



Creating Conditions for Learning

TAKING A LOOK AT FIELD TRIPS

COMP (Classroom Organization and Management Program) is designed to empower teachers to Create Conditions for Learning in their classroom and school settings. Yet, not all teaching and learning take place in the classroom. So how can COMP help teachers when they head off campus for a field trip?

Besides being lots of fun, field trips offer our students the opportunity to see their learning in action outside the classroom, to sample potential careers, to interact with peers in less formal settings, to capture their hearts for responsible citizenship – the benefits go on and on. And yet, from curriculum connections to transportation to meals to restrooms to ... well, pretty much everything is yours to arrange and coordinate on a field trip.

Shannon McGee's [Fed Reserve Field Trip](#) is used under a [Creative Commons 2.0 license](#), cropped to fit.



This issue of the COMP Newsletter is focused on transferring strategies and techniques from COMP to a field trip setting.



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COMP is a research-based, research-proven program for enhancing teachers' classroom management and simultaneously increasing students' academic achievement. The transfer of COMP principles to the field trip setting is simply an extension of best practice to new settings, but is not research-based in those settings.

Let's take a look at how content from COMP can help us to maximize the appropriate learning opportunities for our students while it also can help us to reduce the complexity and stress of planning and supervising a field trip.

COMP's **Module 2 (Planning and Teaching Rules and Procedures)** includes a large focus on the procedures used in classrooms. Procedures are equally important outside the classroom. On a field trip, your students will need to know the procedures for such things as getting on/off the school bus, what to do with their personal items, how to line up, when lunch will take place, and where restrooms are available.

All students will benefit from how you **Make Your Invisible Expectations Visible** (COMP's Theme) through the procedures you teach



Shenandoah National Park's [Spotswood Elementary School Field Trip](#) is in the public domain.

Procedures, Procedures, Procedures



Shenandoah National Park's [Spotswood Elementary Field Trip](#) is in the public domain.

for the field trip. In addition, students will find it easier to pay attention if you introduce the host by name. She or he can better share the site and her/his expertise with your class if you stay with your students and engaged in the activities.

Which class will learn more in a museum tour – the one lined up and focused by their teacher in advance of entering the building OR the class chased by their teacher yelling, "Don't run!" as students race to be the first inside? As you would suspect, procedures set the stage for students' learning. (The site's employees hope your class will come prepared to follow procedures as part of your visit!)

Field trip sites often provide important signage and procedures for guests to help them enjoy a safe visit and to protect the site from damage. Just like you would sit in each students' chair prior to the start of school (to have an advance understanding of what students will experience in your classroom – see *Module 1 Organizing the Classroom*), try to visit a field trip site in advance. This will give you important information and help you anticipate student needs.



Daniel X. O'Neill's [Starved Rock Field Trip 2013](#) is used under a [Creative Commons 2.0 license](#), cropped to fit.

COMP's **Module 7 (Getting the Year Off to a Good Start)** explores the involvement of parents and guardians. Field trips are a great way to involve students' families. Just as with the students, make sure to communicate clearly with those joining your class (grandparents, parents, and, if you allow, siblings). **Make Visible Your Invisible Expectations** – identify where and when the family members should meet you, whether or not they will be required to pay, what the behavioral expectations are for both the student and the family while at the site (e.g., Can the student stand/travel with the family? Will the family member be in charge of multiple students?).

If you have time prior to departure, check for understanding (**Module 6**) to make sure those traveling with your class feel confident about their roles. Family members will also take cues from your actions. They will observe such things as your organization (or lack thereof), level of stress, attention to your students (or to your device), tone of voice, and respect for the presenter (or your talking through the presentation). Each of these will indicate whether or not you value this trip – and the people participating in it.



woodleywonderworks' [SERC Field Trip 8](#) is used under a [Creative Commons 2.0 license](#).

In this day of social media, be sure to demonstrate clarity (**Module 6 Maintaining Student Engagement and Lesson Momentum**) with joining family members concerning what is/is not allowed as far as capturing images/video, posting online, and tagging/naming students. Each of the images included in this newsletter were located through a search for "field trip" on flickr.com. Where else might these photos show up and who else might have access to them? Are the answers to these questions acceptable to students and their families? Make sure you know and help your students and their families to follow your district's social media policy.



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Field Trip. There's something about those two words that makes students light up. Field trips are motivating, engaging, fun, educational, and they can also be a headache for an unprepared teacher. Strategies and techniques from COMP that are designed for the classroom can help teachers prepare themselves and their students. Like the hands-on center experience pictured at the left, or the presenter-led small group

featured in the photo to the right, field trips often involve students in novel situations. Teaching needed procedures (see COMP's **Module 2 Planning and Teaching Rules and Procedures**), reinforcing these consistently (**Module 4 Maintaining Good Student Behavior**), and monitoring students carefully (**Module 6 Maintaining Student Engagement and Lesson Momentum**) are some of the ways you can help your students maximize the learning opportunities available.

As with COMP in the classroom, the key to success with a field trip is to **Make Visible Your Invisible Expectations**. At COMP, we wish you and your students success with both in-classroom and out-of-the-classroom learning!

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Yellowstone National Park's photo [ycc 2nd session 15 \(171\)](#) is in the public domain.

The COMP Newsletter is edited by COMP Lead National Trainer, Inge R. Poole, Ph.D.



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Box 541 GPC
Vanderbilt University
Nashville TN 37203