might not wash their clothes by hand, like the Myers family at Fisherman's Life Museum did, they could hang their clothing on the line to dry. This small decision can lead to more sustainable communities, requiring less electricity.

Activities are Object-Based

The core of all museum school programs should be objects. Throughout this toolbox the word [object](#) is intentionally used to be inclusive of all “real things” that are part of a museum experience, both the [tangible](#) and [intangible](#). Tangible objects include [accessioned collection](#) items ([artifacts](#), [archival records](#), [specimens](#), and [working collection](#)) as well as props, reproductions, [landscapes](#), and [buildings](#). [Intangible heritage objects](#) (what museums often call intangible heritage) also make up a huge part of what museums offer. Intangible heritage objects are often presented through the interpreter and includes language, traditions, stories, music, dance, smells, and [heritage skills](#). Objects can also include virtual objects, such as photographs, video or sound from [websites and online initiatives](#) (online exhibits, social media accounts or digital files).

What is Object-Based Learning?

Interacting with the “real thing” is an experience unique to a museum setting. In [object-based learning](#), activities direct students towards the objects. By closely examining objects, students discover evidence and reveal facts that help them better understand the topic.

Students are encouraged to observe, analyze, and interpret objects. Students should be provided with opportunities to ask questions about objects. The answers will be found through careful examination of the artifact and will lead them to more questions. This encourages them to think more deeply about the object and what it represents. This learning strategy engages students more than asking them to listen, read or accept information given to them.

The IMP states that in order to be relevant to visitors experiences we should “use real things to put history in context.” (IMP p. 85)



Watch for this icon in the toolbox as a reminder of object-based learning.



For many years the owner of these shoes was an “Unknown Child” who died on the Titanic. The owner has since been identified as 19-month-old Sidney Leslie Goodwin from England. What do these shoes tell us about Sidney? (MMA, M2005,4.1a,b)



Examples of “Objects” that Could be Used in Programming



- **Artifacts and Specimens from your Museum Collection:** Working with collections and conservation staff, artifacts and specimens can often be presented without risking damage to the collection. This could include examining objects [in situ](#) or in an exhibit case, or moving an artifact to a prepared temporary viewing location.
- **Artifacts from the Working Collection:** Some artifacts have been accessioned as working collection and thus, have different care and handling needs. These often allow for more opportunities for students to touch.
- **Props:** New and antique items can form a props collection. These are often store bought or donated and are considered replaceable as they are not accessioned.
- **Reproductions:** New objects can be made to look like the original artifacts. Museum quality reproductions can be purchased or fabricated.
- **Archival Records:** Working in partnership with archives will allow for items such as original documents, images, and audio-visual recordings to be used as objects in programs. Additionally, archival records, are more digitized and/or reproduced.
- **Intangible Heritage Objects:** Museums are great places to experience culture. Interpreters can present intangible items including songs, music, stories, language, expressions, first-hand accounts, smells, crafts, recipes, etc. Intangible heritage objects can be represented by tangible objects like archival records.
- **Whole Buildings or Architectural Features (Built Heritage):** The building and its features are also artifacts. Incorporate the architecture, both inside and outside.
- **Landscapes:** The grounds of a museum and views from windows are often just as significant as the building and artifacts. These can be enhanced with archival images.
- **Digital Objects:** Using on-site technology or BYOD (Bring Your Own Device), websites and online initiatives from museums, archives, libraries and cultural organizations can supplement what is available on-site.



All museums have different objects they can use in programs. These can include artifacts placed in exhibit cases, as seen here at McCulloch House (top), props and reproductions such as the costumes at Ross Thomson House and Store Museum (middle), or whole buildings and landscapes like at Lawrence House Museum (bottom).

Continued... Activities are Object-Based



What do these objects tell you? Would you guess from these Georgian objects from North Hills Museum that the outside of the building looks like a typical farmhouse? Its owner established one of Nova Scotia's earliest restoration societies in the 1960s and through these objects, students can discover how Nova Scotians have helped preserve the past.



In object-based learning, students are encouraged to closely examine an object and ask critical questions to fully reveal the object's story.

Why use Object-Based Learning?

Objects provide hands-on, engaging, and meaningful experiences, as well as relevant tools for interpreters. Successful museum school programs provide experiences that teachers cannot replicate in a classroom. Object-based learning, with the "real things" found in museums, is what makes a trip to a museum valuable to teachers. Objects make what students learn in the classroom "real."

Objects can speak to people regardless of language, [intellect](#), and age. Because objects can be understood without reading, young students can understand just as well as older ones. This also makes object-based learning accessible to class groups which often contain students with a variety of learning needs. All students can be equal, as it is not the prior knowledge but rather [critical thinking](#) that is important.

Object-based learning also makes programming easier for museums. First, it doesn't require new resources as museums are already object-rich environments and second, museums do not need a special space to deliver this style of program as it is most successful when delivered in situ. Program developers should work closely with conservation and collections staff to make object-based learning successful for students while ensuring the needs of the objects are met.

Example of Object-Based Learning in Museum Work

Curators, researchers and conservators as well as many other museum professionals regularly use object based learning, though they might call it careful observation, research or study. Invite members of curatorial, collections and preparation teams to share how they use the skills of observation and inference when they are researching an artifact.

Nova Scotia Museum Senior Conservator and Communication Designer use object-based learning to prepare the historic Starr Trophy for display at the Windsor Hockey Heritage Society and Museum.





Continued... Activities are Object-Based

How does it work?

Start by looking carefully at an object. Objects are a [primary source](#) of information. Cultural history (social studies) uses objects to shed light on who people were, and what kind of lives they may have led. Objects can reveal the lives of ordinary people who did not leave a written record of their experiences, including minority groups. Natural history (science) uses objects to immerse students in a natural setting that they otherwise might not be able to experience. Objects can reveal information about the needs and characteristics of living things, the biodiversity of an area, or even complex concepts like climate change.

Objects allow students to play the role of the historian, naturalist, archaeologist or explorer. Students discover facts and evidence through observation and use these to form their understanding. When asked to back up their opinions, they will have their own evidenced reasoning behind it. As students refine their observation and inquiry skills, they are able to direct their own learning, generate their own questions, and determine for themselves appropriate sources for further research.

Interpreters can start the process by offering an object and starting the discussion. Then, rather than tell the students facts, interpreters act as a guide throughout the process. The key to this approach is to take time for observation, inquiry and inference.



This buckle was discovered in an archeological dig at Birchtown. When it was new and complete it would have been very striking, especially in Birchtown where it would have been an exceptional possession. If it could talk, what stories might it tell about Nova Scotia's Black Loyalists?

Equipment for Object-Based Learning



While no specific equipment is needed, a few items can add to the fun.

- Magnifying glass or binoculars to encourage close investigation.
- White gloves for handling objects.
- Pencil and notebook for note taking.

Earn A Badge

Become an expert on an object using object-based learning methods.

1. Choose an object you would like to know more about. Spend at least two full minutes observing it. Look at it from multiple angles. Use a magnifying glass to examine details. If possible, touch your object. Smell your object. Examine it in as much details as possible.
2. Use words to discover your object. Write at least eight descriptive words for your object.
3. Use math to discover your object. Measure it—height, width, length. Weigh it if possible.
4. Use creativity to discover your object. Cover it up. How much can you draw from memory?
5. Use curiosity to discover your object. List at least four sources you could use to learn more about it.
6. Use critical thinking to discover your object. Write a short story about it. How was it made? Where did it live? Who used it? What did its world look like? How has its life changed?



“Good Questions” are Asked

Questions are a great way to start discussions with students and to encourage participation. When used successfully, questions allow students to develop skills, think critically and take ownership of their learning. Asking questions, rather than telling facts, is one of the key skills used in [facilitating](#) programs.

What are “Good Questions”?

“Good questions” are questions that are [open-ended](#), relevant, and allow for students to answer based on the information provided to them. Often the questions do not have a right or wrong answer but rather are more about talking through problems and thinking critically.

“Good questions” also progress with the program. Questions at the start of a program will encourage participation, observation and inquiry. As information is presented in the program the questions can become more in-depth, building on what the students have discovered during the program. By the end of a program, the questions the students are asked should examine all of the information the program has presented, formulating ideas about the meaning of the information, and connecting their observations to larger questions such as ‘why?’ and ‘so what?’.

“Good questions” can also be used to guide student inquiry. Rather than simply providing a student with an answer, questioning can be used to help them discover the answer on their own. Questions can be used to direct student to objects, and encourage them to infer, or hypothesize, from what they have observed. Often students learn more if they discover their own answers in their own words. Often an easy “good question” to start with is “what do you notice?”.

Try not to answer a question a student could answer—they will learn more by saying it in their own words.



Watch for this icon in the toolbox as a reminder of asking “good questions.”



Interpreters are used to having “good answers” and are eager to share information with visitors, as seen here at Perkins House. School programs however are different than guided tours and interpreters must be ready to change how they both ask and answer questions.



Continued... “Good Questions” Are Asked

How to Ask “Good” Questions

There are several different kinds of questions. Effective interpreters should attempt to use a variety of each type during programs.

Memory Questions: These are knowledge based and only have one correct answer. Interpreters should limit their use of these questions and only ask them if they are confident students know the answer. These questions are dangerous as students can become discouraged if too many difficult ones are asked, and bored if many are too simple.

Example: In what year did the Halifax Explosion happen?

Convergent Questions: These questions ask students to put facts together to get the correct answer. They can be used to make comparisons or describe relationships.

Example: How are the polar bear and black bear alike?

Divergent Questions: These questions can have many answers. The students can use what knowledge they have to form an opinion and be original with their answer.

Example: How might this farm be different if we didn't have horses?

Evaluative Questions: These questions ask the students to form an opinion and make a judgment based on their knowledge.

Example: How do you think Nova Scotia would be different if the deportation of the Acadians hadn't happened?

From whom did you learn Gaelic? Did you teach your children Gaelic?

Do you think Gaelic will still be spoken in Nova Scotia 100 years from now?

How do you say “please pass me a cookie?” in Gaelic?

How is the Gaelic spoken in Scotland different than the Gaelic spoken in Cape Breton?

Effective interpreters includes a variety of question types. A fictional example of this type of “buffet of questions” is presented here, using an image from a Gaelic tea hosted by the Highland Village. Can you identify the memory, convergent, divergent and evaluative questions?

Continued... “Good Questions” are Asked

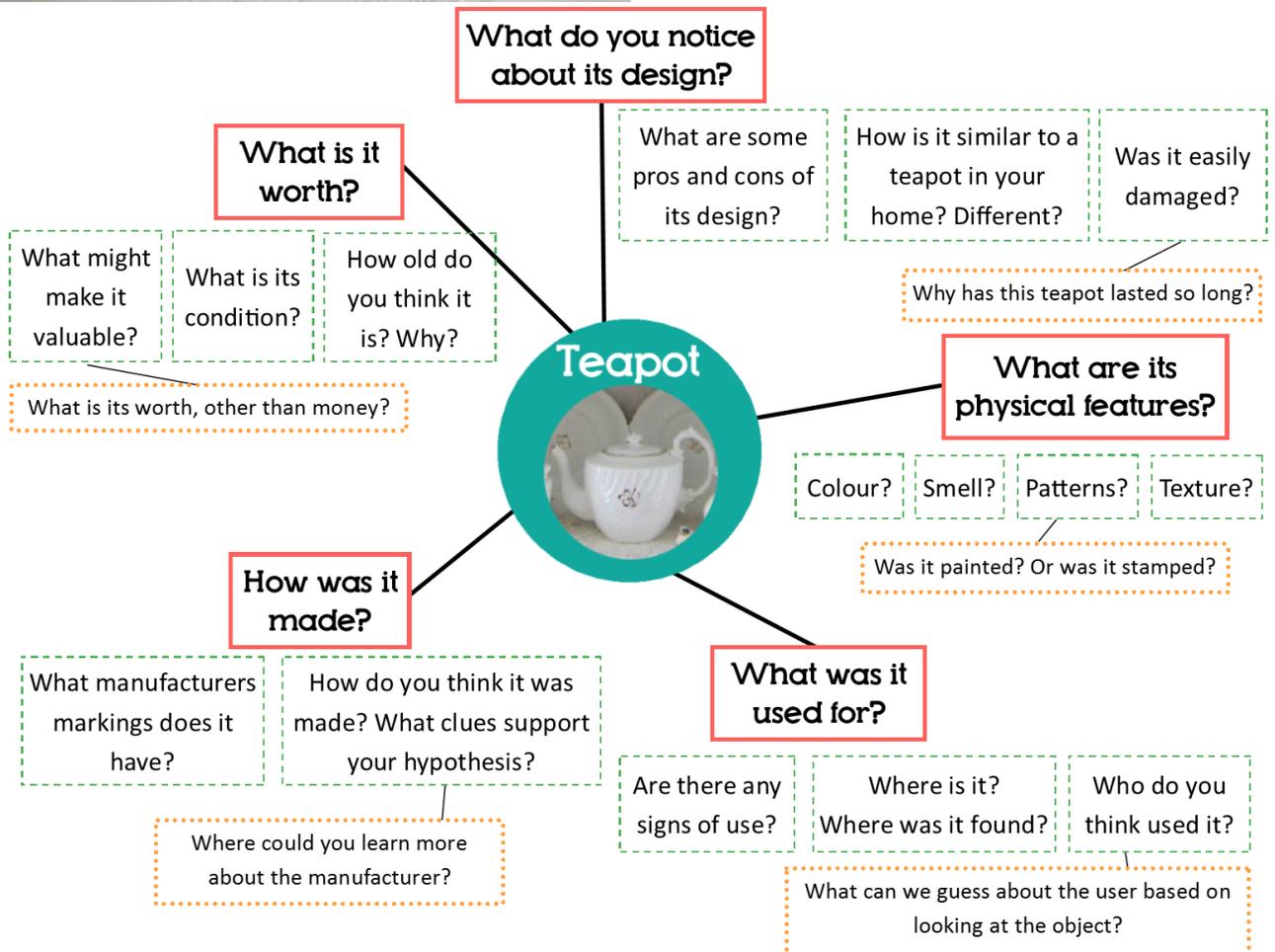
Earn A Badge

Assemble a list of questions you can ask about an object to engage a student in its story. Choose one of the following two methods to create your questions:

1. Choose an object from your collection. Create a web of questions, as seen in the example below, that you could ask students about the object to help them discover its story. When finished, reflect on what you have learned about object-based learning.
2. Alternatively, look at and try the “How to Read a Shoe” from the Bata Shoe Museum activity in [Appendix F](#). This activity is part of “Learning with Objects: Artifact Exploration Guide” by the Department of Education. Create a similar list of questions for an object in your collection. Reflect on how your list of questions will help you facilitate object-based learning.



What could these Sunday best teacups from Fisherman’s Life Museum tell you? This think map demonstrates how students might question an object.





Learning is Student-Centered

Student-centered learning shifts the focus of activity from the interpreter to the students. The interpreter isn't there as "teacher" or "fact teller" and the students aren't there as "learners" or "fact receivers." In student-centered learning is facilitated by the interpreter and the students are active participants who are discovering the information. Museums are there to give students the tools and context and then allow students to explore it. This often results in students speaking more than the interpreter. Activities are designed not to only be hands-on, but more importantly, minds-on. Students are not just touching or doing, they are also thinking. This results in students being engaged, remembering more of what they learned, thinking critically, and often, even having fun.

Student-centered learning incorporates the principles of successful school programs already mentioned in this module, namely, programs address specific curriculum outcomes (SCOs), activities are object-based, and "good questions" are asked.



Watch for this icon in the toolbox as a reminder of student-centered learning.

Example of Student-Centered Learning at a Museum

During the grade one "Characteristics of Living Things" program at the Museum of Natural History, students are introduced to several live animals. Travelling around the museum in small groups, students discuss their observations about the animals. The activity is designed to meet the curriculum outcome that states "students will identify different living things to determine their characteristics."

For example, at the eastern painted turtle enclosure, students are asked to look at the turtles and share what they see. The interpreter guides the discussion based on the observations of the students.

Interpreter: "What do you observe about this turtle?"

Student: "I see that the turtle has feet that look like frog feet."

Interpreter: "Those are called webbed feet. What would webbed feet tell us about turtles?"

Student: "Maybe that they like to swim?"

Interpreter: "Do you see any other evidence that turtles like to swim?"

Student: "The turtle's shell is wet. Maybe it just got out of the water."



Eastern painted turtle at the Museum of Natural History

Continued... Learning is Student-Centered

What is Student-Centered Learning?

Within the confines of a program, learning starts at the students' level. Building on existing knowledge, students are able to follow their interests and curiosities through activities and discussions. This results in students discovering their own understanding of a topic.

There are many methods of student-centered learning. Three of the methods that museums could incorporate into programming include:

Active Learning:

Students solve problems, ask and answer questions, hypothesize, and discuss.



As part of a tour at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, students are engaged in discussion. Information is discovered through questions and conversation, rather than the interpreter lecturing.

Cooperative Learning:

Students work in teams under conditions that assure both positive team and personal accountability.



Students work together at Museum of Industry to learn how the efforts of both individuals and groups were important in Nova Scotia's industries.

Inductive Learning:

Students are presented with a challenge and learn the material in the context of solving it.



Students at the Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic are challenged to create and read messages using signal flags. This activity helps them to understand how ships could communicate at sea.

Why use Student-Centered Learning?

Student-centered learning dramatically increases participation and retention of information. Rather than focusing on specific facts that are often forgotten, students develop skills and discover evidence that supports the facts the museum program is teaching. This in turn supports programs that address the curriculum focusing on skills, not just the knowledge. Developing students' skills will allow all students to succeed as it includes using the different ways people learn, 21st century skills, and [hands-on, minds-on](#) learning.

Museums are an ideal location to use student-centered learning as many [interpretation](#) products, such as [exhibits](#), already exemplify self-directed learning.

Student-centered learning shifts the focus of activity from the interpreter to the student.



Continued... Learning is Student-Centered

How does it work?

No two school programs are ever the same when using student-centered learning. In student-centered learning, the focus is on the students, not the interpreter. Since a program is presented to many different groups of students, interpreters must be responsive and adaptable to the unique needs of each group.

Despite the flexibility, student-centered learning programs still need a framework. Program developers design specific activities and opportunities for discussions. These are often based around an object. The activities do not follow a script, but rather a series of flexible steps that lead students through the process. The role of the interpreter is to provide clear instructions for the activity, ask “good questions,” encourage critical thinking, and create a safe environment for student participation.

These student-centered experiences are fun and may often more resemble play than learning. Play is one of the effective ways to create enthusiasm and help students learn. See “[Learning and Play](#)” (Module Three) for more about play.

Earn A Badge

Design a tour in which the students, not the interpreter, is the focus of the tour.



1. Before starting, identify **one** important fact you want students to know. Now here’s the hard part—this fact is the one thing you are not going to say while giving your tour.
2. During your tour, facilitate conversation instead of telling information. Ask the students open-ended questions, follow their interests, direct the conversation to artifacts or specimens that provide evidence for your one important fact. Provide a chance for students to do something independent of you.
3. At the end, evaluate how you did using the self-reflection on this page.
4. Try doing this several times, with different groups, until it starts to feel natural.

Self-Reflection: Is Your Activity Student-Centered?

Take a few moments after you present an activity or tour to do this self-reflection exercise. Consider repeating it on a regular basis so that you can monitor your own improvement.

Is it student-centered?	Never → Always				
	1	2	3	4	5
Interpreter is facilitating (giving instruction and asking questions) more than teaching (telling facts).	1	2	3	4	5
Students are doing and discovering rather than watching and listening.	1	2	3	4	5
Students come to multiple answers based on facts rather than one “correct” answer.	1	2	3	4	5
Activity and results change slightly from group to group rather the same experience for everyone.	1	2	3	4	5
Learning objectives, such as specific curriculum outcomes, are addressed, even if not directly stated.	1	2	3	4	5

Museums and Program Partners Work Together

Every museum school program has partners. Successful programs recognize and work with these partners. Working with partners is important to every step of program development and delivery. Partners can provide support, resources and better experiences for students.

Who are Program Partners?

Working with partners does not need to be complicated. Often by simply moving beyond established units, departments and/or organizations, interpreters will find partners already exist and are just waiting to be invited into the process. A list of suggested partners can be found in [Appendix D](#) of the IMP.

Internal Partners: Everyone who works and volunteers in a museum is a potential partner. This includes management, administration, curators, researchers, conservators, preparators, designers, visitor services, and custodial staff. Invite them to participate in the program, not only where it is an obvious fit, but in multiple steps of the program from development to piloting to interacting with the school during their visit. Not only might they have unexpected resources and advice to offer, it is also a good opportunity for them to better understand and champion museum school programs.

Community Partners: Many community organizations have education, outreach, and volunteer goals similar to museums. Consider working with special interest groups and community organizations for resources both in program development and presentation. Museums will find in particular that archives and libraries are ready partners. See [Module Six](#) for specific information on working with archives and libraries.

School Partners: Consider schools not just as a client that museums serve, but rather a partner in education. Examine ways to include teachers, parents, and education professionals in program development. During program presentations find ways to involve the teachers and [chaperones](#) to make programs successful.



Watch for this icon in the toolbox as a reminder to work with program partners.



As a part of developing the “History Detectives” program found in [Appendix I](#), the program was piloted not just with students but also museum staff. Here staff from collections, interpretation, design, management, and online marketing test the archives activity under the direction of a pre-service teacher doing a placement at the museum. This provided a wide range of advice for the program, moving it towards the final version.



Continued... Museums and Program Partners

Working with Partners to Develop Programs

There are many ways to include partners while a program is being developed. This can include designing activities, completing research, identifying objects to use, designing and fabricating props, testing program components and evaluating programs.



Watch for the working with partners icon in [Module Four](#) to see the steps where program partners can be included.



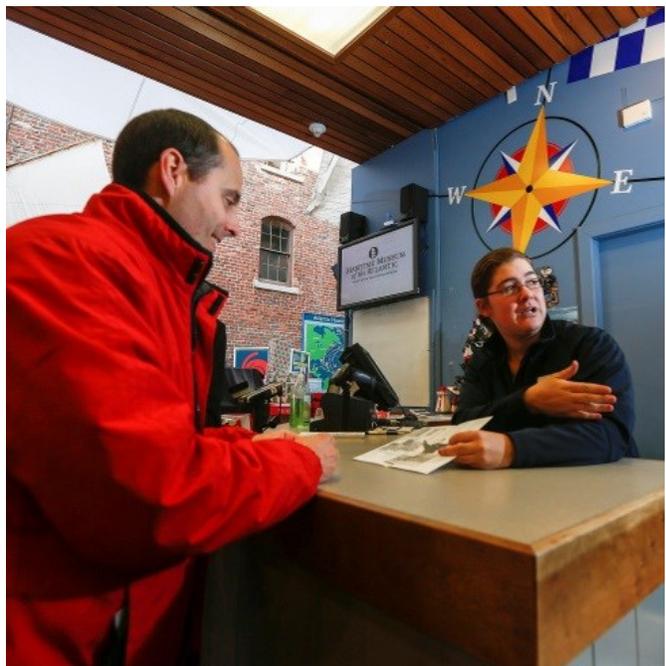
The Fundy Geological Museum invited members of the Interpretive Working Group (IWG) and their community for a daylong education program retreat to start the process of developing new school and public programs.

Working with Partners Before the Program

Programs start long before the students arrive at the museum. The more informed program partners are about the program, the more they can help make the program successful.

Museum staff, volunteers and community partners should be familiar with the program. Although they do not need to know it in detail, provide opportunities for them know what the program is about and what students will experience in the program. This will allow them to promote the program if an opportunity arises and support the program if resources or information comes their way.

Teachers should be given an opportunity to build a relationship with the museum before they book a program. Consider having an open door policy for teachers, possibly offering free admission. Many teachers may wish to personalize school programs to better meet the needs of their class. This can be arranged when the teacher books a program or by inviting the teacher to come into the museum beforehand to meet with staff. See [Module Four](#) for advice on marketing programs to teachers.



Many museums, such as the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, have an open door policy with teachers. Teachers can come visit the mill before bringing their class in order to better link the field trip with what they are doing at school.

Continued... Museums and Program Partners

Work with the Partners to Create Success Upon Student Arrival

Taking classes to a location outside of the school can be stressful for teachers. Include interpretation and visitor services staff in the process of welcoming groups to the museum by:

- Being prepared/set-up for the group before they arrive.
- Waiting for the group when they arrive.
- Making washroom facilities available, especially if students have had a long bus ride to get the museum.
- Allowing for a short “recess,” if possible outside, before the program for students to eat their snack or use-up some energy.



Most importantly, talk to the teacher to find out what will work best for their class.

Working with Partners During Trip

In order to optimize a school program, teachers and chaperones should be included in the program as it is happening. Museums that work closely with teachers and chaperones will have stronger programs, fewer logistical problems, more engaged students, and will more successfully meet curriculum outcomes.

Expectation:

Be sure to welcome teachers and chaperones and explain to them expectations at the start of the program, just like the students. Depending on program set-up, program presenters could talk to them separately, however, it is totally acceptable, and sometimes preferable, to do this in front of the students. This way students will know that their chaperones are doing during the program. Some expectations sites may have for teachers and chaperones are:

- Stay with the group of students assigned to them at all times.
- Be responsible for the safety and/or behaviour of students.
- No food or drink in the museum.
- Be attentive but remember the activities are for the students.

Opportunities to Help Out

Consider asking chaperones to assist with the program by:

- Helping students who are struggling with reading or writing.
- Ensuring all students get a turn.
- Participating in or assisting with a demonstration.



Students, like many adults, have difficulty going directly from a long bus ride to focus on a program. Providing a short “recess” at the start of a program often will make for more engaged learners and a more successful program. This student is enjoying running on the extensive grounds at Haliburton House Museum.

Earn A Badge

Plan how you want to include teachers and chaperones in a program at your museum.



1. Make a list of 5-7 expectations and opportunities for teachers and chaperones.
2. Consider if there is a way they could be of assistance during the program?
3. Get creative. Is there a way you could facilitate chaperones creating special memories with their child?
4. Plan for all scenarios. How will you avoid common problems you have during programs with teachers and chaperones?
5. Write down your plan to share this list with teachers and chaperones. Try it out and adapt as needed.



The role teachers and chaperones play will vary with different activities. In some activities, like the wool carding as seen above at the Wile Carding Mill Museum, students can work independently and chaperones need only to help students who need it. In other programs, chaperones are more actively involved in the program.

Legal Requirements:

Teachers must legally have a set number of chaperones to assist with supervision during a school field trip. The number of chaperones will vary depending on the school board and grade.

Teachers and chaperones should not be asked to leave the program area or students for any reason. If they are becoming a distraction find a way to include them in the activity.

Chaperones should have been instructed on legal requirements by their school board in regards to accompanying a student who needs to be separated from the group (for example, to use the washroom). Remember that the chaperones and teachers are primarily responsible for the safety and behaviour of students during the visit.

Some teachers and chaperones, such as EPAs (Educational Program Assistants) might need to stay with a specific student to support them in the areas of personal care, behaviour management and instructional programming. Museums should be aware this is always a possibility and quickly adapt to these situations.

Create Great Memories and Future Museum Visitor:

Getting chaperones for a trip can be a major challenge for teachers. By providing a memorable experience for chaperones, museums are helping the teacher as chaperones may be more eager to volunteer to come to the museum as they know they will have a good time.

Allow some room in program delivery for families to make museum memories together. For students, having their guardian be the chaperone can be an exciting experience. Similarly for guardians, interacting with their children is a major motivation for being a volunteer chaperone.

Remember, families who come to a museum for a school field trip and have a good time are more likely to return for a visit, buy a museum membership, and participate in public programs. Teachers who have a positive experience are more likely to return for another school program. Other partners who have a positive experience are more likely to try future partnerships.



School programs can be a family's first introduction to the world of museums. By creating a positive experience for chaperones and students, museums are building lifelong family visitors, as seen with this family visiting the Firefighter's Museum.