

Executive Summary:

The Impact of Beyond Classrooms Kingston on Host Sites

This paper explores the ways in which the programming of Beyond Classrooms Kingston has impacted its current host sites. Research undertaken to come to the following conclusions, involved the participation of eight site curators and educational program coordinators, based on the completion of a four-question survey.

1: How do host sites benefit from their experience with Beyond Classrooms?:

- host site reached its participation goal of expanding, or improving, its community outreach program:
 - expanded what the site could offer to a public audience
 - enhanced public knowledge of the site
 - highlighted educational programming, including both summer and March break camps
- increase in inquiries by other teachers and parents looking to visit the site through scheduled field trips
- publicity received:
 - social media platforms
 - local media coverage, including newspaper articles and television programs

2: How does the week of Beyond Classrooms programming function at a cultural site? Did it live up to expectations? Were overall coordination and communications adequate?

- day to day operations were minimally affected by the presence of Beyond Classrooms; sites were able to proceed with their daily activities with little to no disruption in their regular routines
- members of the visiting public commented on how positive it was to see a class of young students engaging with the historical and cultural material of the site, and that this had not disrupted their own time at the site
- Beyond Classrooms programming was self-sufficient and operated on its own within the site (involvement of the staff of the host sites varied depending on the site; if staff wanted to be involved in daily programming they were, and if they did not want to be involved they were not required to be)
- exhibits, materials, and building spaces utilized by Beyond Classrooms were treated by the students with respect and in a professional manner, for the duration of their week-long engagement at the site
- a constant line of communication between the Beyond Classrooms program coordinator ensured that host site coordinators were always aware of how the program was functioning within their site

3. How does Beyond Classrooms' involvement with its host sites address the challenges of presenting historical material to a broader public audience?:

- boosts attendance, particularly of a younger audience
- focus on one theme of study helps to improve the engagement of the students and makes the cultural material relatable to topics they have been introduced to in school
- promotes the importance of studying cultural topics in juxtaposition to contemporary subjects
- introduces students to new materials, and the ways in which people engage with different historical and cultural issues
- due to spending a significant amount of time in these cultural locations, students begin to feel comfortable in cultural sites and feel empowered to seek out and explore other local sites with family and friends

4. What is the role of the historian in working with the Beyond Classrooms program?

- being a subject matter expert: providing research on the topics being addressed by the class and ensuring that the information connected well with the overall theme of study for the week
- function as a fact checker when questions from the students arose
- when needed, help facilitate guest speakers and plan activities that related to the topics and themes studied by the class
- the historian/curator had the opportunity to explain their role within the museum or gallery, introducing students to new career paths within the cultural and heritage community

In conclusion, the benefits that Beyond Classrooms presents to improving the community outreach programs of its host sites, as well as its ability to help spread awareness of these sites to a younger demographic, make it significantly beneficial to the wider heritage community of the City of Kingston and its surrounding areas.

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