

Nonformal Environmental Education Programs: Guidelines for Excellence Virtual Workshop 90 minutes to 4 hours

Note: This workshop is designed for use as an introduction to the Nonformal EE Guidelines specifically and the Guidelines for Excellence Series in general. It can be scaled, depending on your needs, from 90 minutes to 4 hours. Times are approximate and will vary depending on your focus and your participants.

Materials/Links Needed:

- ✓ *Nonformal Guidelines* PowerPoint [Note: Feel free to adapt or edit. Speaker's notes are provided for reference.]
- ✓ Link to *Nonformal Environmental Education Programs: Guidelines for Excellence*: https://cdn.naaee.org/sites/default/files/gl_nonformal_complete.pdf
- ✓ Jamboard "String Theory." Please make a copy for your own use: <https://jamboard.google.com/d/16dclG8-eoDaqme0ALtrjD6TkRj9LYJVAbezfuYiztpY/edit?usp=sharing>
- ✓ Jamboard "Characterizing Your Audience." Please make a copy for your own use: <https://jamboard.google.com/d/1fQfbuN1R9CF6F6QhwOs-B3bdqbiP8-OlaOcl9uJf6w/edit?usp=sharing>
- ✓ Jamboard "Too Good to Pass Up." Please make a copy for your own use: <https://jamboard.google.com/d/1UR1H8Ojpp-9MblZHI9UpQXJc6yabKoJmL59id7VGuHq/edit?usp=sharing>
- ✓ Video *What is Environmental Literacy?* : <https://naaee.org/eepro/learning/eelearn/what-is-ee/lesson-4/animation>.
- ✓ PDF: *Developing a Framework for Environmental Literacy*
- ✓ Jamboard "Deconstructing a Field Day." Please make a copy for your own use: https://jamboard.google.com/d/1RpsNFh9rT_tt669auswY5GUyD9bT1kylgg8yqONkxP0/edit?usp=sharing
- ✓ Google Form: *Self-Assessment Nonformal Environmental Education Program Development*. Please make a copy for your own use: <https://forms.gle/RnQRSw8yG9a96fz49>
- ✓ Jamboard "Six Key Characteristics of Program Planning." Please make a copy for your own use: <https://jamboard.google.com/d/11CpSIESN4T3zr1b8B2adsfYvCoRjIQyqSxNPI387OxE/edit?usp=sharing>
- ✓ Google Form: *Nonformal Guidelines Workshop Evaluation*. Please make a copy for your own use: <https://forms.gle/nbvVwpzqm9vejxYC6>

Introduction & Project Background

15 minutes

Use the PowerPoint presentation to introduce the *Guidelines for Excellence*: What is NAAEE? What is the National Project for Excellence in EE? Why were the *Guidelines* developed? How were they developed? Overview of the *Nonformal Guidelines*. NOTE: Depending on your situation

(e.g., time, audience), you can use a PowerPoint presentation [slides 1-13], or you can use one or more of the video presentations provided.

Depending on your group, you may wish to include, in this introductory session, the following: land acknowledgement, background information about your organization and/or the sponsoring organization, participant introductions, and an icebreaker.

Note: Much of the following assumes you will be using breakout rooms for small group work. Depending on the group and their familiarity with the online platform (e.g., Zoom) and applications (e.g., Jamboard) you are using, you may want to provide a quick introduction to using the chat function, the need to cut/paste URLs for use while in breakout rooms, and such.

Six Key Characteristics (“String Theory”)

40 minutes

Individually and in small groups, participants will reflect on their own nonformal program development process and become familiar with the six key characteristics outlined in the *Nonformal Environmental Education Programs: Guidelines for Excellence*.

Procedure:

- Ask the participants to think about the process they typically use to develop their own nonformal environmental education programs. They should outline their steps on a scratch piece of paper (simple brainstorming). Give them about **3-5 minutes**.
- Explain that they will be comparing their program development process with others in breakout rooms.
- In the chat, post the URL for the Jamboard “String Theory Nonformal EE Programs Guidelines.” Be sure you have made your own copy and created one sheet for each breakout room group.
- Explain that they will be assigned to breakout rooms (2-4 people/group). They should take note of their room number and go to the appropriate Jamboard sheet.
- Once in their groups, participants will have about **10 minutes** to complete the following assignment: (cut and paste the instructions into the chat):
 - Introduce yourselves to the others in your group
 - Each person should complete a post-it note for each of their brainstormed steps.
 - Once everyone in your group has finished writing their post-it notes, quickly review all of the post-it notes.
 - Once you have a good understanding of what each team member has included, create a model of a nonformal program development process.
 - Remember that program development is not necessarily a linear process. You can draw relationships.
 - Be creative.
- Bring the group back together.
- Use screen share to post page 3 of Nonformal Environmental Education Programs: Guidelines for Excellence: https://cdn.naaee.org/sites/default/files/gl_nonformal_complete.pdf OR use the PowerPoint slides to provide a quick overview of the six key characteristics [slides 15-22, **10 minutes**]

- Individually or back in their groups, give participants a few minutes to compare the six key characteristics to their models. Post the URL for the Jamboard models again. **[5 minutes]**.
- Wrap-Up: Ask the participants how their models compared to the six key characteristics? Which key characteristics were included in their models? Were any not included? Had they included steps that they didn't see represented on the summary sheet? Were there any surprises? **[10 minutes]**

***NOTE:** Depending on how much time you have and the nature of your group, select from one or more of the following exercises. Each activity provides an opportunity to dive a bit deeper into one of the Key Characteristics. The PowerPoint slides for these start with slide #23.*

Needs Assessment (KC #1)

35 minutes

Needs Assessment focuses on the design of programs to address identified environmental, educational, and community needs and to produce responsive, responsible benefits that address those identified needs.

Definition of Needs Assessment—The part of the overall planning and evaluation cycle that ascertains the need for a particular program by considering such things as audience interest and knowledge, environmental conditions, etc. Also known as front-end evaluation.

Lead a short discussion of needs assessment:

Have any of the participants conducted a needs assessment—formally (e.g., survey, focus groups, etc.) or informally (e.g., discussion with conference participants, casual observation of visitor behavior)? During the discussion, reinforce the importance of not reinventing the wheel (Guideline 1.2). Ask each group to revisit their group String Theory model. To what extent did they included some type of needs assessment?

Activity: Characterizing Your Audience (Guideline 1.3)

Working in small groups, participants analyze an assigned audience (see Jamboard “Characterizing Your Audience”). They will consider what we might know about that audience, and what we need to learn about the audience. They will be asked to describe their assigned audience, think about how to differentiate audiences, and consider implications for program planning.

Procedure:

- Make a copy of the Jamboard “Characterizing Your Audience” for your workshop. [Paste the URL for your Jamboard into the chat]
- Explain to the group that they will be analyzing a specific audience for a water education program they want to develop. They should take the URL for the Jamboard with them into their small group. They should also note their breakout room number and use the Jamboard sheet associated with that room number.
- Explain that when they go into their breakout room they should [cut and paste these instructions into the chat]:
 - Introduce yourselves.
 - Read the scenario and the description of your assigned audience.
 - Complete the “Characterizing Your Audience” worksheet.

- Bring the group back together for a quick sharing of each group’s scenario and the results of their analysis (two minutes per group). Or, alternatively, ask one to two groups to share their results in full, and then ask if any of the other groups have additional or different experiences that they would like to share.
- Ask participants: If you were given the same audience, but a different topic (e.g., climate change, energy conservation, biodiversity), how might your analysis differ?
- If your group suggested that you needed more information about or from the audience, how might you go about collecting that information?
- Wrap-Up: Ask participants to refer to the bullet points for Key Characteristic 1.3 (p. 9). How do these bullets relate to their scenario? Would any of their considerations change?

Organizational Needs and Capacities (KC #2)

35 minutes

Organizational Needs and Capacities focuses on the development of programs that support and complement their parent organization’s mission, purpose, and goals.

Lead a short discussion about the role of organizational missions in program development:

Ask participants if there are ever times when “mission creep” is appropriate? Ask participants to revisit their String Theory models. To what extent had they included issues related to their organization’s mission, needs or capacities? **[5 minutes]**

Activity: Too Good to Pass Up

In this activity, participants analyze a common question—when does reaching out to new audiences turn into organizational mission creep?

Procedure:

- Make a copy of the Jamboard “Too Good to Pass Up” for your workshop. [Paste the URL for your Jamboard into the chat]
- Explain that they will be considering what advice they should give to their board of directors about a proposed partnership opportunity **[15 minutes]**. In their small groups, they should:
 - Introduce yourselves
 - Read and discuss the scenario
 - Develop a list of questions and concerns they might use in preparing for their board meeting.
 - In addition, they should think about the following questions: What do you need to know before you explore this partnership any further for your organization? What might be a “deal breaker?” What might motivate your organization to enter into the partnership? Provide this caution: If you find yourselves saying, “We assume that . . . write the assumption down as a question or concern.
- Bring the group back together and ask each team to report out or conduct a virtual gallery walk (as a group visit each Jamboard sheet, read the entries, and then move on to the next page).
- After all the groups have reported on their discussions or you visited all the posters, ask them to look at the indicators outlined in the Nonformal Guidelines (Guideline 2.1 bullet points) and compare the results (page 10)
- Wrap up. Engage the participants in a discussion: Do you find yourself tempted to engage in projects that are outside the scope of your organization’s mission? Why? Whether you have or have not done so in the past, when might it be appropriate to engage in projects that could be considered “mission creep?”

Program Scope and Structure (KC #3)

30 minutes

Key Characteristic #3 Program Scope and Structure suggests that programs should be developed with well-articulated goals and objectives that state how the program will contribute to the development of environmental literacy.

Lead a short discussion about goals and objectives: Ask the participants whether they write formal goals and objectives for all/most of their programs. Ask if anyone is willing to share the gist of one of their typical program level goals. Ask them to describe whether they use different program goals depending on the audience, length of the program, or other characteristics?

Activity: Environmental Literacy

Remind the participants that environmental literacy is an essential component in Key Characteristic #3. Explain that they will be dipping their toes into a discussion of environmental literacy – looking at how and when they incorporate environmental literacy development in their programs.

Procedure:

- Show NAAEE's short video [What is Environmental Literacy?](https://naaee.org/eepr/learning/eelearn/what-is-ee/lesson-4/animation) by clicking the underlined title or by going to: <https://naaee.org/eepr/learning/eelearn/what-is-ee/lesson-4/animation>.
- Review the key components of environmental literacy (e.g., knowledge, dispositions, competencies, and environmentally responsible behavior) with your group by displaying the PowerPoint slide or PDF of Developing a Framework for Assessing Environmental Literacy.
- Ask participants to revisit their String Theory models. To what extent did they included specific learning goals or objectives related to these components of environmental literacy?
- *In advance of the workshop, set up a poll.* Ask participants to think about a typical environmental education program they deliver. Then, ask them to complete the poll, indicating the degree to which the four environmental literacy components are addressed during that typical program. For example:

SAMPLE POLL QUESTION:

1. Thinking about one of your typical EE programs, to what extent do you address environmental knowledge (e.g., physical & ecological systems, human systems, environmental issues)?
2. Thinking about one of your typical EE programs, to what extent do you address dispositions (e.g., sensitivity, attitudes and concern towards the environment, motivation, self-efficacy/agency)?
3. Thinking about one of your typical EE programs, to what extent do you address competencies (e.g., identifying & analyzing environmental issues, evaluating & making personal judgements, creating plans to resolve environmental issues)?
4. Thinking about one of your typical EE programs, to what extent do you address environmentally responsible behavior (e.g., individually or as a member of a group work towards solving an environmental problem)?

SAMPLE POLL RESPONSES:

Not at all

Sometimes

Most of the time

All of the time

- After participants have completed the poll, ask them for their thoughts about the results.

- What do these results tell you about typical nonformal EE programs and environmental literacy?
- What factors come into play when they think about program goals and objectives and the focus of their programs?
- Ask if any of the participants explicitly design programs around the four environmental literacy components? If any say “yes,” ask them to describe the program.
- How might they build environmental literacy into their programs?

Program Quality and Delivery (KC # 4 and KC #5)

40 minutes

Key Characteristic #4 Program Delivery Resources suggests that programs require careful planning to ensure that well-trained staff, facilities, and support materials are available to accomplish program goals and objectives.

Key Characteristic #5 Program Quality and Appropriateness suggests that programs be built on a foundation of quality instructional materials and thorough planning.

Activity: Deconstructing a Field Day

In this activity, participants are given a scenario and asked to brainstorm all the steps needed to ensure that a program will go off without a hitch. The checklists they create will be compared to the guidelines in Key Characteristics #4 and #5.

Procedure

- Explain to the participants that we are going to shift now to thinking about all the preparation that needs to go into implementing a program.
- Read the following scenario to the participants: Imagine that you have decided that your nature center wants to host a field day for your local community. You will be focusing on local water issues. The field day will take place at the local high school. You will set up 10 stations around the high school football field; each station will offer a hands-on activity for field day participants. There is a lot of work to be done before the community members arrive.

In your small group, you will design a checklist of “to do” items, beginning with the day you decide you want to launch this program through to the arrival of the first participants.

- Cut and paste the URL for the Jamboard “Deconstructing a Field Day” into the chat before you send the participants to breakout rooms. Remind them to copy the URL into their own browsers.
- After the groups have completed their checklists [**approximately 20 minutes**], ask each group to share one or two items on their checklist. After all the groups have shared, ask the participants to compare their checklist to the bulleted points outlined for Key Characteristics #4 and #5 (p. 16-22).
- Wrap-Up: What guidelines did you include in your checklist? Which ones were missed completely? What did you include that wasn’t included in either Key Characteristic #4 or #5? Did your checklist seem to focus on one element of implementation planning more than another?

Evaluation (KC #6)

20 minutes

Key Characteristic #6 Evaluation focuses on the need to define and measure results to improve current programs, ensure accountability, and maximize the effects of future efforts.

Tell the participants that we are going to move on to a new topic—evaluation. Who has conducted an evaluation? Ask them to describe their experiences briefly. Point out to the participants that we have been talking about evaluation all day—refer them to the note at the beginning of Key Characteristic #6. Evaluation is included throughout successful nonformal programming.

Tell the participants that there are different types of evaluation that take place at different points in the program development cycle. Remind them that we talked about needs assessment earlier in the day. Briefly introduce concepts of formative evaluation or summative evaluation.

Definitions

Needs assessment: The part of the overall planning and evaluation cycle that ascertains the need for a particular program by considering such things as audience interest and knowledge, environmental conditions, etc. Also known as front-end evaluation.

Formative evaluation: Collecting information and data about your program during its implementation with the goal of using the information and data to improve the program as it is implemented.

Summative evaluation: Focuses on the documentation of outputs (e.g., number of participants reached, number of events held) and impacts or outcomes (e.g., level of knowledge gained, changes in social, economic, or environmental conditions) of the program once it is completed.

Assessment: Systematic and ongoing process of collecting and analyzing information about learner progress and achievement. The primary purpose of assessment is to improve learning.

Activity: Self-Assessment

Explain that self-assessment can be an important tool. It can be used at the beginning of an experience to help facilitators understand what participants already know and how to tailor instruction. Self-assessment can also be used to help individuals reflect on their own learning.

Procedure:

- Post a link to the Google form Nonformal Programs Self-Assessment in the chat and ask participants to complete it.
- Once they are finished, asked them to raise their hands.
- Discuss their reactions.

Wrap-Up and Final Questions

15 minutes

Tell participants that as a final exercise, they will think about all six key characteristics.

Procedure:

- Post the Jamboard, Six Key Characteristics of Program Planning.
- Ask participants to place their name on a post-it.
- Ask participants to think about each of the six key characteristics and then to move their post-it to the Key Characteristic they think is the hardest to do well.
- Ask a few participants at each key characteristic to share with the group what makes that characteristic hard.
- Next, ask participants to move their post-it next to the key characteristic that they think is the easiest to implement.
- Ask a few participants at each key characteristic to share with the group why that characteristic is easy.
- Ask participants to note who the people are standing next to the key characteristic they thought was hardest. These will make great resource people after the workshop.
- Final reflection: What two things are you going to take back to your organization?
- Open up the floor for any final questions.

Workshop Evaluation

5 minutes

- Post the URL to the Google Form: Guidelines Virtual Workshop Evaluation in the chat. Ask participants to take a few minutes to complete the evaluation.