

GOODMAN RESEARCH GROUP, INC.
Program Evaluation • Consultation • Market Research

Passport to Learning Final Evaluation Report

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SUBMITTED TO

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INTRODUCTION

Passport to Learning is a program offered by the Shelburne Museum that aims to introduce and engage K-8 students in social studies, art, language arts, math and science. The program consists of a series of 12 hands-on, facilitated workshops that meet the educational standards from Vermont's Framework of Standards and Grade Expectations.

In Spring 2010, Goodman Research Group, Inc. was contracted by the Shelburne Museum to evaluate the *Passport to Learning* program, which is funded by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The evaluation sought to assess the influence of the program on students and educators through an online educator survey. Survey topics included:

- Which interactive workshops the students attended
- Whether and how desirable and justifiable the field trips are to educators
- Whether and how the field trips fit in to the teachers' curricula
- Whether and how much teachers prepared for the field trip and what follow-up there was in the classroom
- Learning outcomes experienced by their students
- Any logistical issues around the field trip experience
- Demographic information about the teachers, their students, and their school.

METHODS

The evaluation covered three cohorts of school group field trips to the Shelburne Museum: Spring 2010, Fall 2010, and Spring 2011. In each of these seasons, GRG sent out a survey link, approximately one week after their museum visit, to all educators who attended the *Passport to Learning* program with their students. Prior to GRG contacting the educators, the Shelburne Museum sent out an email explaining GRG's role in the *Passport to Learning* evaluation and requesting that educators complete the survey.

At least three reminder emails were sent to instructors who had not responded to the survey invitation and for whom we had valid email addresses. The results reported are from the 184 teachers across the three cohorts who responded to the survey. See Table 1 for response rates.

Table 1: Response Rates

| | Number of Teachers Invited | Invalid Emails | Number of Reminders Sent | Completed Surveys | Response Rate |
|-------------|----------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Spring 2010 | 106 | 2 | 4 | 65 | 66% |
| Fall 2010 | 60 | – | 4 | 36 | 60% |
| Spring 2011 | 144 | 5 | 4 | 83 | 58% |

GRG processed and analyzed the educator survey data (see Appendix A for the Annotated Educator Survey). A brief summary of responses follows below.

RESULTS

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS AND THEIR STUDENTS

The majority of educators were middle-aged women who have been teaching for an average of 16 years. Almost all of them (90%) have at least a Bachelor’s degree and half of them have a Master’s degree. Most educators taught elementary school-aged children in the content areas of social studies, language arts, reading, math, and science.

Schools that participated in the *Passport to Learning* program are lower- to middle-income public schools and the majority (94%) of their students were white. Most students were in grades 1-5. While attendance rates varied by school, a typical group included 25 students, two teachers, one school staff member, and six additional chaperones.

THE PASSPORT TO LEARNING EXPERIENCE

In total, 332 school groups participated in the *Passport to Learning* program between the spring of 2010 and the spring of 2011. School groups spent about four hours at the museum (time spent ranged from 2 hours, 15 minutes to 6 hours, 30 minutes). Groups were able to attend either five or six workshops. Not surprisingly, the more time spent at the museum, the more workshops students were able to attend. See Table 2 for the percentage of students who attended each workshop and the quality ratings given by teachers.

All of the workshops were rated as *very good* by teachers (a rating of 4.31 on a scale from 1 to 5). Eighty-nine percent of teachers report that the amount of information presented at the workshops is just right for their students.

Table 2
 Percentage of School Groups, Quality Rating and Enjoyment Level of Each
 Workshop Across All Three Cohorts

| Workshop | Percentage of School Groups that attended | Quality Rating | Percentage of students who enjoyed this Workshop the MOST ¹ |
|---------------------------------|---|----------------|--|
| The Addison County Spelling Bee | 77% | 3.98 | 17% |
| Brains vs. Brawn | 67% | 4.26 | 11% |
| Canvas Chronicles | 22% | 3.88 | 1% |
| Focus on Photography | 44% | 4.29 | 19% |
| Home-Grown to Homespun | 47% | 4.23 | 0% |
| Just Tooling Around | 45% | 3.86 | 10% |
| Math by Design | 37% | 4.28 | 5% |
| Math-Go-Round | 35% | 3.84 | 2% |
| Printer's Devils | 63% | 4.22 | 11% |
| Quilt Memories | 48% | 4.14 | 7% |
| Reduce, Reuse, Make Paper | 38% | 4.13 | 13% |
| Settling In | 58% | 4.28 | 10% |
| Shop 'til you Drop | 58% | 4.19 | 15% |
| Spectacle of Spectacles! | 36% | 4.14 | 6% |
| Step Right Up! | 28% | 3.96 | 2% |
| Train Tracking | 55% | 4.21 | 10% |
| Who's for Lunch? | 36% | 3.97 | 2% |
| Wish You Were Here | 14% | 3.91 | 0% |
| You be the Judge | 57% | 4.09 | 14% |

N=66; Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents were able to select multiple options. Teachers only rated workshops they attended.

Students' Enjoyment and Learning

Teachers described the *Passport to Learning* program as a positive learning experience for their students. According to teachers, students were *very to extremely enthusiastic* (a rating of 3.93 on a scale from 1 to 4) about the program and visit to the museum. The program was *very successful* at sparking students' interest in workshop content, teaching students something they didn't know before and introducing students to a new topic as well as supporting ongoing curriculum.

Figure 1 represents the "tagline" or summary of the *Passport to Learning* experience provided by teachers. The words that were used most often appear larger than less frequently used words. Most responses were positive (86%). The words used most often describe a "*positive*" and "*engaging*" "*learning experience*" that students "*loved*."

¹ This data was provided by educators not directly from students.

Teachers were asked to comment on how the Shelburne Museum might be able to address some logistical issues. Suggestions include:

- *Have the gate open and available to exit the museum, without going through the store museum.*
- *Send workshop info and times in advance, suggest routes for age appropriate workshop choices.*
- *Have some programs begin on the quarter hours or have guided activities elsewhere that groups could do while they waited like near the just tooling around with fences.*
- *Shorten workshops to a maximum of 15 minutes.*
- *Workshops could be tailored to a cluster of grades [first through third] to make the content more appropriate to the age level. I don't think it is realistic to visit more than 3 workshops, have snack/lunch and just enjoy/explore the grounds in one short day.*
- *I would like the "workshops" to be more informal and continuous so that groups can come and go and participate as they would like. I would like to see more of these informal, hands-on opportunities at each of the buildings/locations.*
- *Allow a little more flexibility if groups are delayed in getting out of the previous workshop.*

PROGRAM MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES

Pre-visit Materials

Almost all teachers (93%) received and reviewed the pre-visit materials prior to their visit to the museum. About two-thirds of teachers rated the materials as *very to extremely useful* at helping them plan and prepare for their visit to the museum.

Extension Activities

Only one-third of the teachers reported using the extension activities. Of those who did use them, two-thirds (68%) rated them *very to extremely helpful* at supporting their ongoing curriculum and expanding upon content presented at the museum. All but one of those teachers would use the extension activities again.

The pre-visit and post-visit suggestions are the most utilized components of the extension activities. Teachers rated these activities *very to extremely useful*. Teachers also reported that, overall, students were *somewhat to extremely engaged* in the extension activities. Table 4 shows which extension activities were most used.

The other two-thirds of teachers who did not use the extension activities gave reasons for not doing so, with “lack of time” as the main reason (82%). For a lot of schools, the visit to Shelburne Museum was in the spring, at the end of the school year, leaving little time to use the materials as a part of the *Passport to Learning* experience. Almost all teachers reported that they would use the extension activities if time permitted. There was no difference in the use of the materials between the Spring and Fall visitors.

Table 4
Percentage of Teachers Who Used Each Extension Activities

| Workshops | Percentage of Respondents | | | Average |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------|
| | Spring 2010 N=40 | Fall 2010 N=21 | Spring 2011 N=55 | |
| I have not used to the Extension Activities | 36% | 22% | 43% | 37% |
| Brains vs. Brawn | 13% | – | – | 13% |
| Canvas Chronicles | 3% | 0% | – | 2% |
| Focus on Photography | – | 8% | – | 8% |
| Home-Grown to Homespun | 5% | 6% | – | 5% |
| Just Tooling Around | – | 6% | 2% | 3% |
| Math by Design | 13% | 6% | 5% | 8% |
| Math-Go-Round | – | – | 3% | 3% |
| Printer’s Devils | 3% | 8% | – | 5% |
| Quilt Memories | 5% | 11% | – | 7% |
| Reduce Reuse Make Paper | – | – | 3% | 3% |
| Settling In | 10% | 11% | 2% | 6% |
| Shop ‘til you Drop | 8% | 19% | 7% | 10% |
| Spectacle of Spectacles! | 3% | – | – | 3% |
| Step Right Up! | – | – | 0% | 0% |
| The Addison County Spelling Bee | 18% | – | 10% | 13% |
| Train Tracking | 3% | 14% | 5% | 6% |
| Who’s for Lunch? | 0% | 3% | 2% | 1% |
| Wish You Were Here | – | – | 0% | 0% |
| You be the Judge | – | 8% | 7% | 7% |

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents were able to select multiple options.

JUSTIFYING THE FIELD TRIP

The *Passport to Learning* Program is described as *somewhat* or *very successful* (a mean rating of 3.77 out of 5) at extending teachers’ larger classroom curricula. Teachers believe that the program is aligned *quite a bit* with the goals and standards of their school, district and state. Ninety-four percent of teachers reported that it is *very easy* (a mean rating of 3.94 out of 4) to justify the *Passport to Learning* field trip to their school administration.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Forty-three percent of teachers liked the *Passport to Learning* program as it is and have no recommendations for improvement. Among teachers who had suggestions, there was a wide range of suggestions provided. See Table 5 for themes and examples of suggestions.

Table 5
Suggestions for Improvement

| Themes from visitor responses | Examples of visitor responses | Percentage of Respondents |
|---|--|---------------------------|
| None: Like it as is | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep up the great work! Thanks for such a great day. • None. I liked how the program has evolved into letting students do weaving, be part of printing, etc. The students love being actively involved in every learning experience. Keep up the great work! • It is fantastic as is! | 43% |
| Other | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you consider setting aside dates on which the museum could be used for self-guided explorations? • I mentioned making the workshops descriptions a little more interactive on the website so students could do some prep work on the computer before their visit. • I would have liked the pre and post visit materials - glad you're doing that generally. I would have like some extensions then and there that were self guided. E.g. look for this as you go; next door you'll see this, etc. | 18% |
| Scheduling and sign-up for workshops | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be sure there is travel time to get from one workshop to the next. (Staying on schedule as much as possible.) • Possibly extending the workshop sessions later in the day for those of us who can't arrive earlier but could stay later. • Shorter workshops. Less formal, so that groups could come and go as they needed. Have times when the buildings were open for unstructured visits. (e.g. The Schoolhouse) | 16% |
| Adjust grade levels/amount of information presented during the sessions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be nice to have similar grade levels scheduled on the same day as much as possible. Having a wide span between grades can make certain sessions difficult. • If presenters are willing to go more in-depth with small groups of highly motivated students, the homeschoolers would be happy to get this additional experience. I feel that some presenters did make adjustments for us, and we appreciate that. • A few places were fairly long and gave too much information to maintain the 4th graders interest (according to chaperones). Other places they thought were just great- the adults claimed to have learned new things too! | 16% |
| Add new workshops or modify existing ones | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the workshops meatier, i.e., include more information with each one. That may require lengthening the workshops, but I think that would be preferable. • Incorporate several new workshops each cycle so we can keep attending! • More workshops. More history and art. More hands on activities. | 11% |
| Address differing grade levels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maybe times for different level of children. • Have higher level activities for older students. | 5% |

N=109

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Almost all teachers (93%) would recommend the *Passport to Learning* program to other educators/colleagues. Eighty-eight percent would participate in the program in the future. Additionally, teachers seemed interested in the idea of adding workshops; the majority were interested in the content areas of science, social studies, music, and art.

There was varying interest in professional development opportunities through the museum. The majority of teachers (51%) were *a little to somewhat* interested (a mean rating of 2.56 out of 5). Of those who were interested, about half were most interested in social studies; other content areas were of less interest (see Table 6 for content areas of interest). Most teachers liked the idea of a conference (53%) or workshop (55%) at the Shelburne Museum.

Table 6
Content Areas of Interest in Professional Development

| Content Area | Percentage of Respondents | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| | Spring 2010 N=45 | Fall 2010 N=36 | Spring 2011 N=87 |
| Social Studies/History/Geography | 71% | 50% | 44% |
| Science | 36% | 39% | 29% |
| Computers/Technology | 27% | 11% | 17% |
| Reading | 27% | 22% | 17% |
| English/Language Arts | 22% | 22% | 15% |
| Art | 18% | 36% | 18% |
| Music | 16% | 17% | 13% |
| Mathematics | 13% | 31% | 13% |
| Foreign Language | 2% | 3% | 3% |
| Physical Education | 2% | 8% | 5% |
| Special Education | 2% | 6% | 2% |
| Other; please describe: | – | – | 1% |

Note: Total exceeds 100% as respondents were able to select multiple options.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers and students enjoyed the *Passport to Learning* program. Teachers described the program as a positive learning experience for their students. The program and workshops fit into their larger curricula and they rated the quality of the workshops as *very good*.

GRG recommends offering more workshops that are in line with the current model in content, length and level of difficulty.

Most logistical issues were related to scheduling and timing of the workshops. Teachers reported difficulty getting their students from workshop to workshop on time. Additionally, some teachers encountered workshops that were full or that wouldn't allow a group to join late.

GRG recommends increasing the amount of time between workshops and/or adding a sign-up component. While still maintaining the flexibility of the program, it would be beneficial to include some workshops that required sign-up for at least part of the day. Additionally, allowing 10 minutes between workshops would allow groups to maneuver themselves around the grounds.

The supplementary materials were underutilized. Under a quarter of teachers used the extension activities but those who did found them quite useful. Those who didn't use the materials primarily noted a lack of time as the main reason.

*GRG recommends encouraging use of the materials throughout the *Passport to Learning* experience. Adjusting the spring schedule to early May through early June could also help provide more of an opportunity to utilize the materials. Fall attendance was low compared to spring; encouraging teachers to come earlier in the school year might help increase the use of these materials.*

From a practical standpoint, GRG also recommends that Shelburne provide separate .PDF documents for each workshop and hosting the materials on the website. This might help increase use of the materials because teachers would need to print out only those workshop activities relevant to them.

Interest in the *Passport to Learning* professional development opportunities for teachers is minimal. The majority of teachers were only *a little to somewhat interested* in the professional development offered by the Shelburne Museum.

GRG recommends that Shelburne increase its marketing of the professional development including more information on the museum's website describing what the professional development would entail and outlining the benefits of attending. Also, if it is not already being done, providing teachers with more information (perhaps in a thank you email after visiting the museum) could draw more interest in this component of the program.

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