

Basics of Environmental Education - Independent Study

Included in this packet are readings for the completion of the *Basics of Environmental Education Independent Study* section for North Carolina Environmental Education Certification Program, beginning in January 2009. Each reading includes follow-up discussion questions. Your completed answers to the discussion questions should be between 40-200 words.

The *Basics of EE* can be completed on your own time. However, it is a prerequisite for taking the *Methods of Teaching Environmental Education* workshop, which is a required course for NC EE Certification. Participants are encouraged to complete the readings in the sequential order below for full understanding. Do not submit answers to the discussion questions until all 10 are completed. Please refer to the Basics of EE Checklist to make sure you have answered all questions adequately. Your answers should be sent as an attachment to libby.wilcox@ncdenr.gov. The subject line should be your full name and Basics of EE. *Example: John Doe – Basics of EE.*

- 1) Congratulations on enrolling in the NC Environmental Education Certification Program. As you begin this independent study section, reflect on your involvement and role in environmental education. How would you describe environmental education to a friend or family member? Please record your thoughts before beginning the readings.

2) The Tbilisi Declaration – the Beginnings of EE

List the five objectives of environmental education as outlined in the Tbilisi Declaration. Select a goal, objective, or guiding principal from the document that you strongly believe or practice and describe why. Discuss the challenges of achieving this goal/objective/principal with your audience(s).

3) EE – From the Classic to Contemporary *J.F. Disinger*

List the three traditions that Disinger claims are the roots of environmental education. Discuss which one of these past traditions most influence your environmental education efforts.

4) Two Hats *John Hug*

Why do you think John Hug and other environmental educators make a careful distinction between environmentalism (advocacy) and environmental education? How do you personally separate environmentalism and environmental education when working with audiences?

Advocating for the EE Profession

John Hug's Two Hats article cautions against taking an advocacy position on particular environmental issues, and emphasizes that each environmental educator is partly responsible for the credibility of the entire EE profession. The environmental educator's role is to help others develop the knowledge, skills, and attitude to make their own informed decisions. It should be carefully noted that being an advocate for or against a particular environmental issue is different than being an advocate for the EE profession.

The relatively young EE field is finally gaining awareness and credibility. Part of this credibility results from environmental educators carefully refraining from environmental advocacy in their lessons. Another part of this credibility and awareness results from dedicated environmental educators who emphasize the value of EE. There are increasing opportunities to improve the field by supporting local, state and federal legislation and policies integrating EE into the formal education curriculum and to increase funding for EE. Advocating for EE can help foster individuals and communities that are better equipped to address important environmental issues. Some people shy away from advocacy because they think of it as "political activity", but advancing the EE profession is the responsibility of every environmental educator. Your EE advocacy should be based on research (which is limited, but growing), a "message" that is consistent within the profession, as well as your own personal experiences and observations about the value of EE.

For more information or guidance on EE advocacy, please refer to the North American Association for Environmental Education (www.naaee.org) or the North Carolina affiliate, Environmental Educators of North Carolina (www.eenc.org).

5) Environmental Education and Environmental Interpretation: The Relationships *Doug Knapp*

How might environmental education and environmental interpretation compliment each other? How do they differ? Explain with which role you most identify.

6) Roper Report Summary: Environmental Literacy in America

Describe the difference between environmental information/knowledge and environmental literacy. How can you encourage movement towards environmental literacy with your audience?

7) National Project for Excellence in Environmental Education - The Guidelines for the Preparation and Professional Development of Environmental Educators

Please review the information provided regarding the *Guidelines for the Preparation and Professional Development of Environmental Educators*. Then, complete the self-assessment using the guidelines as a reference. Participants are encouraged to keep their self-assessment as a reference tool as they progress through the EE Certification program.

Upon completion of the self-assessment, which theme(s) do you need to strengthen? What are some steps that can be taken to develop these areas?

8) Should Action be a goal? Yes or No. R. Wilke and J. Kwong

Cite one argument for and one argument against taking action including an “action” component in environmental education. What guiding principle(s) in the Tbilisi Declaration would help environmental educators avoid some of the issues mentioned in Kwong’s article?

9) Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder by Richard Louv

Which parts of Louv’s book, as discussed in the overview, do you believe makes the best case for youth having more direct experiences in nature? Why?

10) Beyond Ecophobia David Sobel

Explain the difference between *ecophobia* and *ecophilia*.

To what do environmentalist attribute their development of environmental values?

11) Alphabet Soup! North Carolina has many resources to help you in your current and future EE endeavors. Explain the meaning of the acronym, then describe the organizations and the resources they can provide.

- NC OEE
- EENC
- NCAEEC
- EE Fund
- NAAEE

12) At the beginning of this independent study, you were asked to record how you would describe environmental education to a friend or family member. Upon completion of these readings and the discussion questions, how would you change or add to your previous description of environmental education?