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Environmental Education Resources for Multi-disciplinary Learning Through Non Formal Education

The learning process through environmental education has often focused on engagement of learners through exploration, discovery, investigation, gaming and hands-on activities. These efforts both draw the learner into the learning exchange and also become the basis for the learning that is to follow. The dominant belief is that the experience does not teach, but prepares the learner for understanding the outcomes of the experience (EETAP Infosheet # 9, 1996).

Keeping this nature of environmental education in mind, we have explored a number of projects that focus on providing an interdisciplinary approach to teaching specific disciplines required to achieve proficiency at different levels of learning for Grades K-12. Some of these projects are identified below and illustrate the subject areas addressed by each effort.

Project WILD is an interdisciplinary, supplementary conservation and environmental education program emphasizing wildlife. The activity guide is divided in seven sections that focus on learners' awareness and appreciation; diversity of wildlife values; ecological principles; management and conservation; people, culture and wildlife; trends, issues and consequences; and responsible human action. The focus is on teachers of grades K-12 and activities are also divided by subject areas to support learning in specific disciplines. These areas include anthropology, art, biology, business education, career education, chemistry, civics, communications, composition, debate, drama, earth science, economics, English, environmental problems, geography, geometry, government, health, history, home economics, human relations, language arts, life science, mathematics, music, philosophy, photography, psychology, reading, science, social studies, sociology, speech, vocational agriculture, world history, and world geography.

Source: Project WILD Activity Guide 1992. Western

Regional Environmental Education council, Inc.

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Project Learning Tree (PLT) uses the forest as a “window on the world” to increase students' understanding of our complex environment; to stimulate critical and creative thinking; to develop the ability to make informed decisions; and to instill the confidence and commitment to take responsible action on behalf of the environment. The conceptual framework of PLT's Pre K-8 Activity Guide focuses on five themes namely; diversity, interrelationships, systems, structure and scale, and patterns of change. 96 activities in the activity guide enhance learning through subjects of Visual Arts, Language Arts, Mathematic, Physical education, Science, Social studies, and Performing arts. Each activity comprehensively provides details of appropriate grade level, subjects, concepts, skills, objectives, materials needed, and time required to complete the activity. The assessment opportunities guide the educator toward assessing students' understanding of the concepts covered in the activity. It also provides opportunities for students to apply the knowledge they have gained.

Source: Project Learning Tree Environmental Education Pre K-8 Activity Guide 1993. American Forest Foundation.

Contact: The American Forest Foundation

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Website: <http://www/plt.org/>

Project WET: Water Education for Teachers aims to facilitate and promote awareness, appreciation, knowledge, and stewardship of water resources through

the development and dissemination of classroom-ready teaching aids and through the establishment of state and internationally sponsored Project WET programs. The Project WET Curriculum and Activity Guide, for kindergarten through twelfth grades, is a collection of innovative, water-related activities that are hands-on, easy to use, and fun. Project WET activities incorporate a variety of formats, such as large and small group learning, whole-body activities, laboratory investigations, discussion of local and global topics, and involvement in community service projects. The activity guide consists of five modules on Watershed, Wetlands, Water/Environmental History, Ground Water, and Water Conservation. The curriculum framework consists of three major areas: conceptual, affective, and skills. The framework is based on current educational research, water-related curricula and national education reforms efforts. It incorporates key concepts related to learning about water and water resources.

Source: Project WET Curriculum and Activity Guide. 1995. The Watercourse and Council for Environmental Education (CEE).

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Project WET in the city is an urban environmental education program of the Council for Environmental Education (CEE) that focuses on water resources. The program provides an opportunity for young people to participate in engaging, hands-on activities that creatively explore the science of water, its cultural context, and the complex issues surrounding its management and stewardship. The focus on urban issues is a result of the fact that by the year 2000, more than 90 per cent of the population live in urban areas. Urban youth are increasingly disconnected from outdoor pursuits and the natural world. The activities are designed to satisfy the goals of education programs by complimenting existing curricula rather than displacing or adding more concepts. The activities provide many opportunities to address curricular objectives and educational standards. Several tools are available to locate activities within the resource guide to meet teachers' needs.

Source: Project WET in the city Curriculum and Activity Guide. 1999. The Watercourse and Council for Environmental Education (CEE).

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Council for Environmental Education
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Windows on the Wild or WOW is World Wildlife Fund's environmental education program. The goal of WOW is to educate people of all ages about biodiversity and to stimulate critical thinking, discussion, and informed decision making on behalf of the environment. The program also promotes creative partnerships and interdisciplinary education at all levels. Taking advantage of WWF's unique expertise in addressing biodiversity issues, WOW incorporates current data from projects around the world and draws on the work of many science, development, education, and conservation organizations; government agencies; businesses; and individuals who work closely with WWF to maintain and enhance the Earth's biodiversity.

Source: *Windows on the Wild* 1999. World Wildlife Fund. Acorn Naturalists Publishers.

Contact: World Wildlife Fund
1250 Twenty-Fourth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037
Website: www.worldwildlife.org

Need more resources?

The databases of Educational Resources Information Center/ Clearinghouse for Science, Mathematics and Environmental Education (ERIC/CSMEE) and Eisenhower National Clearinghouse (ENC) have a multitude of resources available to educators. On line, these resources can be accessed by typing

<http://www.eelink.net>

Page down to CLASS-RESOURCES, DIRECTORIES, then to ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION-RELATED EDUCATION SITES that will lead you to ERIC or ENC. You will then be able to search ERIC and ENC databases by following the appropriate pointers.

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EETAP Resource Library is a project of Environmental Education and Training Partnership effort. The goal of the Resource Library is to increase educators' access to and use of databases such as ENC and ERIC. This information sheet may be freely reproduced for educational purposes.