



Environmental Education – Quick Tips

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Environment-based **Education**
Creating High Performance Schools and Students

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EETAP

The North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) developed the Environmental Education Guidelines Project as part of overall efforts to promote excellence in environmental education.

Edward McCrea

**Leading the Way to Environmental Literacy and Quality:
National Guidelines for Environmental Education**

by Edward J. McCrea

What do a cabinet level agency in the State of Kentucky, a Colorado environmental education association, and a Wisconsin company that is a global leader in automotive systems have in common? They are all using the National Guidelines for Excellence in Environmental Education to enhance environmental literacy in the United States. Read on to find out how.

The North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) developed the Environmental Education Guidelines Project as part of overall efforts to promote excellence in environmental education. The goal of this quality initiative is to facilitate an environmental education process that yields an environmentally literate citizenry—a citizenry that can compete in our global economy; has the skills, knowledge, and inclinations to make well-informed choices; and participates responsibly in the decision making processes that are our right and our duty.

What publications make up the guidelines series?

Presently ten documents make up the written materials for the Guidelines for Excellence Project. These publications, which are available from NAAEE, focus on three main areas:

- Environmental Literacy.** The first area deals with setting a baseline for environmental literacy. This set of guidelines and the document that accompanies it detail what every student should know at the 6th, 8th, and 12th grade levels in order to have a basic grounding in the environment and environmental issues.

These guidelines facilitate the teaching of science, civics, social studies, mathematics, geography, language art, etc. They help educators develop

Key ideas

- ❖ EE is education *in, about, and for the environment*
 - Systems
 - Interdependence
 - Importance of where one lives

Goals

- ❖ To foster clear awareness of, and concern about, economic, social, political, and ecological interdependence in urban and rural areas;
- ❖ To provide every person with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, values, attitudes, commitment, and skills needed to protect and improve the environment;
- ❖ To create new patterns of behavior of individuals, groups, and society as a whole toward the environment.

Environmental Literacy

- ❖ Questioning, analysis, interpretation skills
- ❖ Knowledge of environmental processes and systems
- ❖ Skills for understanding and addressing environmental issues
- ❖ Personal and civic responsibility

Educator Skills

- ❖ Foundations of environmental education
- ❖ Professional responsibilities
- ❖ Planning and implementing environmental education
- ❖ Fostering learning
- ❖ Assessment and evaluation

Education Materials

- ❖ Fairness and accuracy
- ❖ Depth
- ❖ Emphasis on skills building
- ❖ Action orientation
- ❖ Instructional soundness
- ❖ Usability

Strategies

- ❖ Convey information
- ❖ Build understanding
- ❖ Improve skills
- ❖ Enable sustainable actions

Monroe, M., E. Andrews, K. Biedenweg. 2007. *A Framework for Environmental Education Strategies*. Applied Environmental Education and Communication 6:205-216.

Strategies

❖ Convey understanding

- To disseminate information, raise awareness, to inform
 - ▶ Textbook, lecture, video, film, and Internet resources
 - ▶ Information campaign, electronic media, Internet resource or website, poster, brochure, sign, Public Service Announcement, news article, exhibit

Strategies

❖ Build understanding

- To exchange ideas and provide dialogue, to build a sense of place, to clarify and enhance the understanding of information and issues and to generate concern
 - ▶ Discussion, role play, simulation, case study, experiment, game, constructivist methods, experiential learning, field study
 - ▶ Workshop, presentation with discussion, charette, interactive website, simulation, case study, survey, focus group, interview, peer to peer training, action research, issue investigation, environmental monitoring, guided tour, guided nature walk

Strategies

❖ Improve skills

- To build and practice skills
 - ▶ Cooperative learning, issue investigation, inquiry learning, citizen science programs, volunteer service, some types of project-based education
 - ▶ Coaching, mentoring, demonstrations, technical training, environmental monitoring; providing a chance to practice a specific skill or work on a task, persuasion and social marketing strategies that modify social norms, including: modeling, commitment, incentives and prompts to encourage skills building and behavior change

Strategies

❖ Enable sustainable actions

- To build transformative capacity for leadership, creative problem solving, monitoring
 - ▶ Inquiry-based education, some types of service learning, Environment as an Integrating Concept, and other opportunities for learners to define problems, design and select action projects, identify facts, and build skills in problem solving
 - ▶ Adaptive collaborative management, action research, training for organizational effectiveness, facilitating partnerships and networks, joint fact finding, mediation, alternative dispute resolution, negotiated rulemaking, learning networks

EE Resources

- ❖ EETAP – Environmental education and training partnership
 - ▶ <http://www.eetap.org/>
- ❖ National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF)
 - ▶ <http://www.neefusa.org/>
- ❖ North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE)
 - ▶ <http://www.naaee.org/>

Human Dimensions Resources

❖ HD.gov

▶ <http://www.hd.gov/HDdotGov/>

❖ NOAA Coastal Sciences

▶ <http://coastalscience.noaa.gov/human/welcome.html>

❖ Changing Public Behavior

▶ <http://wateroutreach.uwex.edu/CPBhomepage1.cfm>

❖ Target audience research database

▶ <http://wateroutreach.uwex.edu/cpb/tad/index.cfm>