



Standardization of the teaching-learning strategy Field Trips, for the planning and development of its three execution moments: before, during and after

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<https://doi.org/10.5377/torreon.v7i19.7911>

Keywords: *field trips, meaningful learning, curriculum, standardization, teaching-learning, competences, objectives.*

ABSTRACT

Field trips are one of the main didactic strategies that relates the theory learned in the classroom with the practice in the labor field; this article highlights aspects that play a relevant role for the implementation of such strategy, it should be noted that there are few documented evidences of its achievements; and currently for many students and teachers it has become a simple excursion rather than a significant learning process, for this and other reasons, in the educational institutions where this important strategy is put into practice teachers must have instruments, such as formats that demonstrate and allow an adequate planning of execution during the three great moments of the field trip that are: the before, during and after. These moments are needed, even more in those universities that make use of the teaching portfolio, where the evidences of the teachers' actions are an essential component, since it contributes to having a source of information on the scope that this strategy can have in the students' learning, without forgetting the perspective that students have towards the field trips in which they have been involved, but most of the their perspective is not taken into account, being this very important to know for the continuous improvement in the application of field trips.

INTRODUCTION

The strategy of teaching Field Trips, is one of the strategies that allows to establish a close link between theory and practice. It is used in different universities around the world and has shown the scope of excellent results; However, different authors such as Echegaray (2013), López (sf), Rodríguez and Morales (2010) and Lossio (2004), who have written about the importance of this strategy, have pointed out that for many higher education teachers, the strategy has become a walk that lacks planning and normalization in its execution, it should be noted that, this strategy is carried out outside the classroom, which indicates that the correct management of the strategy it is the responsibility of the academic and administrative staff. So, in order this strategy has a significant scope, it is necessary to work together to manage and carry out the Field trips.

In the present essay, different thoughts of authors who have used of the field trips as a teaching strategy are exposed and, at the same time, they have carried out research in which the main theme is this strategy; It should be noted that, most of them converge in that, lacking of organized planning, provokes lack of effectiveness, so they recommend the three major moments of execution: the before, the during and the after, which will allow the students to feel motivated, facing prior knowledge and new knowledge to discover, even more when the object of study is closely linked to their academic profile.

It is necessary to remember that the universities are in a constant curricular development in which the main objective is to have students endowed with the specific competences as tools to face a challenging world, being this the key challenge for the university teacher role, who must select and execute that teaching - learning strategy that will allow to reach the objectives proposed in their subjects.

DEVELOPMENT

Different concepts of Field Trips

The Modelo Educativo de la UNAN-Managua (2011) mentions that Field Trips are an important strategy to be developed in a different environment to the classroom; they put the student in contact with reality through cognitive processes such as observation, analogy, description, analysis, synthesis, among others. That is, it is a semiformal didactic moment, because it requires the effective presence of the facilitator (the teacher or team of teachers), in an environment that is not the classroom (page 42).

For many teachers and students, Field Trips are known by different names, such as: technical tours, visits to institutions, field visits, tours, field tours. For this reason, when a teacher is asked what a "Field Trip" is, probably in his or her the definition any of the names mentioned

above will be taken into account. Consequently, these different names will be understood as synonyms.

Authors such as Lossio (2004) affirm that the Field Trip is a didactic strategy that allows generating significant learnings in Geography. This author differentiates it as a teaching method and highlights the particular interest in understanding the advantages of these works, since they contribute to the retention, understanding and active use of knowledge; however, it not only obeys to geography and related sciences. As well as the author Lossio mentions, Field Trips not only allow to generate significant learning in a specific subject, but in all those subjects that adopt this strategy as a key tool for the significant learning of the student.

Rodríguez and Morales (2010) define the Field Trip as an academic, experiential, programmed activity, in which theory and practice are integrated with different evaluation modalities, which “can be applied, observed, or analyzed in the field”.

In the definition of these authors it is possible to observe that the word “programmed” is immersed, this indicates that the strategy Field Trips has to be planned previously, and not to be carried out spontaneously, since it could lose the focus of the potential achievement of the previously stated objectives, in case they had been stated previously.

From the point of view of different authors who have been immersed in this topic, the conceptions of Field Trips are many, but in the end, all of them converge on the same point, this is a strategy that allows to relate the theory with the practice and that teachers must have a suitable planning.

Field Tips, strategy or resource?

New teachers tend to confuse a series of concepts, including didactic strategies and didactic resources; however, each of them has a specific function, which does not indicate that they are contradictory, but rather, they complement each other to facilitate the teaching-learning process, as can be seen in the following definitions:

In the educational field, didactic strategy refers to planning a group of activities and tools to respond to the needs and the objectives a group of people have been proposed. The final purpose is focused on facilitating learning; it is the way in which the teacher guarantees that the student integrates the contents (Carbonell, 2004).

On the other hand, didactic resources are defined as mediating or facilitating instruments between the student and the context or reality. Either a natural object, a blackboard, the computer or the teacher’s own explanation. The didactic resource is that element that helps to obtain the knowledge (Bedmar, 2009). It should be said that the didactic resource is not the

one that generates knowledge, but it facilitates the teaching-learning processes that the teacher performs.

As you can see in the definitions of both authors, Field Trip is a strategy that must use resources for its realization, resources such as the mean of transportation, which is essential for the realization of this strategy, such way, it is necessary the existence of means of transportation that are available to carry out these field trips.

Field Trips, a worrying reality

According to López Martín (2007), in his article “Field trips, much more than an excursion”, he states that it is a verifiable fact that nowadays there are less visits to the field with the students and when there are visits these are just entertaining excursions. He adds that some of the possible causes that have contributed to this are the following:

- The fear of the teacher to the responsibilities assumed in this type of extracurricular activity.
- The low degree of teacher satisfaction in these activities.
- The lack of teacher training in practical aspects of the field, as well as their ignorance of the environment.
- The lack of good planning and methodology that prevents a good use of the activity.

Among the most negative aspects, some scholars agree that they do not have enough time to prepare for Field Trips and that it is very difficult to have other teachers involved in the activity. Echegaray (2013) mentions how expensive it is to get some permits in the administration of the study centers to carry out specific field trips.

Attending to what the authors say, it is reflected that many teachers see great difficulties in making field trips, taking into account the time it is necessary to dedicate and the problem of having more teachers. This may be the main reason why their general level of satisfaction is not very high. However, Echegaray (2013) states that field trips are very satisfactory for both the teacher and the student.

As it is possible to observe in the quotations of these authors, Field Trips are not very frequent and the reasons are many; On the basis of this, it is necessary to reflect and realize that it is necessary to identify the cause of this and turn the negative into positive.

It can be interesting and positive for institutions of higher education and even more for teachers, to normalize the realization of field trips, by using standardized instruments that present flexibility for all those subjects that make use of this important didactic strategy that takes place outside the classroom and requires control, this could contribute to the role of

teaching, where you can have documentation to serve as teaching evidence, and therefore, you can see the different Field Trips that have been carried out in the institution and at the same time they can be bases for future trips. Having evidence of them, would become a fundamental part of teaching evidence, which is a fundamental section in the teaching portfolio that is evidenced in many educational institutions.

How to get the most out of a Field Trip

According to López Martín (2007), in order to obtain a good use of Field Trips, it is very important to carry out a good planning, use an appropriate methodology and dedicate the necessary time to each of the scheduled tasks. The student must, at all times, know at what stage of the Field Trip is, what the purpose of it is. These tours should be developed in a contextualized manner, with a set of articulated teaching-learning activities that contribute to connecting the student's knowledge before, during and after the trip. The materials prepared for this output should be designed to exercise skills (observe, note, draw, among others) but also to encourage reflection, encouraging the student to expose their ideas and develop their skills. Before the field trip, the teacher will explain its content (general description of the place), each of the phases that it consists of, description of the itinerary, type of itinerary, start, end, distance, duration and stops that will be made , the tasks that must be done and the objectives that are to be achieved. The good organization of the field trip is important, take precautions and necessary security measures, have the data collection cards, field notebooks, cameras and everything that allows the collection of information.

Echegaray (2013) suggests aspects that should be defined when establishing the design of a field trip:

- The objectives that are intended to be achieved
- The needs of the student
- The characteristics of the student
- The means and materials available
- The results that are intended to obtain
- The way to integrate what was learned in the field trip with the subject taught in the classroom

As the author mentions, it is evident that Field Trips should not be carried out without suitable planning and much less without letting the students know process, starting with awareness, where the tour should be presented to the student in the first class sessions , this because it must be contemplated in the semester plan, and between the first announcement and

the day of the tour there must be a constant awareness of the student, which at the same time becomes a motivation, this will help the students to understand that the Field Trip is not the end of the subject, but a planned strategy that will help them to abstract from reality the theory they study in class or on their own.

The formulation of the objectives is essential in Field Trips, whose wording should be consistent with the academic profile of the student, it should be noted that the site where this trip takes place must be linked to the objectives and, above all, to the profile of the future professional, without forgetting the previous verification of the site to visit, in which it must be verified that it has safety standards for the students, since otherwise, it tends to cause uncertainty both in the university authorities and in the students 'families

Field Trips from the teacher and students perspective

Teaching perspective:

Much has been said in the pedagogical literature that, the purposes of teaching must be extended beyond the curricular content circumscribed to the classroom, therefore, there is a need to acquire and develop multiple capacities in different contexts to face the demands of the classroom in today's society. In this sense, Field Trips are a good example, because they constitute a situational coexistence contextualized outside the educational institution whose implementation requires strategic teaching (Lara, 2011).

In the case of teachers, their perspectives are guided by their experiences, from which representative data are obtained in order to know the implicit beliefs of teachers, which guide the transforming action of their practices. The teacher must be very careful when planning a Field Trip, to start he or she should inquire what the student knows about the context in which the work will be done, start a documentation phase with supporting material, then provide the materials to use, among them, the field guide instrument that is vital because objectives, activities, stops, resources, evaluation, among others are established there. (Lara, 2011).

As seen in the quotes of this author, the perspective of Field Trips will have a different perspective for the eyes of each teacher, being important to encourage them to take into account that it is necessary to plan the trip and above all, to ignite the spark of enthusiasm and Students' curiosity for learning, and even more by showing them a previously developed field guide that allows students to approach the context under study and make them feel part of it.

Student Perspective:

Field Trips, from the student perspective, have not been researched and documented, to the extent that there is no information on the Web about it, which turns out to be interesting to carry out research to obtain data regarding the trips from the student's perspective.

Moments of the Field Trip

These trips assume a scheme with three important moments, according to the publications of the Centro Nacional para el Mejoramiento de la Enseñanza de la Ciencia, CENAMEC (sf, page 5) in which they state that within the activities that should be considered at the moment of planning a field trip, the following stand out: Before (previous preparation work); during (activities to develop during the trip) and after (analysis, discussion and evaluation work).

Before Field Trips:

The teacher must anticipate some considerations such as: (a) Select the objective (s) or the competence (s) that he or she wishes to develop, reinforce or expand. (b) Look for information regarding the study area (historical data, climate, soils, vegetation, among others that the teacher considers important). These are secondary data obtained from indirect sources. (c) To make a recognition visit to carry out the work itinerary. It is considered necessary to block the area (previous inspection) in which the available areas are observed to execute the activities, verify the spaces of risks, escape routes, service loans, verification of usual visits schedules (depending on the place), limitations of the area. (d) Carry out the administrative procedures (permission for the students from their parents and representatives and the respective authorities, if necessary, make the previous request for the permit to carry out the visit, exemption request for a school institution, request for a tour guide, hiring or availability of transportation or another that the teacher considers). (e) Establish a work schedule and the distribution of tasks for each participant. In addition, it is important to elaborate a didactic material with brief explanations, a script of questions, some orientations, among others. (f) Negotiate the rules of discipline and discuss the purpose of the activity, its benefits and importance. Talk about safety rules and risks in case of infringing them. (g) Verify the physical health status of each participant. Consider those people who have an illness, in which they must necessarily consume medication. (h) Verify that any member or companion has knowledge about first aid. It is also necessary to determine the required didactic resource. These must be specific according to their use, place of visit, duration and objectives that are pursued with Field Trip.

Initially, a variety of information sources can be used: books, electronic references, edited brochures, specialized guides, promotional materials, audiovisual material, among others. You can also use files, censuses and local studies. All this material will allow to obtain enough information about the locality, to have a global vision about its conditions, its limits, level of security, roads, organization, functionality, structure, recreational and leisure areas, work zones, types of visits (guided, semi-guided, not guided), historical or relevant sites and others.

Among the considerations to be taken for the academic benefit of a Field Trip, López (s.f.) indicates the importance of the student knowing each of the phases of the activity, so

he recommends explaining the content before or at the beginning of the course. the trip, the description of the place, the distance, the logistical generalities, the necessary materials, the tasks to be carried out, the scientific protocols and the objectives that are intended to be described. In this way, by clarifying a series of previous aspects, students can skillfully exercise the required skills, as well as encourage reflection periods, which will encourage the student to present their ideas and to put into practice their skills.

From the above considerations, it can be said that Field Trips involve a series of previous activities that require investment of time by the teacher; Probably, not all field trips have all these prerequisites, but it will depend on the study context, the academic profile of the major, and the duration of the Field Trip itself.

According to the I Encuentro, Vygotski and his legacy in the Latin American research of Ulate de Brooke (2014), in the didactic process of a field trip there are several moments that must be contemplated for their proper planning. He adds that the field trips can be divided into phases or stages, such as:

- Initial phase: give instructions, printed material, prior knowledge, objectives, general guidelines, guidance, among others.
- Execution phase: the practice is generated, in which a follow-up guide, rubric and instruments should be available to describe the observed and measured.
- Phase of information collection or report preparation.
- Experience socialization phase: experience is shared. It can be through the technological resources available in the institution as learning platforms. To do this, we use forums, blogs or, in person, in a discussion or group feedback (tutoring).

There are several requirements for field trips mentioned in this meeting, among them, students require documents to guide them instructionally, before, during and after the field trip. Likewise, these training materials should include information related to the evaluation rubrics, guidelines for the presentation of reports and regulations, behavior protocol, safety aspects to be considered, equipment required, materials, guidelines, type of clothes to carry, safety warnings (international and medical regulations), methodology in the delivery of the report, requirements and prerequisites, aspects of first aid, health considerations, psychological problems and explanation of the stages to be carried out.

During Field Trips:

(a) Organize the team works according to the activities to be carried out, the instruments and equipment available and the space available for the development of the scheduled activity.

(b) Carry out the qualitative observations of the area, according to the objectives set out in the activity. (c) Perform quantitative measurements (if applicable) and take the relevant annotations for further analysis in class. (d) Take tours with a tour guide (tour guided, optional). (e) Apply interviews or surveys to local people, historians, chroniclers, authorities. (f) Make recordings, take photographs, draw plans, make drawings, draw figures and sketches, among others. The primary data gathered at this moment acquire special importance, since it enables the construction and reconstruction of knowledge, the verification of hypotheses, the validation and testing of theories. During the development of Field Trips, it is necessary to verify the rules of discipline and safety, deliver the didactic material that guides its execution and provide some considerations for the preparation of the final report (Delgado, 2012, p.174).

It is very important to highlight what this author presents, so that it is useless to have all a didactic material prepared in advance, if this is not delivered to the student before the Field Trip; From another perspective, it should be noted that it is very necessary for the teacher to explain all those documents that have to be filled in during field trips and that the student must be aware of that.

In this work modality, the student is the active part, he is the protagonist. During the realization of the route the teacher is the only passive element and only rarely intervenes driving or guiding. Prior to the Field Trips, the necessary information and elements have been provided to the student to be able to achieve the objectives (Ramírez and Lozada, 2011).

After Field Trips:

(a) To make the analysis of the data obtained during field measurements. (b) Perform a guided discussion with the students about the most relevant aspects developed during the work, relive the experience, and evoke moments and knowledge. In addition, to know the different interpretations about the constructed meanings. (c) Make an assessment of new learning in terms of constructed or reconstructed knowledge. (d) Students must make a report that includes the objective of the activity, the analysis of the data, the itinerary and work schedule, the methodology used, the results obtained, the conclusions and the importance of the activity carried out (Delgado, 2012, p.175).

At the end of the visits, a written report of the work carried out jointly by the group and its referring teacher will be prepared. It will also be possible to communicate the results looking for more informal modalities. It can be among others, the elaboration of a creative work as a tool to show them. The importance of the data collected and the field minutes, is that this is the closing stage in which the analysis and discussion of all will be done (Ramírez and Lozada, 2011).

In relation to this last moment about Field Trip, it is necessary to know the scope that this strategy had, that better to discover it through the perception of the students, for this, the various authors agree that the written report should be used analytical-reflexive, in which the student reveals his achievements, discoveries, observations and learning achieved.

Throughout the expositions made, the reader may notice that Field Trip is a strategy that apparently involves a lot of effort of completion, however, when the teacher ventures with this strategy, this probably turns out to be true, however, with the practice of it, fine-tuning details are done, until the time when the teacher can say: "the disciplined, planned, organized, controlled and standardized realization ends up being attractive, easy, interesting and above all, enriching for learning".

CONCLUSION

It is advisable to conduct field trips at the beginning of the subject or at the level intermediate of the same, since if it is carried out in the end, the students could interpret it as "the farewell of the semester".

Finally, it is necessary to emphasize that the Field Trip strategy is applied not only for a specific subject, although it is standardized, it can be applied in any subject, as long as the proposed objectives are closely linked to the prospect site where the strategy will be carried out; therefore, it is necessary to be aware and accept that for many educators it is not easy to accept the idea of working with a strategy that has standardized instruments, that is, a strategy duly planned in its three great moments of execution: before, during and after ; in which each of these moments contemplates a work that for many is arduous, and for others it is very interesting and enriching, and here is the perception that every teacher should have, since the planning, organization, direction and control will allow that a strategy that is not executed in the classroom, could be carried out best way, and this will allow the students to be the main benefited, since by performing field trips with standardized instruments, students will approaches their potential labor field, and above all, the linking of the theory taught in the classroom, with the contextual environment, where the future professional will put into practice what they have learned in their student life.

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