

Reinventing the Field Trip: On Site Experimentation

Prepared for the Minnesota Historical Society

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Prepared by:

Denise Huynh

Wilder Research 451 Lexington Parkway North Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104 651-280-2700 www.wilderresearch.org

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Marilyn Conrad

Paul Devereaux

Lida Gilbertson

Louann Graham

Leonard Major

Alicia Matos

Nicole MartinRogers

Dawn Mueller

Dan Swanson

Mary Ann Thoma

Introduction

The mission of the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) is to "illuminate the past to light the future." MHS helps people pursue opportunities to preserve historical evidence, learn more about history, and demonstrate that they value history in their personal lives and society at large. Ultimately, MHS seeks to foster among people a connection to and an understanding of Minnesota history, so that people may draw perspective from the past to create a better future.

The Reinventing the Field Trip quasi-experimental design study contributes to this mission by helping the Minnesota Historical Society better understand the impact of 21st century learning on its field trips to improve the delivery of relevant and enjoyable programming for all. With funding provided by the State of Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Legacy Fund, MHS carried out post-field trip experience surveys with students, teachers, and chaperones who visited eight historic sites across Minnesota from May 6-June 9, 2011.

The Reinventing the Field Trip study hypothesizes that incorporating activities that build upon 21st century learning skills, chiefly critical thinking and problem solving skills, impact historic sites field trips in the following ways:

- All participants demonstrate an increase in overall positive field trip experience
- Students demonstrate an increase in enjoyment of history and confidence in problem solving skills
- Teachers and chaperones demonstrate an increase in appreciation for the Minnesota Historical Society

21st Century Skills

The 21st Century Skills movement asserts that the goals of education and the practices of learning must be redefined in order to meet evolving needs; its skills framework encompasses strategies for personal, societal, and economic success. The Reinventing the Field Trip study focuses on learning and innovation skills within the framework, also known as "The 4 C's" of critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, communication, and collaboration (Partnership for 21st Century Skills).

In particular, Reinventing the Field Trip is interested in attributes of critical thinking and problem solving. The Minnesota Historical Society considers the following attributes of 21st Century Learners in new program design to increase student engagement (Figure 1).

Attributes of 21st Century Learners

Interesting graphics	Are there visuals? How are they presented?
Instant gratification	Are frequent rewards offered?
Networking	How does the information lend itself to socialization? Do students have opportunities to seek out multiple points of view?
Pace of information	What modes are available for youth to access information? What are the lengths of the information presented?
Parallel processing and multi-tasking	Do students have opportunities to do multiple things at the same time? Can students access two different types of information that connect in multiple ways?
Random access	Are different pathways or entry points to the same information provided? Do students have opportunities to make choices in their own learning?

Eight historic sites within the Minnesota Historical Society each incorporated a new component addressing the aforementioned attributes to their existing historic site field trip experience, thereby addressing critical thinking and problem solving. Figure 2 illustrates the changed field trip component, how the field trip differs, and specifically which attributes are addressed at each historic site.

1.

Partnership for 21st Century Learning Skills (n.d.) Retrieved from http://www.p21.org

2. Field trip component change

Historic site	Changed field trip component	Old way	New way	New way – critical thinking and problem solving skills addressed	New way – 21 st Century Learner attributes addressed
Charles A. Lindbergh	Guided tour of Lindbergh's boyhood home	Students told about Lindbergh's work in aviation, medical invention, environmental work, prior to learning about his life as a child in a guided tour. This is heavy on lecture, but allowed students to ask questions and included hands-on activities.	Students collect clues about Lindbergh's work during the guided tour to discover his interests and how they began in his youth. The emphasis is on using stories and artifacts to achieve these goals.	Students must gather information from a variety of sources, interpret data, and draw conclusions about Lindbergh's career and interests as an adult.	Interesting graphics Networking Random access
Forest History Center	Guided tour of 1900s logging camp	Students given a guided tour of the logging camp, inclusive of six interpretive stations. Costumed interpreters interact with students about logging camp jobs.	Students are given a scenario in which a tote sleigh is delayed and the camp does not receive expected supplies.	Students must participate alongside interpreters by delivering news to the camp, discovering how each person in the camp is affected, and finding solutions.	Networking Random Access
(Historic) Forestville	Credit and barter system of the 19 th century	Interpretive dialogue and reproduction ledgers used to visually share stories.	Place students in small groups. Each group is given 19 th century family status and issued a historically accurate Meighen store credit coupon book. Small groups are tasked with purchasing items from an assigned shopping list without enough credit for all needed supplies and provisions.	Students interact as a team to make difficult group decisions on which items to purchase based on need and priority of the family group.	Networking Random Access
(Historic) Fort Snelling	1820s-1830s schoolhouse	Schoolhouse used to discuss fur trade, the Dakota, and the Indian Agency.	Place students into small groups. Small groups answer questions which compare their current education to 1820s-1830s education. They present their answers to the rest of the class.	Students compare their school with the Fort Snelling school (rules, textbooks, issues teachers face). Students decide what type of school they prefer.	Interesting graphics Networking Pace of information
Jeffers Petroglyphs	Travois Program	Costumed role-play with Dakota girl and boy packing up to move locations. Interpreters described items and students predicted if a female or male would use said item.	Place students in small groups. Each group receives a parfleche/tipi bag with 3-4 items, accompanied by a printed description. Groups answer questions and present to class. Interpreter provides additional information.	Students must think about importance of objects for survival and who uses these items historically.	Interesting graphics (objects) Networking Pace of information Multi-tasking

2. Field trip component change (continued)

Historic site	Changed field trip component	Old way	New way	New way – critical thinking and problem solving skills addressed	New way – 21 st Century Learner attributes addressed
Mill City Museum	Scavenger Hunts	Students found pictures and answered concrete questions with right or wrong answers.	Students find grouped pictures and answer open-ended questions.	This incorporates thinking about how small ideas fit into larger themes that are introduced in the exhibits.	Random access
Minnesota History Center	Five minute welcome program to orient groups and establish proper museum etiquette.	Welcome program included staff lecture with students listening passively as information was shared.	Students are invited to take on the role of detectives throughout entire visit and to find clues in order to answer questions. Students are asked to read and evaluate various photo sets shown on a PowerPoint to actively determine proper museum etiquette.	Students compare and contrast photo sets using clues within photos. Staff use inquiry techniques to encourage students to consider "whys".	Interesting graphics Instant gratification Parallel processing Random access
North West Company Fur Post	Replace the program Hunting and Gathering and the program Fortunes and Perils with a new program.	Students race to gather food and learn about semi-nomadic people, their society, and successful survival strategies.	Students explore the same content independently and solve challenges in small groups.	Students gather facts, organize, and find solutions to problems.	Interesting graphics Networking Pace of information Parallel processing

Methods

MHS contracted with Wilder Research to design, carry out, analyze, and report findings from the Reinventing the Field Trip study. In collaboration with MHS staff, Wilder designed survey instruments, data collection protocol, and assisted in the data collection process. The tools from these activities are available in the Appendix. The "n" values represent the number of participants.

Design

The Reinventing the Field Trip study is designed as a post-test nonequivalent quasi-experiment. A quasi-experiment refers to the lack of random assignment in choosing field trip groups. Because field trips are carried out by request of the school and data collection is made possible through MHS or Wilder staff availability and coordination, random assignment is impractical. Nonequivalence refers to the differences between the treatment group and the control group prior to the experiment. The issue of nonequivalence and other challenges with the design will be explored further under Limitations.

Reinventing the Field Trip tests the hypotheses through a post-field trip survey with a treatment group and a control group. The treatment group receives the additional 21st century skills component as a part of their field trip (i.e., the New Way) and the control group does not receive the 21st century skills component (i.e., they experience the field trip the Old Way).

This design facilitates our ability to determine whether there are differences between the experiences of participants based on whether their field trip was conducted in the New Way or the Old Way. After completion of the field trip, surveys are administered to students, teachers, and chaperones. Each student, teacher, and chaperone survey included similar questions related to the hypotheses. Teacher and chaperone surveys also included questions related to perception of students' experiences.

Sample

MHS conducted post-field trip experience surveys with students, teachers, and chaperones at eight historic sites across Minnesota from May 6-June 9, 2011. Due to the nature of field trips, groups are not controlled for size or characteristics. As a result, there is great variation within the sample (Figures 3-5). Incentive for participation in the study was a \$25 gift certificate to the primary contact teacher (or equivalent) for school supplies.

3. Student sample

Historic site	Old Way (n)	New Way (n)	
Charles A. Lindbergh	67	90	
Forest History Center	82	65	
(Historic) Forestville	113	39	
(Historic) Fort Snelling	40	203	
Jeffers Petroglyphs	80	46	
Mill City Museum	51	47	
Minnesota History Center	137	91	
North West Company Fur Post	80	61	
Total	650	642	1,292

4. Teacher sample

Historic site	Old Way (n)	New Way (n)	
Charles A. Lindbergh	7	5	
Forest History Center	2	4	
(Historic) Forestville	5	2	
(Historic) Fort Snelling	2	9	
Jeffers Petroglyphs	7	2	
Mill City Museum	1	2	
Minnesota History Center	8	5	
North West Company Fur Post	4	4	
Total	36	33	69

5. Chaperone sample

Historic site	Old Way (n)	New Way (n)	
Charles A. Lindbergh	1	5	
Forest History Center	12	7	
(Historic) Forestville	17	7	
(Historic) Fort Snelling	15	17	
Jeffers Petroglyphs	4	6	
Mill City Museum	7	11	
Minnesota History Center	23	23	
North West Company Fur Post	1	12	
Total	80	88	168

Limitations

Limitations to the study include issues of internal validity and nonequivalence. In other words, the study is limited in its ability to scientifically determine the causes of the outcomes observed by the study. The study is also unable to reliably compare data across sites or characteristics. Each historic site is different in terms of content; the 21st century component added in the New Way at each site also differs. Furthermore, the small and unequal sample size, time constraints in data collection, pre-existing factors related to group experiences and characteristics, confounding variables during field trips such as differences in social dynamics, timing of activities, or even weather, for example, must be taken into account. Leading field trips in the Old Way has also been practiced by staff many times whereas the New Way is, as the name implies, also new to staff and, therefore, less practiced by nature.

In addition, the North West Company Fur Post Old Way data was collected using draft surveys; minor changes were made to the survey instruments after data collection at this site. Due to scheduling challenges, it was not feasible for the North West Company Fur Post to accommodate additional data collection for the Old Way after the surveys were finalized. Therefore, results from the North West Company Fur Post must be interpreted with particular care.

With these limitations in mind, only aggregate data is presented and interpretation of overall findings is carefully considered.

Field trip student characteristics

Below are the characteristics of the students who participated in the Reinventing the Field Trip study. This data was not collected for teachers and chaperones.

6. Gender (n=1,265)

	Percent
Female	52%
Male	48%

7. Grade (n=1,248)

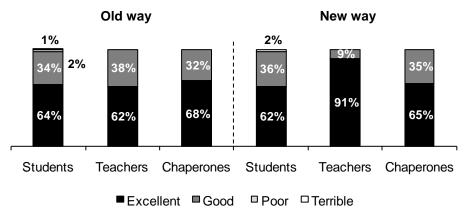
	Percent
3 rd	27%
4 th	37%
5 th	10%
6 th	16%
7 th	4%
8 th	6%

Findings

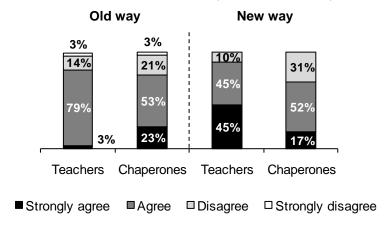
Participants' overall field trip experience

Results indicate that nearly all students, teachers, and chaperones had an excellent or good experience on their field trip in both the Old Way and the New Way (Figure 8). There are no considerable differences between findings for students or chaperones between Old and New. Teachers, however, rated their overall field trip experience as excellent more frequently in New (91%) than Old (62%). Teachers are also more likely to report they learned more about their students during New (90%) than Old (82%). Please refer to Figure 9.

8. Overall field trip experience



9. "I learned more about my students today."

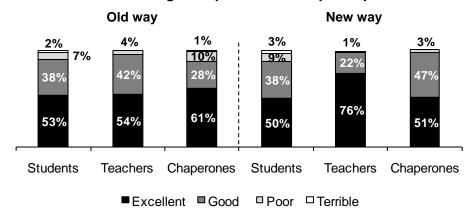


Ratings of specific field trip components

All participants rated specific field trip components they experienced at the historic site they visited and each historic site asked about different components. Teachers and chaperones also rated how they believed their students perceived each field trip component. Due to aforementioned limitations, data is not compared across sites or characteristics. Please refer to the Appendix for the specific field trip component content from each historic site.

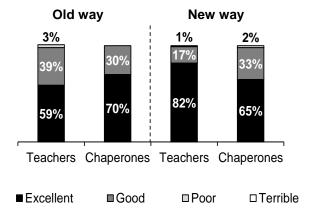
Aggregate data show positive ratings (excellent or good) from students, teachers and chaperones. There is little difference in students' ratings between the Old Way and the New Way. Chaperones' perceptions of the students' experiences are more positive in New (98% excellent or good) than Old (89% excellent or good). Teachers' perceptions of their students' experiences are positive in both Old and New, but more teachers rated students' experiences with specific field trip components as excellent in New (76%) than Old (54%). Please see Figure 10.

10. Overall student ratings of specific field trip components



Teachers and chaperones also rated specific field trip components positively. There is little difference in chaperone rating between Old and New. Teachers, however, rated New as excellent more frequently (82%) than Old (59%). Please see Figure 11.

11. Overall teacher and chaperone ratings of specific field trip components



Over two-fifths (43%) of teachers and chaperones rated their personal experience with one or more field trip component differently than the rating they perceived their students would choose. These teachers and chaperones were asked to explain why they rated their personal experience with different field trip components more positively or negatively.

Most of these teachers and chaperones gave critiques, regardless of whether their personal experience was more positive or negative than their students. In both Old and New, teachers and chaperones cited lack of time to do all the scheduled activities on the field trip, that many of the specific field trip components were not hands-on enough, and that there should have been more opportunities for students to ask and answer questions. In New field trips, many teachers and chaperones also commented on the amount or type of information. Some thought there was too much information being delivered in a short period of time or that the content may not be grade-level appropriate. Comments follow to illustrate these points:

- Some students struggled some and ran out of time making their project. That frustrated a few of them, but they still liked it. (Teacher Old Way)
- So complicated. There was a lot of information for so short a time. (Chaperone New Way)

Some teachers and chaperones said they enjoyed the hands-on interactive aspects of the field trip components. They especially liked when the students were given opportunities to ask and answer questions. These teachers and chaperones mention these aspects in both Old and New. Following are a couple of these comments:

■ Hands on is the key! (Chaperone – Old Way)

■ The afternoon was awesome! We will discuss, journal, draw, and share our learning experience. (Teacher – New Way)

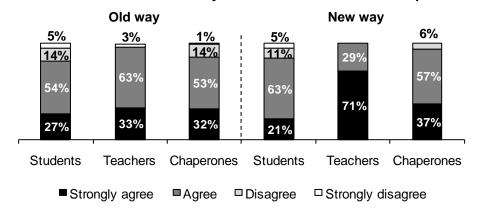
Teachers and chaperones also attribute some of the differences in ratings to the age of the students, explaining that children often rate experiences as less good or that children are unable to appreciate experiences the way an adult may. In particular, chaperones who experienced the field trip in the Old Way explained differences this way most frequently. Below are a couple of these comments:

- Some are too young to appreciate what they learn. (Chaperone Old Way)
- Students can be more negative about things. (Teacher New Way)

Students' attitude and knowledge ratings

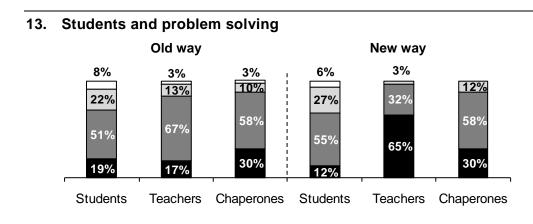
Aggregate data show students' attitude toward history and knowledge related to problem-solving is high in both the Old Way and the New Way. Students are slightly more likely to strongly agree or agree they like history more after their field trip in New (84%) than Old (81%). Teachers and chaperones are both more likely to strongly agree or agree students show an increase in their interest in history in New than Old. Teachers, in particular, are much more likely to strongly agree in New (71%) than Old (33%). Please refer to Figure 12.





There are no considerable differences between Old and New in students' perception of their problem solving skills. While students were asked whether they feel like they know more about how to solve problems, teachers and chaperones were asked whether students used critical thinking and problem solving during the field trip. And, while chaperones show no considerable difference between Old and New, teachers are much more likely to strongly

agree or agree that students used these 21st century learning skills during New (97%) than Old (84%). Please refer to Figure 13.



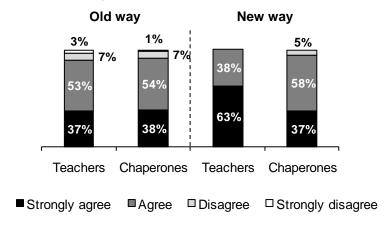
■ Agree

Teachers and chaperones were also asked whether the field trip connected history to things that are relevant to students' lives in the present and in the future. Both teachers and chaperones are more likely to strongly agree or agree that the field trip was relevant to their students in New than Old. Teachers, especially, are much more likely to strongly agree in New (63%) than Old (37%). Please refer to Figure 14.

□ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

14. "Today's trip connected history to things that are relevant to my students' life today and in the future"

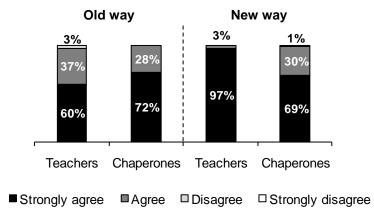


■ Strongly agree

Teachers' and chaperones' value of the Minnesota Historical Society

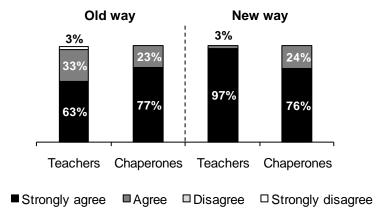
In general, nearly all teachers and chaperones highly value the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS), both in terms of their recommendation of the specific historic site program and in terms of MHS as a good resource to help teach Minnesota history (Figure 15).

15. "I would recommend this Minnesota Historical Society program to others"



There are no considerable differences in chaperones' ratings for recommendation of the MHS program or MHS as a good resource to teach in the Old Way or the New Way. Teachers, again, are much more likely to strongly agree in New than Old (Figure 16).

16. "The Minnesota Historical Society is a good resource to help teach Minnesota history"



Issues to consider

Results from Reinventing the Field Trip indicate the addition of 21st century learning skills components positively impacts overall experience, enjoyment of history and confidence in problem solving skills, as well as appreciation for the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS). Teachers, in particular, rated all areas positively more frequently in the New Way than the Old Way.

Overall, the New Way appears to more effectively achieve positive outcomes in the following areas:

- All participants (students, teachers, and chaperones) more frequently:
 - o Rate student interest in history as excellent or good
- Teachers and chaperones more frequently:
 - o Think the field trip connects history to things that are relevant in students' lives
 - o Think students had an excellent experience with specific field trip components
- Teachers more frequently:
 - Rate their overall field trip experience and experience with specific field trip components as excellent
 - o Think students use problem solving skills
 - o Recommend the specific historic site program
 - Consider MHS a good teaching resource

Students and chaperones did not demonstrate an increase between Old and New in the following areas:

- Overall field trip experience
- Rating of specific field trip components
- Problem solving

Wilder Research recommends that MHS considers the following in program development:

Examine the types of 21^{st} century learning skills employed at each historic site and determine their effectiveness and appropriateness for the site. In particular, contextual considerations such as length of field trip, student grade level, and amount of information may be important in the intensity and breadth of 21^{st} century learning skills applied.

These issues are particularly important, as some participants felt the type and amount of information relayed during the field trip should be delivered at a slower pace. Another consideration is participant feedback related to the inclusion of more hands-on activities and time for students to ask questions, which may be addressed via 21st century learning skills indirectly, but not explicitly.

Addressing these results in program development will help MHS improve programming to more effectively fulfill its mission of helping people pursue opportunities to preserve historical evidence, learning more about history, and demonstrating that they value history in their personal lives and society at large.

Appendix

Student survey

Teacher survey

Chaperone survey

Site-specific field trip content

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Student Survey



[HISTORIC SITE NAME] Student Survey

1.	_	errible	trip today? (P 3 Good 4 Exce		K ONE.)			
2.	How	did you like ea	ch of these thi	ngs on your tri	p?			
					Terrible	Poor	Good	Excellent
	a.	[SITE-SPECI	FIC ITEM A]		1	_ 2	3	 4
	b.	[SITE-SPECI	FIC ITEM B]		1	_ 2	_ 3	_ 4
	С.	[SITE-SPECI	FIC ITEM C]		□ ¹	_ 2	_ 3	_ 4
	d.	[SITE-SPECI	FIC ITEM D]		 1	_ 2	_ 3	_ 4
3.		Strongly agree	☐³ Disa		CHECK ONE.)			
4.	_	Strongly agree	☐³ Disa		ve problems. (Pl	EASE CHE	CK ONE.)	
5.	[SITE	SPECIFIC KN	NOWLEDGE (QUESTION]				
6.	What	was your favo	rite part of you	ur field trip toda	ay?			
7.	What	was your leas	t favorite part	of your field tri	p today?			
8.		a (PLEASE C Boy □² Gi						
9.	l am i	n	grade.					

Teacher Survey



[HISTORIC SITE NAME] Teacher Survey

		Terrible	Poor	Good	Exce
a.	[SITE-SPECIFIC ITEM A]	 1	2	3	
b.	[SITE-SPECIFIC ITEM B]	 1	_ 2	_ 3	
c.	[SITE-SPECIFIC ITEM C]	 1	 2	_ 3	
d.	[SITE-SPECIFIC ITEM D]	1	_ 2	 3	
a.	[SITE-SPECIFIC ITEM A]	1	1 2	 3	
a. b.	[SITE-SPECIFIC ITEM A] [SITE-SPECIFIC ITEM B]	□¹ □¹	□ ²	3 3	-
		-			_ _ _

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		
5.	I would recommend this Minnesota Historical Society program to others.	 1	_ 2	 3	 4		
6.	Minnesota Historical Society is a good resource to help teach Minnesota history.	 1	_ 2	_ 3	 4		
7.	I learned more about my students today.	1	_ 2	_ 3	_ 4		
8.	My students learned about Minnesota History today.	 1	 2	_ 3	_ 4		
9.	My students' interest in history increased today.	1	2	 3	4		
10.	Today's trip connected history to things that are relevant to my students' life today and in the future.	 1	_ 2	_ 3	 4		
11.	My students used critical thinking and problem solving today.	 1	 2	_ 3	 4		
12.	What was your favorite part of your field trip today?)					
13.	What was your least favorite part of your field trip today?						
14.	How can we improve our field trip services?						

Thank you for your input. We really appreciate it!

Chaperone Survey



[HISTORIC SITE NAME] Chaperone Survey

		Terrible	Poor	Good	Exce
a.	[SITE-SPECIFIC ITEM A]	 1	2	3	
b.	[SITE-SPECIFIC ITEM B]	_ 1	_ 2	_ 3	
c.	[SITE-SPECIFIC ITEM C]	□ 1	_ 2	_ 3	
d.	[SITE-SPECIFIC ITEM D]	_ 1	 2	_ 3	
	w do you think your CHILD/CHILDREN	would rate the follow Terrible	Poor	Good	Exce
Ho a.	w do you think your CHILD/CHILDREN		J	•	Exce
			Poor	Good	Exce
a.	[SITE-SPECIFIC ITEM A]	Terrible	Poor	Good	? Exce
a. b.	[SITE-SPECIFIC ITEM A] [SITE-SPECIFIC ITEM B]	Terrible	Poor 2 2	Good	Exce

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		
5.	I would recommend this Minnesota Historical Society program to others.	1	 2	_ 3	4		
6.	Minnesota Historical Society is a good resource to learn about Minnesota history.	 1	_ 2	_ 3	4		
7.	I learned more about my child/children today.	1	_ 2	_ 3	4		
8.	My child/children learned about Minnesota History today.	 1	_ 2	_ 3	 4		
9.	My child's/children's interest in history increased today.	1	_ 2	_ 3	_ 4		
10.	Today's trip connected history to things that are relevant to my child's/children's life today and in the future.	1	_ 2	_ 3	 4		
11.	My child/children used critical thinking and problem solving today.	1	_ 2	 3	 4		
12.	What was your favorite part of your field trip today?						
13.	What was your least favorite part of your field trip today?						
14.	How can we improve our field trip services?						

Thank you for your input. We really appreciate it!

Site-specific field trip content

Forestville

- A) The House Tour (OLD)
- B) The General Store (OLD)
- C) The Workshop (NEW)
- D) The Garden (NEW)

Northwest Company

- A) Tour of the Post and Encampment (NEW)
- B) Making a Sac a Feu (Fire Bag) (NEW)
- C) Hunting and Gathering Game (OLD)

History Center

- A) Orientation
- B) Exploring the exhibits (NEW)
- C) Classroom lesson (OLD)
- D) Grainland

Mill City

- A) Orientation (NEW)
- B) Minneapolis in 19 Minute Flat Movie (NEW)
- C) Scavenger Hunt in the Exhibits (NEW)
- D) Observation Deck (OLD)
- E) Flour Tower
- F) Round the Mills

Fort Snelling

- A) The Schoolhouse
- B) The Laundry (OLD)
- C) The Indian Agency (OLD)
- D) The Commandment's House
- E) The Parade Ground
- F) The Hospital (OLD)
- G) Dred Scott's Quarters (OLD)
- H) The Blacksmith Shop (OLD)

Lindbergh

- A) House Tour
- B) Lindbergh Documentary Video (NEW)
- C) Exhibit exploration
- D) Dead Reckoning (NEW)

Forest History Center

- A) Clerk's office/camp store (NEW)
- B) The bunkhouse (NEW)
- C) The cook shack (NEW)
- D) The barn (OLD)
- E) The blacksmith (NEW)
- F) Sawing/the filing shack (OLD)

Jeffers

- A) Multimedia presentation
- B) The Travois (OLD)
- C) Atlatl (NEW)
- D) Petroglyphs tour (OLD)
- E) Winter count