Beyond the Field Trip

By Elizabeth Barrett-Zahn

“Education is a natural process carried out by the child and is not acquired by listening to words but by experiences in the environment.” —Dr. Maria Montessori

This issue of *Science and Children* takes us “Beyond the Field Trip,” which in our current unsettled landscape of the pandemic crisis takes on a new meaning. Initially, this theme’s focus was to highlight the learning that takes place outside of formal classroom settings and how teachers can provide supports to make the learning obtained through field trips even more potent by providing pre- and post-connections. Yet in the current COVID-19 regulated climate, we need to think about field trips in a broader sense, including virtual opportunities, at-home experiences, or on-campus school trips where we creatively provide opportunities for students to see that learning happens in many places. “Beyond the Field Trip” can be seen as a call for taking learning beyond the walls of traditional classrooms to find opportunities to engage students in meaningful learning experiences.

Many of our authors have offered alternatives and options for adapting to the new school environments of social distancing and virtual learning. To help with lesson and unit planning, read about Understanding by Design in Methods and Strategies (p. 76). Prioritizing and streamlining curriculum will allow for more in-depth learning connections, as students engage in sense making by “doing” science.

We’ve added two new columns inspired by an abundance of interest when offered as *S&C* themes: Cross-curricular Connections (p. 26) supports the idea of integrating learning where students solve real-world problems and create optimized solutions through curricula integration points. Start With Phenomena (p. 56) offers assistance in grounding student sense making in three-dimensional learning through the lens of anchor, investigative, and everyday phenomena.

You will also notice that we have relocated our Next Generation Science Standards connection tables to the NSTA website, where you will also find pertinent instructional details, lesson plans, and specifics for assessment. We hope these online connections will offer even more for our readers, especially during these uncertain times, to help create meaningful, student-centered learning under the safety constraints of the COVID-19 mandates.

We here at *Science and Children* wish you a safe and productive school year in whatever that may look like in your community or state. We are here as your resource. Please stay connected with your NSTA community for support, guidance, collaboration, and take full advantage of all that NSTA has to offer. We will continue to listen to your needs, and together we will find the best approaches to educate our children to adapt and succeed in this challenging educational environment.

Stay healthy, stay positive.

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