

Music For Every Classroom: Field Trip Time!

by Elizabeth M. Peterson

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Spring fever is just around the corner and what better way to celebrate the new season (and the nearing of the end of the school year) than a field trip? Taking a field trip can be a way to celebrate the culmination of a unit or to excite students about something new. Who doesn't like field trips? Sure, sometimes we are more tired after a day out of the classroom than in it, but there's something special about taking a day off from the norm.

Many classrooms take trips to see a concert or a play. The intention of this type of field trip should be to get the most out of the experience. In order to do that, teachers really need to spend the time preparing their students. There are some things you can do before, during and after the performance to make sure your students get the most out of the experience. And of course there are ways to connect that experience to your curriculum. This article will speak on terms of attending a concert, but keep in mind that the following applies to all kinds of field trips including those to the theater and museums.

Before

GET A PROGRAM

If you call the theater or concert hall where the performance will take place, you can usually get a program in advance. In some cases, for school groups especially, there will be a packet of information and/or activities for teachers to use before the class attends the concert. This may be something on which you can work together with your music teacher.

A program can be useful in gathering basic knowledge about the music you will hear at the concert. Not only does it give the names of the pieces and composers, but often a program will have historical background information about the pieces. This kind of information can be helpful in integration. Maybe the music was written in a time of history you are studying, maybe the music is a good accompaniment to your unit on poetry, or maybe the music comes from a country you are studying.

LISTEN AHEAD OF TIME

Listening to and familiarizing your students with the music you will hear is a great way to prepare your students for the concert. Having a familiarity with the music will make the concert much more enjoyable.

PREPARE YOUR AUDIENCE

Your students should be familiar with what to expect at the concert. They have a job at the performance, the job of audience member. A good member of the audience is polite, respectful of the performers and other audience members, claps loudly at the appropriate times and dresses accordingly. By being polite and respectful he/she is allowing others to enjoy the performance. This means he/she is quiet throughout and takes care of any business prior to the beginning of the performance. Once seated, all audience members should remain in their seats for the duration of the concert.

During**ENJOY**

Make sure the concert is enjoyed. I guarantee that if you have prepared your students for the concert, they will enjoy it no matter what kind of music they hear. Students love listening to music they recognize. Don't we all?

After**REFLECT**

Reflection time is important and students should be able to reflect on the whole experience of the performance. You may want to take the approach of reflecting on the music: Which was your favorite part and why? You may want to take the approach of having your students write a recount of the events of the day. This is also a great time for some of your special education students to write a social story that includes all the events of the day and how they reacted to them.

You may want to integrate your reflection piece with the type of writing you are studying in LA. For example, if you are studying poetry, have the students write a poem about the experience. If students are writing short stories, have them write a short story based on their experience at the concert hall. If they are in the middle of writing procedures, have them write a procedure on what to do when attending a concert.

The worst thing that can happen is letting the experience of a field trip go to waste. Be sure to utilize the excitement of a field trip in your classroom before and after the big day "off" of school.