REPORT FROM THE FIELD

YELLOW BUSLOADS FROM HELL: A MUSEUM FIELD TRIP IN THREE VOICES

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ABSTRACT. The purpose of this paper is to present data collected over eight years from teachers, tour guides, students, and museum staff about field trips. Readers' theatre, an alternate format for presenting qualitative data, provides a setting for the voices of the teacher, museum educator and student. The paper then addresses three issues arising from the readers' theatre presentation. First, the role of teacher training institutions in preparing teachers to use museums as curriculum enhancement is addressed, and suggestions are made for incorporating museum visits into units of instruction. Next, we discuss the recreational versus educational role of the museum, pointing out that while a trip away from the school can be fun, it can also be an educational opportunity. Finally, the compatibility of paradigms influencing the expectations of teachers and museum educators during field trips is explored.

RÉSUMÉ. Cet article a pour but de présenter des données recueillies pendant plus de huit ans auprès d'enseignants, de guides, d'étudiants et de membres du personnel des musées à propos des visites de groupe. Le forum des lecteurs, nouvelle tribune de présentation des données qualitatives, permet aux enseignants, éducateurs des musées et étudiants de se faire entendre. L'article aborde ensuite trois questions découlant de cette présentation. Il traite tout d'abord du rôle des établissements de formation des maîtres en ce qui a trait aux mesures visant à préparer les enseignants à exploiter les ressources des musées pour enrichir les programmes d'études; des suggestions sont également proposées pour intégrer les visites des musées dans les unitées d'enseignement. L'article établit ensuite une comparaison entre le rôle récréatif et éducatif des musées, en soulignant que les visites peuvent certes être une source de plaisir pour les élèves, mais qu'elles offrent aussi des possibilités éducatives. Enfin, l'article examine la compatibilité des paradigmes qui influent sur les attentes des enseignants et des éducateurs des musées durant les visites.

A yellow school bus loaded with noisy elementary students pulls up to the main entrance of the museum. The teacher takes a few moments to quiet the class before the bus doors open for them to disembark. The students rush off

the bus and down the sidewalk towards the museum, ignoring the teacher's instructions to proceed in an orderly fashion and line up quietly at the door. Their excitement is understandable: it's mid-June and summer break is close at hand; this field trip has liberated the group from the stuffy confines of the classroom; and it is the first visit for some to this museum.

The students, teacher, and parent supervisors enter and assemble in the foyer of the museum, where they are greeted by the staff person who will guide their tour. More than just touring the displays, these children will be participating in a program designed specifically to enhance a component of the curriculum. As the museum educator begins her opening remarks, everyone is anticipating what the next hour will bring.

This paper begins by highlighting the museum visit. The voices of the museum educator, teacher, and a student tell the story of their assumptions, expectations, and experiences of the education program. The paper concludes by addressing some of the issues arising from the interpretations of the visit.

The voices of the teacher and student are composites of observations, exit evaluations, conversations, and written correspondence collected over eight years. The voice of the museum educator is a combination of Lee's experiences as a museum educator and those of the tour guides she supervises. The voices of the teacher and museum educator are augmented by current literature from the fields of museum education and curriculum. Readers' theatre is used as a creative way of presenting the findings so that all three voices can be heard (Donmover & Yennie-Donmover, 1995; Ellis & Bochner, 1996; Wiebe & Brodie, 1998). Readers' theatre is not a play; it is a scripted dialogue that is read. Instead of acting, the voices of the readers are used to emphasize and give life to the text. Props, if used, are minimal, although the stage may be set (Dixon, Davies & Politano, 1996). This readers' theatre presentation is not a dialogue among the three participants; it represents the thoughts of each about the program during its presentation. It has been selected to present the data in a way that, we hope, accurately captures the essence of the teacher, the museum educator, and the student, using their own words (verbal or written) whenever possible.

Land of the Midnight Sun is an hour-long program designed for grade one, and fits into the social studies curriculum on heritage and interdependence. Developed with the assistance of an Inuit professor of education, the program's original intent was to complement a temporary display about the history of northern Canadian archaeology. The program proved to be so successful that it was kept as a regular offering to teachers long after the display had gone. In the first half hour of the program, the children are seated on the floor in a semi-circle where they handle props, or replicas of artifacts, and learn about family roles in the Inuit culture of long ago. A woman's ulu or multi-purpose knife, a man's snowknife, a soapstone lamp, and a woman's sewing kit with bone needles and sinew thread are some of the artifacts passed around among the students to demonstrate the division of labour in the family. Students also view soapstone sculptures given as gifts to former Prime Minister John Diefenbaker as examples of Inuit art. The tour ends with the students carving a piece of soapstone into a pendant and playing Inuit games.

The program was developed from a traditional perspective, with measurable behavioural objectives. Through lectures supported by visual aids (artifacts) tour guides would inform students about the roles of Inuit family members and the tools used in performing those roles. However, in the past two years a shift has taken place in the way the program is delivered. The emphasis is less on lecturing and more on using students' knowledge and experiences as points of reference for comparing and contrasting new learnings about Inuit culture.

MUSEUM EDUCATOR: Only a few minutes into the introduction with this group and it is evident that they are not prepared for the program. They don't even know what they're here to see. Teachers find this program, like field trips generally, most useful as an introduction to a topic or unit (Willis, 1997). But with only a few days remaining in the school year, it is unlikely that this class is starting an Inuit unit. The teacher didn't complete any of the pre-visit classroom activities developed for this program; consequently the students have no background knowledge of the Inuit. Given the fact that there has been no advanced preparation, I can only assume that their visit here is merely to pass the time, which is unfortunate, because the educational value of a museum visit is squandered if the visit has no purpose (Willis, 1997). Well, I'll have to modify the tour as an introduction to Inuit culture. Maybe they'll enjoy handling the artifacts. My approach will be to use the students' own experiences and knowledge as a reference for building an understanding of the Inuit lifestyle (Palmer, 1969). If the children understand the function of a paring knife used in their own homes, then they can add to their knowledge an ulu's function.

TEACHER: This is not what I had expected. I was led to believe that the tour would be more fun. We're here on a day off from school. It's June, and these kids are

too hyper to teach them anything. The idea of coming on this trip was for recreational purposes, as an escape from the daily routine (Allen, 1960).

STUDENT: This place is cool!

TEACHER: The museum should provide coffee for the adults.

MUSEUM EDUCATOR: Judging by their lack of preparation, I assume the reason for this class' visit is non-curricular, unrelated to learning. It appears that the visit isn't intended to inspire questions, exploration, reflection, and discussion (Mann, 1997; Willis, 1997). And it isn't intended to engage students actively in learning in order to meet educational objectives outside of the classroom (Knapp, 1996). But the program was developed incorporating objectives, following a similar pattern that teachers might use to create a lesson plan. First, the curriculum topic was chosen. Next, learning objectives were established and learning experiences were selected. Artifacts from the collection were chosen to explain or enhance the objectives (Tyler, 1949). Pedagogical issues such as the pacing of the program, questioning techniques, and motivation were also considered in the development of this program.

TEACHER: I'm not impressed. This is just like a lesson at school.

STUDENT: The soapstone lamp is heavy. By the way, I wonder how old the tour guide is?

MUSEUM EDUCATOR. These children are a little unruly, particularly this one child on the end. Why won't the teacher step in and manage his behaviour? Classroom management is the job of the teacher and parent helpers, not the museum staff. The teacher is just sitting there, and the two parents are down in our staff lounge drinking coffee. I don't want to say anything to this child. I made that mistake once when I asked a child not to speak out of turn and he burst into tears. Later, the teacher told me that he was on a specific individualized behaviour management program and my methods were unfamiliar to him. Now I'm reluctant to single out a child for management purposes. It would have been easier to include this child in discussions if the students were wearing name tags. Calling on a student by using his or her name is helpful in building rapport, and useful for classroom management. Perhaps a word to the group about their overall behaviour might be sufficient.

TEACHER: I don't believe it! This tour guide does not know how to manage classroom behaviour. And so far, she hasn't spoken a word of French. I've called twice since booking this program to request a French-speaking tour guide since we're from an immersion school. The secretary reassured me that she would try to get someone who could give the program in French. She said she'd try to get the French-speaking tour guide that works on Wednesdays to come in today.

STUDENT: I liked the ulu. It was fun.

TEACHER: I had thought there was a tour of the gallery. The presentation was, maybe, a little too long. The tour guide should give students a chance to guess what the artifacts are before telling them. More time could be spent on the artifacts. Why not have the students glean factual information about the artifacts through observation? First, they use their five senses to gather data about the object. Next, they develop basic concepts and ideas that are translated into words. Finally, the students discuss and compare their findings with others, relating it to previous experience or knowledge. Observation of the artifact by students using sensory perception, reflection, and judgment develops their knowledge acquisition skills (Hooper-Greenhill, 1991). The intent of an artifact, or object-lesson, is to train the senses, develop thinking skills, and to develop language (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994). More factual information about the artifact might be gained from using the observation approach. Besides using their senses to determine texture, colour, and shape, their observations might include the object's use, meaning, materials, associations, production and design (Hooper-Greenhill, 1991).

To experience museum visits fully, we first have to know how to look and how to learn from objects. Before students can think about a chair, for example, they have to be able to observe its shape and size, how it was constructed, what materials were used, whether the chair has any carving or other decoration. Then they can think about the chair, compare it to other chairs, make hypotheses about the maker and the owner and thus, relate this one object to its culture (English & Lipton-Doidge, 1997, p. 7).

MUSEUM EDUCATOR: The students have passed around a chunk of raw soapstone, viewed soapstone sculptures, and handled a soapstone lamp, and now they will carve their own soapstone pendants. They will be able to feel what it is like to work with soapstone, to carve a design into their own soapstone chunk. This part of the program particularly recognizes that, unlike adults who are more likely to be satisfied with viewing and being told about objects, children's responses are more tactile in nature (Alderson & Low, 1996). The objectives set for this part of the program are appropriate to the child's level to accommodate current pedagogical practices, and to address his or her urge to touch, feel, and handle objects. (Alderson & Low, 1996)

TEACHER: There's not enough time for the children to finish carving. More time could be spent on this. They should have bigger chunks of soapstone.

STUDENT: I like the soapstone carving. I really lert [sic] about Inuit. I wonder if we can come back again?

TEACHER: The presentation was at times above the grade one level. It would be a better tour if the presenter was more knowledgeable, did not need to refer to

her notes, and was more aware of the needs of grade one. Some of the girls didn't care for one of the games at the end – the Walrus Race. And they should have more pictures and videos.

STUDENT: Awesome! I had fun. Does the tour guide sleep here at night?

Issues arising

Consumers or teachers arrive at the museum with certain expectations about the service that is to be provided by the museum staff. The museum educator also has expectations for the use of the program. These expectations can be analyzed in terms of three issues that are evident in the "yellow busloads from hell" scenario which has been presented here. The first is the issue of teacher training. The second is the educational versus the recreational role of the museum. The third is a compatibility of paradigms.

Teacher training

Without question, museums offer educational opportunities not available in the classroom. While some museums provide an outreach service where a staff person or volunteer brings artifacts into the classroom, not all museums can afford to release their holdings. Rather than the museum going to the classroom, the classroom must come to the museum. Visits to the museum are on a continuum from curricular to noncurricular. The teacher in the readers' theatre scenario had a noncurricular, recreational outing planned. The visit was not meant to be an integral part of a unit, therefore did not maximize the educational potential of the museum. One wonders: What training was provided by the faculty of education in using out-of-classroom resources?

Hopefully, student teachers learn not only to value museums as curriculum resources, but to use these resources effectively. Careful planning and an understanding of current child development theories are the keys to unlocking a successful museum visit.

In most curriculum methods classes, student teachers are taught yearly, unit, and lesson planning. The yearly plan, usually developed prior to the beginning of the school year or term, is an overview of the topics to be covered. It is the year at a glance. Our "teacher from hell", for example, might have scheduled the month of June for a social studies unit on the Inuit, with a field trip tentatively arranged for sometime in the first week. The unit plan consists of lesson plans for teaching the curriculum topic, and other resources deemed necessary. The lesson

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plans specify the content to be taught, the teaching strategy, and activities students will complete to apply the new information. The visit to the museum is one lesson among several about the topic. Like any other lesson, it flows in sequence. Lankford (1992) suggests that the field trip provides concrete, hands-on experiences, and should occur at the beginning of the unit, with the more abstract learning to follow in the classroom. The museum program as a lesson is one way that student teachers can be taught how to use out-of-classroom resources. There are other possibilities.

Rather than select the curriculum topic first, then search for an appropriate museum program, student teachers can be challenged to select a museum program and let the curriculum emerge from it. For example, our teacher from hell could have brought her students to participate in *Land of the Midnight Sun* to generate interest in a broad topic. Back in the classroom, questions arising from the visit would be identified and pursued as research projects.

Another option is to use the museum as a classroom, although the logistics are more challenging because several visits are required. With this method, the Land of the Midnight Sun program becomes a springboard for learning in several curriculum areas. The concepts addressed in the program are family, community, and interdependence, but learning in the museum-as-classroom is expanded to include other cultures in Canada, Canada's membership in the Commonwealth family, cultures and traditions of peoples in Commonwealth countries, and global interdependence. While the original intent of Land of the Midnight Sun was to enhance a component of the grade one social studies curriculum, other subject areas naturally flow from the program. For example, Inuit soapstone sculptures could be the focus for a study of the history of sculpture, the elements of design, famous regional sculptors, or the various sculptures from around the world that are part of the museum's collections. The sewing kit used in the program can be the springboard for teaching students to sew a button on a garment, or for learning about fashion by examining the silk robe on the rare Japanese doll on display in the gallery.

In the readers' theatre scenario above, the teacher suggests that artifacts be used in an object-lesson. The purpose of the object lesson is to elicit information about the object using the senses. Some of the research categories include the object's use, meaning, materials, associations, production, and design (Hooper-Greenhill, 1991). English and LiptonDoidge (1997) modify the categories to fit the curriculum areas of social studies, drama, physical education, music, and language arts. For example, interviewing the object's owner, or writing the obituary of the object's owner if deceased, would be language arts activities.

Object learning is not a new concept. It came to North America from England as early as the eighteenth century, reaching its zenith after 1850 (Tanner & Tanner, 1980). It was Pestalozzi who has largely been credited with using objects in teaching. Dewey (1915) states:

In this phase of his activity as a teacher, Pestalozzi was particularly zealous in building up schemes of object-lesson teaching in which children should learn the spatial and numerical relations of things and acquire a vocabulary for expressing all their qualities. (pp. 65-66)

Using objects for lessons soon developed into a method of pedagogy. The objectives of object-learning "were to develop alertness, accuracy of perception, concepts and generalizations, and vocabulary" (Tanner & Tanner, 1980, p. 215). However, object-learning as a teaching method came under scrutiny as it became more formalized. Lessons built around objects were unrelated and lacked an overall plan (Tanner & Tanner, 1990). Some lessons went off track, leading to discussion of one topic rather than the one set for that class, and others were merely vocabulary lessons.

The strength of object-learning is that direct experience with an object is a substitution for teacher verbalization about an object (Tanner & Tanner, 1980). The legacy of object-learning is learning by experience, learning as inquiry, visual aids, and field trips. By making curriculum matches as in the English and Lipton-Doidge (1997) example, objectlearning becomes more practical, and perhaps more enticing to teachers.

Another way that student teachers can use museums is by teaching their students to read exhibits like books. Each artifact in a display is like a word in a sentence; each display is like a sentence. All of the small displays combine into an exhibit, which is like a novel. The exhibit has a story to tell, and students can learn to read the story for the message being conveyed by the exhibit. Like a novel, students can learn about the historical setting for the story, the life and times of the author (curator), and the manner in which the story is communicated to the reader or visitor.

Some of the same pedagogical principles used in the classroom apply to the museum visit. For example, the concept of advanced organizers (Ausubel, 1968) used by classroom teachers to prepare students for

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what they will learn in a lesson has applications for the museum visit. Visitors that are informed in advance of what they will see in an exhibit, or what the intent of the display is, will be more comfortable and better prepared to learn (Hein, 1998). Therefore, presenting students with the concepts that they will be learning, and providing them with an overview of the program prior to the field trip, are two ways of applying advanced organizers to the museum visit.

Most curriculum methods courses address the issue of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1985) within the classroom by demonstrating how student teachers can incorporate activities for all learning styles into their lesson plans. Yet how many curriculum methods courses advocate museums as alternative learning environments that draw upon a wide variety of intelligences? Some students may shine at a museum who do not shine in the classroom (Mann, 1997). Seen as an extension of the curriculum, the museum visit becomes more than a day off, or a reward for good behaviour where 'troublemakers' are left behind (Mann, 1997).

With any out-of-classroom experience, there are logistics to consider. These include the scheduling of transportation, recruitment of parent helpers, parental or guardian permission forms, and perhaps the collection of additional fees from students to defray transportation or museum admission costs. Organizing the logistics of a field trip is one component that student teachers need to consider; another is organizing the field trip as a curriculum extension. A curriculum methods class is a logical place to introduce field trip planning to student teachers. This is the forum for teaching teachers to view museums as both curriculum resources and as venues for addressing students' differing learning styles.

Recreational vs. educational role of the museum

In the readers' theatre scenario, the teacher expected the museum to fill a recreational role. The visit was not intended to meet the educational or curriculum objectives of a unit of study. At best, the objective might have been to expose the students to a positive out-of-classroom experience. The recreational use of a museum does not preclude learning. It means that the teacher's goal for being outside the classroom is different than for an educational visit. There are fewer expectations of students to gather and retain information from the museum, and there will likely not be any pre- or post-visit activities related to the learning experience.

Using the museum for educational purposes implies that the students are on an information-gathering quest related to a topic of study in the classroom. There most likely will be pre-visit classroom activities and a post-visit debriefing, and students can expect to be tested on what they have learned. The museum visit is like a piece of a puzzle. Certain information gathered at the museum fits together with lectures, guest speakers, films, discussions, and library research that happen in the classroom about the topic being studied. The tour or program at the museum enhances the topic and is geared in its use of language, artifacts, questioning, and pacing to a particular grade level.

The two roles of the museum mentioned in this segment fit on two opposing ends of a continuum. On one end is the recreational role of the museum, in which the museum is valued for the relaxation and entertainment it provides. On the other end is the museum as educator, filling a role similar to a school. In both the museum and the school, a professional educator has been hired to teach students the curriculum by chopping it up into lesson chunks. Between the educational and recreational roles of the museum is an area combining both. There is a long tradition of the museum fulfilling both roles. For example, in early nineteenth century Britain, museums displayed natural, historical and cultural objects so that the public, regardless of class, could educate themselves (Hooper-Greenhill, 1991). Initially, the museum was envisioned as a place for families to visit on a Sunday afternoon, not only for recreation, but for cultural education, thus promoting positive familv values rather than the alternative outing to public houses (Bennett, 1995). Today, museums continue to provide a service of public education through self-guided exhibits, thus maintaining a tradition of being one of many institutions that provide education for the populace (Hein, 1998). Perhaps some teachers still view museums in their historic combined educational and recreational role.

Compatibility of paradigms

Each lesson plan teachers create has a particular slant. If analyzed, the lesson might be labeled as traditional or critical theory-oriented, or interpretive, or constructivist. For example, a teacher grounded in a traditionalist paradigm has a linearly structured lesson plan. This teacher views curriculum development as a technical act, and the purpose of schooling is to promote or produce learning (Posner, 1988). The key ingredients of this approach to curriculum development and lesson planning are the objectives, the content, the program or lesson delivery, and the evaluation (Tyler, 1949). The curriculum is seen as an ends-mean plan, course of action, or document to guide the teaching and learning process with aims, goals, measurable objectives and learn-

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ing outcomes. Teachers are the experts while students are extrinsically motivated passive receptacles of knowledge. Typical teaching strategies include lectures, with students using textbooks and workbooks to complete assignments. Emphasis is placed on understanding facts. A traditional museum educator creates programs with aims, goals, and learning outcomes. The programs are often delivered by lecture, with artifacts being used to convey facts.

A teacher influenced by the critical theory perspective brings a different dimension to lesson planning than the traditional teacher. Critical theory empowers teachers to reflect upon the dominant class structure and critique the ways in which the curriculum is used to perpetuate the status quo (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998). School, and schooling, is part of a larger, oppressive social order from which we are urged by critical theorists to liberate ourselves. The root activity of this orientation is reflection, in which "the actor through the critical analytic process uncovers and makes explicit the tacit and hidden assumptions and intentions held" (Aoki, 1980, p. 16). Teachers are seen as agents of change within a classroom. Their role is to question the curriculum by asking what knowledge is of most worth, and whose interests are being served by the curriculum. The museum educator aligned with this orientation would use artifacts to encourage visitors to reflect upon race, class, and gender issues. A program such as Land of the Midnight Sun might be used as a vehicle for exploring the thorny museum issue of the repatriation of Native artifacts, or discussing whose interests are served by non-Natives retelling the story of Native life.

A teacher from the interpretive paradigm emphasizes understanding in terms of the meanings given to situations by people (Aoki, 1980). Communication for the purposes of sharing experiences, creating a deeper understanding of a situation, and finding commonalities among experiences is the root activity of this paradigm. The approach to curriculum is also different than the traditional paradigm, for it acknowledges that people give their own meanings to situations:

The key focus of curriculum activity is not the content, the subject matter per se, but rather the individual. Subject matter tentatively selected in the development process has importance only to the degree that a student can find meaning in it for himself or herself. Subject matter should provide opportunities for a reflection on and the grist for a critique of knowledge, for engaging the student dynamically in the creation of meaning. (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998, p. 203) A museum educator who uses this paradigm as a program development guide will emphasize the knowledge and understandings students bring to the program as a foundation for building new learning. Individual experiences are valued, and students are encouraged to share the meaning they make of their museum visit.

Museum educators do not know which paradigm guides the direction each teacher takes in developing unit and lesson plans, or where the museum visit fits into the yearly plan. The style of the museum educator may clash with that of the teacher. For example, a "traditionalist" museum educator with an objectives-based, lecture style Land of the Midnight Sun program may clash with the critical theorist teacher expecting the program to use artifacts to encourage students to reflect on the power relationships between the Canadian government and Native groups. Or the traditionalist program may clash with the interpretive teacher who wants the students to gain a deeper understanding of what community might have meant to people who lived long ago in the Arctic as compared to what community means to students today. Are the criticisms of the program expressed by some teachers in exit evaluations an indication that the museum educators did not meet their paradigm needs? Conversely, were the accolades given by some teachers on the exit evaluations an indication that the museum educator's traditionalist-based program matched their traditionalist-based unit?

Epilogue

Each school group's visit to the museum is different. More often than not, teachers and students have a positive experience. However there will always be teachers whose expectations will not be met. The fault may lie with the teacher, the museum program, or both. Museum staff may not clearly outline the objectives of the program to the teacher, or the expectations of him/her prior to and during the visit. Teachers may view the program as recreational, thus ignoring the required pre-visit preparations. Perhaps more teachers would leave as satisfied customers if they were taught as student teachers how to integrate museum programs into their units of study. Extending pedagogy beyond the classroom into the museum emphasizes the educational role of the museum and provides students with an alternative learning environment. Teachers who recognize the value of the museum as a curriculum resource are the ones who arrive at the front entrance in a yellow busload from heaven. In summary, we recommend the following do's and don'ts to teachers when visiting museums. Do integrate the visit with your curriculum, preferably at the beginning of your unit of study so that it will generate questions back in the classroom. Do make use of any pre-visit and postvisit materials provided by the museum. Do provide constructive criticisms for the improvement of programs by museum educators. Do recognize that hundreds, if not thousands, of school children will participate in any given program, and it is challenging for museum educators to create a program that will meet everyone's expectations. Do let museum staff know in advance if students have special needs. Don't forget to enjoy your visit!

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Fortunately, not all museum visits are busloads from hell; there are busloads from heaven. Most teachers arrive for the program having completed the pre-visit materials. For some teachers, the museum visit is an annual event and they have realistic expectations of the program. The following are positive comments made by teachers and students about the program.

TEACHER: Well done! The tour guide made the presentation interesting and pertinent. The kids asked lots of questions! The tour guide had a good rapport with the students.

STUDENT: Cool!

TEACHER: Knowledgeable with subject matter. It was fast moving which is necessary to keep the attention of 6-7 year olds.

STUDENT: Neat!

TEACHER: An excellent, highly stimulating variety of hands-on interactive activities. The artifacts are important since children need "hands-on" experiences.

STUDENT: Wow! We learned lots of new things.

TEACHER: Reviewed many concepts which have been discussed as well as introduced new concepts. We had our questions answered. We have been to this presentation before so I had a good idea of what to expect.

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