
TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION THE RESTAURANT EXPERIENCE

by Chris Moore, Eisenhower Junior High

The Ground Work!

Whether your students come from rural or city areas, the "Restaurant Experience" can be adapted to fit student needs. Most restaurants are very cooperative about allowing students in their establishment. Ask to speak to the owner or manager of the restaurant of your choice. Identify yourself and tell them about your program and how their restaurant will enhance student learning.

Monday evenings are generally the best for restaurants as this is a slow evening for them. Some schools have arranged for a luncheon where students are dismissed during school to help keep costs down. Give the restaurant about a one to two month notice before taking students. Some places like to limit the menu to two entrees from which the students choose. Choose foods that the student may not ordinarily experience. I generally choose one fish dish and one beef dish. Don't be afraid to ask the owner if the price can be reduced to accommodate the student budgets. A gratuity of 15 % should be part of the total price. As part of the "deal" I promise the owner that I will make sure this event is advertised with the restaurant getting full billing!

In rural areas where restaurants may not be available, the home economics department can be transformed into a restaurant. Food can be prepared by home economics students as part of the cuisine. Students can serve as waiters and waitresses and hosts and hostesses. Menus can be printed and students can practice ordering and serving food.

The Transportation!

Transporting students to the restaurant can be handled in several ways. Parents can be used to transport students. I have found that the PTSA is more than willing to help with this experience. School buses can be chartered and private companies will also charter students. Our school has a tradition of using limousines. Limousines are the most expensive form of travel and must be used with caution because of the expense. We have compromised by having the students transported to the restaurant by limousine and returned to the school by chartered bus. Be sure that gratuities are also applied to the cost of the transportation. Companies will tell you how much is appropriate. Some of the companies used in the Salt Lake Area are:

Sterling Limousines (highly recommend--ask for James)	
Salt Lake-967-5485	Provo- 224-2724
Bonneville Limousines	Salt Lake-364-6520
Lewis Brothers (Chartered Buses)	Salt Lake-359-8677

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The fewer the students going to the restaurant, the greater the cost of transportation since the cost is divided by all students attending. Also, the more limousines, the greater the cost. If you charter one or two limousines and make several trips, the cost will be less than ordering five (5) limousines with one trip each. The money for the transportation is collected in advance and is NON-REFUNDABLE. The students are transported in shifts. This helps the restaurant and the transportation company. Approximately 30 to 35 students can be transported in five (5) limousines. Each limo will hold about six (6) students. The groups leave and arrive at hour intervals.

Students are free to select their groups. The only requirement is that there be at least one boy per group so that both boys and girls will have the practice needed. I emphasize that I reserve the right to move students so the experience is most meaningful. Above all, this is a learning experience! A teacher chaperon should ride in the front with the driver to supervise the limousine. The drivers appreciate this courtesy.

The Parents!

Complete parental understanding is the key to a successful field trip! Field trip explanation and permission slips are handed out at least two (2) months in advance so that funds can be arranged. We emphasize that **the student is to earn all of the money for the trip**. Our trip costs approximately \$22.50 (which includes the tip) for the meal and \$13.50 (including the tip) for the transportation. (See sample sheet on page IV-B-62.) Creative ways for students to earn money that can't otherwise afford it can be developed. One principal had the student work after school to earn the money. Caution must be taken to consider the rules and guidelines for each district as to how students can earn money. Fund raisers have also been used.

The Dress!

Insist that each student wear best clothes. Boys should wear a tie. Suits are acceptable. If the boys cannot afford one, a clean shirt and slacks can be worn. Clean, new looking jeans without holes or stains, can be accepted. Bring extra ties for those boys who can't afford them. Sweaters and ties are appropriate.

Girls should wear best dresses. Sunday dresses are great! Some girls will borrow prom dresses that sisters or friends have worn. These are appropriate too. Emphasize that the students should not go out and buy special clothes as this adds to the expense of the evening and is not necessary.

Dress standards should fit within the context of the school. Strapless, plunging, tight, or see through clothing would not be appropriate. Have students check all seams to make sure they will not rip or tear!

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THE RESTAURANT EXPERIENCE - Page 3**The Behavior!**

Whether or not the evening is successful is determined as to how well the teacher has prepared the students. A teacher who gives a one day preparation or announces to the student as they are on their way to the restaurant to "Mind your manners!" is doing the experience and the restaurant a disservice. There have been incidences where students have gotten out of control in the restaurant and made messes in the restrooms and on the premises. Restaurant owners were wondering whether or not to allow these students back. It should be noted that many owners are somewhat reluctant to allow teenagers into the restaurant for this very reason. **Teachers must thoroughly review manners that are applicable in all areas of the experience.** The teacher might even give steps to follow: e.g., Step 1 = open door for girl, Step 2 = take coat off girl, etc.

This learning experience has been so valuable for the students and schools who have participated in it that it would be a shame to have it discontinued anywhere because one teacher has failed to prepare his/her students adequately for the experience. It is absolutely critical that the teacher be diligent in teaching and preparing the students.

The Restaurant!

I arrive with the first group of students and give the person in charge the grading sheets for the servers to use to grade each group. (See sample on page IV-B-63). This is an important part of the experience as the following day will be a processing day with the grading sheets as the focus. The grading sheets are collected after the last group leaves the restaurant.

Each student brings his or her own money for the cost of the meal on the night of the event. The girl gives her money to the boy in charge of the group. He keeps the money and is responsible for paying the waiter or waitress at the end of the meal. He makes sure that there is enough money, including the tip.

The next day, each student writes a thank you note to the restaurant thanking them for the experience. I mail them to the restaurant. If a student did not go, I have that student write a note to someone they know or a fictitious person thanking them for something as part of their assignment that day.

