

APPENDIX 3

Guidelines for Environmental Education

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The terms associated with CEPA are:

C for communicating, connecting, capacity building, change in behaviour

E for educating, empowerment (learning and professional updating)

P for public, public awareness, public participation, policy instrument

A for awareness, action, action research.



“To create deep change, we must find ways of managing communication and learning across cultures and disciplines, and collectively creating and managing new knowledge for sustainable solutions.” (Keith Wheeler, Chair: IUCN Commission on Education and Communication)

The following guidelines have been developed through years of experience and applied research in environmental education processes. They are shared here as a reference for developing meaningful participation processes, training courses and other related programmes.

Environmental education processes should:

1. Be relevant and appropriate to the situation and the context of the participants.
2. Seek to connect with the context in which the learning is situated and the topics under consideration.
3. Build on existing strengths and opportunities.
4. Mobilise and engage with the prior knowledge or understanding of participants and, where appropriate, challenge prior knowing in a supportive, enabling ‘learning for change’ environment.
5. Engage participants in learning tasks that are related to their context (task-based learning).
6. Support dialogue, practical field-work experiences, reporting on experiences and sharing ideas as well as ‘action taking’ related to the learning. The appropriate interlinking of such processes will strengthen meaningful learning.

7. Share the ‘tools of science’ so that participants become confident in using such tools to empirically find out about their environment, explore and tackle problems. For example, learning with basic water quality monitoring kits can enable participants to investigate and address water pollution.
8. In the case of work-based learning, relate to the work environment of the participant rather than be removed and hypothetical.
9. Build an understanding of the social and physical world as interconnected and inter-dependent systems.
10. Enable participants to learn, ‘un-learn’ and ‘re-learn’ from discontinuities such as a pollution incidents or loss of water supplies.
11. Encourage and enable informed action-taking and on-going practice-based learning.
12. Engage participants in collective processes of finding out, thinking through and acting on environmental issues, challenges and opportunities.

Another set of guidelines have been developed by Gareth Thomson, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, and Jenn Hoffman, Sierra Club of Canada, BC Chapter. Drawing on their publication, *Measuring the Success of Environmental Education Programmes*, we highlight and adapt the following three guidelines:

1. Examine environmental problems and issues in an all-inclusive manner that includes social, moral, and ethical dimensions, and is mindful of the diversity of values that exist in society.
2. Motivate and empower participants through the development of specific action skills, allowing them to develop communities of practice and strategies for responsible citizenship through the application of knowledge and skills as they work toward the resolution of an environmental problem or issue.
3. Promote an understanding of the past, a sense of the present, and a positive vision for the future.

Principles for Curriculum Design

Prof Heila Lotz-Sisitka (1999) from the Southern African Development Community (SADC), drawing on international literature and regional research, developed the following principles to inform curriculum or course design for environmental education:

- Responsiveness to the complex and changing social, environmental and economic contexts within which participants live and work.
- Meaningful opportunities for participants to contribute to and shape the content and purposes of the course.
- Open teaching and learning programmes that are flexible enough to respond to individual participants’ needs and allow for participants to contribute to course processes.
- A recognition that within any practice there is a substantial amount of ‘embedded’ theory; provide opportunities to critically engage with this theory, its strengths and its weaknesses in different contexts.

- Tutors and course coordinators work with participants in ways that enhance the contribution that participants make in their work and community contexts.
- All of the above implies and supports reflexivity in terms of evaluating what we do, understanding why we do it in that way, considering alternatives and having the capacity to support meaningful social transformation when appropriate.

An Open Framework for Learning

The following framework developed by Prof Rob O’Donoghue of Rhodes University, South Africa, provides guidance for planning learning opportunities. The surrounding questions can be used to plan opportunities for learners to seek information, encounter reality, take action, and report on what they have come to know.

