

Year End Evaluation of National Project for Excellence in Environmental Education Workshops

Section 1: Goal of The Evaluation

1. The goal of the evaluation was primarily summative.
2. The outcome evaluated was:
 - At least 80% of the formal and non-formal educators who participated in a Guidelines workshop facilitated by a Guidelines Trainers' Bureau member will be able to describe how they plan to use at least one of the NPEEE publications to improve the quality of their environmental education programs and resources.
3. The specific indicators measured to determine if the outcome was met were: As part of the end-of-workshop evaluation, participants are asked two related questions. The first question, *Within the next 6 months, I intend to improve my EE efforts by using the National Project for Excellence in Environmental Education publications* (1= Extremely Unlikely to 7= Extremely Likely), measures intent to use. The second question, *How do you anticipate using what you learned from the workshop to improve your own or others' EE efforts over the next six months*, measures the ability of participants to describe how they will apply the materials. A follow up survey, conducted 4-5 months after participation in a full day workshop, revisited these two questions. Participants were asked: Have you had the opportunity to use any of the information or materials (e.g., Guidelines) you received as part of this workshop? If so, how? If not, why not? In addition, participants were asked: If you have not used the Guidelines yet, do you have any plans to use them? If so, how? If not, why not?

Section 2: Methods

1. An internal evaluator conducted the evaluation (i.e., one of leaders of the activity).
2. The sources that were used to collect data included: Individual workshop participants
3. Data was obtained from these sources through: An end of workshop evaluation form was used to collect data. An E-mail survey was used to collect additional data from 8-hour long workshop participants November - December 2006.
4. The data were collected: Evaluation forms were completed at the end of all 2-8 hour workshops (Appendix A). Participants of the all day (eight hours) workshops were surveyed approximately 4-5 months after the workshop was held (i.e., November and December 2006).

5. The sample size and response rate was: The end of workshop evaluation form was distributed to all participants. It is estimated that less than 3% failed to complete the form. Completed evaluation forms were received from 135 participants.

Fifty-two individuals participated in a day long workshop. A random sample (n=15) of these individuals were asked to complete a follow up survey (Appendix B).

6. Key characteristics of the sample included:

Background	Total Number	Percent of Total
K-12 Teacher	9	6.6%
University/College Faculty	9	6.6%
Non-formal Educator	67	49.7%
Administrator	16	11.9%
Government Agency	34	25.2%
TOTAL	135	100%

7. The data were analyzed by:

Descriptive data – simple means, modes, ranges and percentages have been calculated
 Open-ended data – responses have been listed and where appropriate, themes have been generated.

Section 3: Results

1. The results of the evaluation were:

The end of workshop evaluation consisted of 11 questions (six closed-ended questions and five open-ended questions). Descriptive statistics were calculated for the closed-ended questions. Responses to the open-ended questions were listed and, where appropriate, themes were summarized.

What grade do you give this workshop? A B C D F

Mean = 4.7 (on a five point scale)

Mode = 5

Range = 4 -5

**Within the next 6 months, I intend to:
 ... improve my EE efforts by using the *National Project for Excellence in Environmental Education* publications. (1= Extremely Unlikely to 7= Extremely Likely)**

Mean = 6.54 (on a seven point scale)

Mode = 7

Range = 4 - 7

... share what I learned from this workshop with colleagues and other educators. (1= Extremely Unlikely to 7= Extremely Likely)

Mean = 6.77 (on a seven point scale)

Mode = 7

Range = 4 - 7

How do you anticipate using what you learned from the workshop to improve your own or others' EE efforts over the next six months? If you do not plan on making any changes, please explain why not:

Over ninety percent of the participants listed some positive action. Comments were separated into three broad categories: Specific actions related to use in the participant's work, intention to share the Guidelines with another individual, and general comments related to the Guidelines perceived usefulness. Examples of each category follow:

Specific actions related to use in the participant's work:

- Apply it to evaluating resources for Bay Area CREEC. Promote this to local providers.
- Will think about EE materials with a much more critical eye.
- I will check my own instructional materials in my outdoor education program. I will use it to certain extent in working with our resource provider.
- To improve/evaluate existing materials; to encourage staff to use to improve their programs.
- I will apply to any new program/materials/videos being developed.
- Yes, thru participation in EET and curriculum development.
- Will use the guidelines in updating the Project WILD activities to CA. ED. Standards and EET (a summer program). Also use this in evaluating the 4-H Habitat Evaluation Program guide that the advising committee has developed and is preparing to implement state wide.
- I will be using the prep guidelines to inform the grad curriculum where I work.
- I will reference the curriculum planning flow chart in the future when I am planning my own programs.

- Use guidelines to ensure that my programs are covering the 6 criteria. Use the 6 criteria as a basis for thinking about and identifying the goals I want to accomplish through my programs.
- Use the publications/guidelines to improve on current programs at my site.
- I will try to keep standards in mind when developing educational displays and new programs.
- I plan to use the evaluative strategies for some newly designed curriculum (and some old stuff too.)
- I have to completely rewrite a series of lesson plans using the guidelines.
- Discussion with Ed. Committee and creation of group to evaluate materials, starting with Raptor Ecology Manual. Intern training. New programs. Website development. Grant writing. Planning.

Intention to share the Guidelines with another individual:

- Present at East Bay Provider Training in fall 2007 maybe.
- I will share in my science methods calls for pre-science teachers and with EE providers at my meeting in March.
- Disseminate information about the Guidelines for Excellence – Discuss the characteristics and encourage the striving for excellence in EE.
- Sharing with the providers in my region. Would love to have a workshop with the providers on using the materials.
- I will be using what I learned to meet with key decision-makers in the state about advancing EE.
- Share with environmental educators and curriculum developers.
- Disseminate information to environmental educators statewide and in my region.
- Incorporate steps in the guidelines into trainings I provide to teach adults who are providing education for our students/visitors.

General comments related to the usefulness of the Guidelines:

- Definitely! I'm in the learning stage of how to be an educator, so all the help I can get is great!
- Spend more time with the booklets. Become more aware during planning of future programs.
- I want to work with my friends group to help reinforce the need for skill building and inquiry based programs to provide a depth in quality of programming. And reinstate using evaluation sheets.
- Yes, I'm still in the learning stages.

- I train Ameri Corps members in EE and use and will continue to use your materials.
- It helps me to think about all my teaching.
- I need to build up my own base of EE knowledge – this workshop has shown me how much I don't know. Now I feel like I can read through EE resources with an idea of how good they are; write effective grants, and take a look at my own lifestyle.

Will you recommend this workshop to colleagues or other professionals? YES NO

Why or Why not?

YES = 99.2% (n= 129)

NO = .8 % (n= 1)

[Note: No Response = 5]

No written comments were negative. Those who responded to the “Why or Why not?” prompt typically made positive comments about the workshop and/or the materials. For example:

- Valuable to be reminded of criteria for high quality EE and for education in general!
- Would recommend to EE providers
- Good to know what is in the guidelines
- Class gives a well rounded approach to teaching EE

How could this workshop be improved?

Comments written in response to this question were transcribe verbatim and grouped into categories. Participants typically made three types of comments related to: Logistics, specific suggestions, and/or general responses. Examples for each of the three categories, taken from a representative sample of workshops, follow:

Logistics:

- Really liked the activities, but the room was a bit crowded
- It was great! A few more mini breaks between guidelines would be nice (5 minutes)
- Bigger space for more room to move about
- Time to go outside
- Shorter

Specific Suggestions:

- The last activity wasn't as useful – perhaps modify?
- End on a high point, not a worksheet/boring activity
- PIT exercise instructions were a little convoluted. Streamline and simplify.
- This was good for a quick overview of NAAEE's tools. However, it would have been more helpful to have an explanation of how each tool could be used in real-life situations.
- At least 2 days, felt a bit rushed – more time to discuss guidelines

General Responses:

- It was very good. Lots of participation – good info.
- Great for us
- Very useful to receive training – gives much more depth to understanding the guidelines
- Very valuable experience and well trained instructors. Very useful material/critical to the EE movement and the future of EE

What is your current profession?

Background	Total Number	Percent of Total
K-12 Teacher	9	6.6%
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Administrator	16	11.9%
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TOTAL	135	100%

How many participants do you typically reach each year in your programs?

Total number indicated = 136,830 *

Range = 35 – 30,000

Numbers reached as indicated by participants' responses seemed somewhat imprecise. For example, although some participants listed exact numbers (e.g., 35), others simply indicated 1000's or "everyone in the state." Almost 35% (n=47) of the participants failed to complete this question, either leaving the question blank or simply indicating that they did not know the statistics.

As a professional, have you previously completed:

Yes

No

A workshop on the Guidelines for Excellence?	19 (14.1%)	116 (85.9%)
The “Fundamentals of EE” online course Supported by the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point?	3 (2.3%)	132 (97.7%)

Additional comments?

Comments provided for the last question were, for the most part, simple and to the point. Typical comments included:

- Good job!
- Thank you!
- Great job.
- Fantastic workshop!
- Thanks for providing this service.
- Good job and keep it up.
- Good balance of activities and information.
- Thanks! This made my 5 hour drive so worth the trip!
- Great presentation and discussion!

Follow up Evaluation:

Fifty-two individuals participated in a day long workshop. A random sample (n=15) of these individuals were asked to complete a follow up survey approximately 4-5 months after they attended the workshop. Surveys were emailed to participants. Of the 15 individuals emailed, 2 responded that they were no longer working as an environmental educator:

- Though I am glad I attended the workshop, I have not used any of the information I learned there since I am not currently working in environmental ed. If I ever go back to that field (I hope to), I will dig out my workshop notes and resource books and put them to good use. Thanks for checking up, and thanks for the workshop.

For three of the participants, functioning email addresses could not be found. In the end, 10 individuals completed the following survey. Typical responses are included.

1. Have you had the opportunity to use any of the information or materials (e.g., Guidelines) you received as part of this workshop? If so, how? If not, why not?

Of the 10 respondents, seven indicated that they had applied the Guidelines. The following represent typical responses:

- I shared the information with my staff, especially those working on a particular EE project right now. They are using the Guidelines as they write activities.
- I have applied the materials to my own review of our education programs and materials, but just on a surface level. It's enough to know that certain materials should be taken out of circulation, which we have done.
- They have been very helpful as I approach grant writing and evaluation steps for grants.
- The materials are great, we are working on a Strategic Plan for the unit and are including environmental education as a component for discussion. At that time, it would be appropriate to introduce the materials to the rest of the team, sometime in Spring/Summer 2007.
- I've created a departmental goal to evaluate. The guidelines will eventually seep into our work here. It takes so much time!
- I am using them as I design and re-design staff training.
- Mostly I've used them to review how we develop programs. We are planning on conducting a needs assessment.

Three participants responded that they had not yet had an opportunity to use the Guidelines in their work. Time seemed to be the biggest obstacle:

- I want to apply the guidelines, but I don't have a lot of time to do it by myself...I have to keep cranking with the rest of my job.
- We have recently re-organized and staff has moved jobs. We just don't have time to do anything, but keep our heads afloat right now.

2. If you have not used the Guidelines yet, do you have any plans to use them? If so, how? If not, why not?

- My plan is to add some members to my education committee who are primarily responsible for evaluation of materials and programs, so that the guidelines will receive greater use.
- I would hope to refer to them from time to time as they apply to various projects.

3. Were there any unexpected results from attending the workshop?

- No real unexpected results. I suppose I didn't know just how bad our materials were, prior to attending. I guess that was unexpected!
- I picked up some very good facilitator activities-- creative ways of breaking the group into smaller groups. I have used these already.
- The workshop was great. The only unexpected result was the personal learning about the overall application of environmental education and how it can fit into everyday course work and daily living.

4. Have you shared the Guidelines or other workshop information with others? If yes, please describe.

- Not yet. I have plans to get the Education Committee involved to employ the guidelines, but getting them together in the same room is a challenge.
- I have shared the guidelines with my supervising manager, _____. I have also spoken about them during presentations at CSTA and other meetings. The Ca. Department of Education sponsors the CREEC Network which will be hosting their annual conference in Feb. At the conference, we have asked Lori Mann to also do a workshop session for our coordinators. We want them to be fully knowledgeable about the guidelines and begin to incorporate them into their work for the CREEC Network and CDE.
- With my boss and the rest of the staff.

5. Additional comments?

- There are so many guidelines to integrate...not just NAAEE, but individual state guidelines, sometimes city or grant-specific guidelines. I wish we could one-stop-shop. Perhaps there will come a day when this happens.
- Bottom line...guidelines are helpful, but for a small organization, day-to-day operations get first priority. Not many people are willing to volunteer to evaluate materials. It's not as much fun as some of the other things we do, or they worry that they lack the qualifications to evaluate things well...I can give them the books, and they disappear with an overwhelmed look in their eyes.
- I really appreciated getting this information and knowing more about the resources that were available.

2. Indicate extent to which the activity is achieving (or making progress toward) its expected outcome based on the results just described.

The results indicate that the project is making progress towards meeting the expected outcome. By the end of 2+ hour workshops, facilitated by a number of different individuals

under a number of different circumstances, participants consistently indicate that they plan on using the Guidelines and are able to describe how they plan on using them.

3. Indicate extent to which the activity is achieving unanticipated beneficial outcomes.

This may not be an unanticipated benefit of the project. However, it seems as if the workshops are reaching a new group of environmental educators. Since the Guidelines project was initiated in 1993, with the first set of guidelines being published in 1996, it would be easy to assume that many, if not most, environmental educators had already participated in a guidelines related workshop or at least heard of the Guidelines. However, 85.9% of the participants indicated that they had not attended a guidelines workshop previously.

Section 4: Discussion & Implications of Results

1. Briefly discuss your results:

The results were, for the most part, positive. Participants gave the workshops high marks (mean = 4.70 on a five point scale), indicated that they planned on using the Guidelines (mean = 6.54 on a seven point scale) and responded that they planned on sharing the Guidelines with others (mean = 6.77 on a seven point scale). Overwhelmingly, the participants suggested that they would recommend the workshop to others (99.2 %). Additionally, the evaluation results suggest that participants can describe tangible ways to use the Guidelines in their own work, and that a majority of those contacted 4-5 months after their workshop had used the Guidelines.

2. If relevant, describe how you will adjust the expected activity outcome based on results obtained.

Revision of the activity outcome does not seem to be necessary at this time.

3. If relevant, describe the changes you will make to improve the activity, based on results obtained.

This activity depends on a growing number of Guidelines Trainers' Bureau members to design and implement presentations and workshops. Although all of the Guidelines Trainers' Bureau members have participated in a three-day training workshop, they are all volunteers who may only facilitate a workshop 1-2 times each year. The evaluation strategy has highlighted two issues that need to be addressed:

- a.) Project staff need to reinforce the importance of using the evaluation form. There have been two cases where a Trainers' Bureau member simply forgot to administer

the evaluation. In another case, Trainers' Bureau members created their own evaluation form. Although it is quite understandable that they might want to ask additional questions related to their own agenda, much of their data has limited use for EETAP3 reporting.

- b.) Overall, Guidelines Trainers' Bureau members seem to be successfully providing presentations and workshops. The returned evaluations have highlighted instances where a Guidelines Trainers' Bureau member is not as well prepared to implement a particular activity or seems a bit confused about Guidelines content. As project staff becomes aware of these issues, we have talked with the individuals involved to clear up any confusion, etc. In addition, as areas of confusion are identified, an email will be sent to all of the Guidelines Trainers' Bureau members with the correct information highlighted. The evaluation forms provide useful input into the activity's mentoring function.

4. Discuss the success/impact of the activity in helping to achieve EETAP's short- (1. Knowledge to 4. Intention), intermediate- (5. Behavior) and long-term (6. Impacts) outcomes per EETAP3's Logic Model.

The results of the end of workshop evaluation suggest that the activity is meeting EETAP's short-term (4 Intention) outcome. Participants' indicate that they do anticipate using the Guidelines to improve their EE efforts. In addition, they indicate that they plan on sharing the Guidelines with others.

The results of the follow up survey suggest that the activity is meeting EETAP's intermediate (5 Behavior) outcome. Surveyed 4-5 months after they attended a day long workshop, the major of respondents were able to provide at least one example of how they have used the Guidelines in their work.

5. Describe how future evaluations of the activity could be changed to gain more insight into how to improve the activity and/or collect evidence on outcomes.

At this point, major changes in the evaluation strategy are not anticipated. Currently, participants are asked both closed and open-ended questions regarding their anticipated use of the Guidelines. Since these questions are asked at the end of the workshop, the participants' answers provide a snapshot of their intention to act. Most of the participants are completing this evaluation and their responses seem to indicate that they are taking some care in writing their responses.

The end of workshop data collection has been followed up with a survey of randomly selected individuals who participated in a day long workshop. The survey, administered approximately 4-5 months after the workshop, provides an indication of whether participants

have followed through with their intentions. A major improvement of the evaluation strategy would involve asking *all* participants to complete the survey 4-6 months after the workshop. However, it is felt that this would be unduly costly. On the other hand, it might be reasonable to increase the number of participants surveyed. This would give a more robust picture of how/if participants are using the Guidelines in their work.

Section 5: Appendices

Appendix A

End of Workshop Exit Evaluation – see attached

Appendix B
Follow up Email Survey Questions

1. Have you had the opportunity to use any of the information or materials (e.g., Guidelines) you received as part of this workshop? If so, how?
2. If you have not used the Guidelines yet, do you have any plans to use them? If so, how?
3. Were there any unexpected results from attending the workshop?
4. Have you shared the Guidelines or other workshop information with others? If yes, please describe.
5. Additional comments?

6.) How could this workshop be improved?

7.) What is your current profession?

- Higher education student**, *degree/major*: _____
- K-12 teacher**, *grade(s)*: _____
- College/University faculty member**, *department*: _____
- Non-formal educator**, *setting*: _____
- Administrator**, *type of organization*: _____
- Other**, *describe*: _____

8.) How many participants do you typically reach each year in your programs?

9.) As a professional, have you previously completed:

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| A workshop on the <i>Guidelines for Excellence</i>? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The “Fundamentals of EE” online course supported by the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |

10.) Additional comments?

Thank you!