

teep teacher environmental education preparation

a joint project of the Council on the Environment of New York City, Environmental Education Advisory Council, and the NYU Wallerstein Collaborative for Urban Environmental Education at the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development.

Symposium Summary

Rochester, NY

February 29, 2008 – March 1, 2008

The sixth Teacher Environmental Education Preparation symposium took place on February 29, 2008 at the SUNY Brockport MetroCenter in Rochester, New York. Over 30 participants attended representing individuals from numerous environmental organizations and 10 colleges and universities from across New York State as well as two representatives from out of state colleges. The goal of the symposium was to discuss the environmental education challenge in teacher preparation by focusing specifically on the national initiative that was launched between North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) to incorporate environmental standards in the accreditation process of teacher education programs.

The Teacher Environmental Education Preparation program was established in the fall of 1999 as a partnership between the Council on the Environment of New York City (CENYC), the Wallerstein Collaborative for Urban Environmental Education at New York University's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development and the Environmental Education Advisory Council (EEAC), to expand environmental education (ee) in teacher education programs.

The symposium was designed to give attendees the opportunity to participate in discussions as well as hear speakers from various colleges and universities who shared how environmental education is being incorporated into their programs. The symposium was coordinated by Kathleen Oliver of the Wallerstein Collaborative for Urban Environmental Education, NYU and members of the TEEP Planning Committee.

The day began with a welcome by our host, Peter Veronesi, Associate Professor of Science Education at SUNY Brockport followed by an introduction to TEEP by [Mike Zamm](#), Chair of TEEP and Director of Education at Council on the Environment of NYC and Mary Leou, Clinical Associate Professor of Education, Co-Chair of TEEP and Director of Wallerstein Collaborative for Urban Environmental Education at NYU. Mike Zamm focused on TEEP's history over the last eight years.

Keynote Address

Dr. Bora Simmons, University of Oregon, delivered the keynote address; *NCATE Environmental Education Standards in Teacher Education: A New Agenda*. Main keynote ideas included the following:

- Environmental Education (EE) standards will encourage statewide environmental literacy.
- EE standards will encourage teacher education programs to take environmental education seriously.
- Faculty members will have incentive to offer more courses in environmental education.
- To be certified, a university must document that all EE courses taught on campus are meeting NAAEE's standards.
- EE is now being accepted as an important part of formal education training.
- More EE will be taught in schools as teachers are better trained to provide it.

Link to [NAAEE Standards for the Initial Preparation of Environmental Educators](#)

Link to [NAAEE Program Report](#)

Panel Discussion: New Directions in Environmental Education and Teacher Preparation

Facilitated by Mary Leou, the panel was an opportunity for several representatives of Universities to share what is being done in their departments in terms of environmental education. The panel included the following representatives:

- Beth Klein (Associate Professor of Science Education at SUNY Cortland)
Beth described the three-day outdoor education component required of all SUNY Cortland undergraduate childhood and early childhood education majors which is held at the SUNY Cortland Outdoor Education Center on Raquette Lake in the Adirondacks. In addition, she described how all SUNY Cortland undergraduate childhood education majors participate in some or all of the Project Wild, Project Wet, and Project Learning Tree workshops which are then used as teaching resources for field experiences.
- Peter Veronesi, (Associate Professor of Science Education at SUNY Brockport)
Peter discussed the importance of incorporating global climate change in science education and bringing contemporary issues associated with the interplay between Science, technology, and society, into the classroom.
- Mary Leou, (Associate Clinical Professor of Teaching and Learning, NYU)
Mary presented NYU initiatives which include introducing all undergraduate pre-service teacher education candidates to environmental education through field-based placements in museums, parks, botanic gardens and zoos. She also described NYU's Hudson River Summer Program designed to introduce in-service teachers to outdoor field methods and urban ecology.
- Lynda Paznokas, Associate Dean for School and Community Collaboration at Washington State University. Lynda discussed WSU's Pre-service Environmental Education Project (PEEP). The goal of PEEP is for professors at 18 universities in the state of Washington to incorporate significant environmental/sustainability education within pre-service teacher science methods courses. For more details click [here](#).

Breakout Sessions

Facilitated by Christine Coughlin, Program Coordinator for Wallerstein Collaborative for Urban Environmental Education.

The first breakout session enabled participants to get acquainted with each other, and share what they are currently doing at their respective institutions and what they would like to do. The second breakout session focused on two questions: What are the possibilities in your institution? What are the barriers you need to overcome? The following list is compiled from the results of the breakout sessions:

Possibilities

- EE can be an approach to teaching several subject areas
- Retrofit national programs by making EE local and relevant to students' lives
- Use clout of NCATE to implement and incorporate more EE in pre-service education
- Funding opportunities – NOAA Sea Grant, NYSERDA, Conservation fund, No Child Left Inside (NCLI), public and private foundations
- Offer Project WET, WILD, PLT in teacher preparation programs
- Because the environment is a hot topic it is more easily embraced and accepted

Barriers

- Non-formal college partnerships are hard to sustain
- Fear of science
- Standards are always changing – hard to keep up
- Assumption that EE is a “leftist” idea
- People of color not as involved as they should be
- University issues of turf, money, and standards
- Need to meet certification requirements
- No EE certification area in NY State education
- Not enough grants or resources to implement
- Lack of faculty expertise
- Time to incorporate EE into the curriculum is limited (standards, testing)
- Clear definition of EE does not exist
- EE perceived as advocacy

NYSOEA: A State-Wide Resource

Mary Anna Russo, President of New York State Outdoor Education Association spoke on NYSOEA: *A statewide Resource for Environmental Education.*

Concluding Remarks

To conclude the day's symposium, Mary Leou summarized the main ideas that came out of the day's discussion and identified priorities to work towards. Recommended action items included:

- To develop an environmental literacy plan for NYS
- To follow-up on the No Child Left Inside Legislation

- To get a letter out by DEC to all colleges and universities regarding PLT, Project WET, Project WILD
- More professional development for faculty as needed
- Interest in more TEEP symposia
- SUNY wide on-line course could be developed as a pilot
- A TEEP on-line course could also be developed

For more information about TEEP or to join the TEEP list serve please visit <http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/wallerstein/teep>

Update

DEC Commissioner Pete Grannis will be sending a letter to all NYS College and University deans and faculty in June 2008 offering Project WET, WILD, and Project Learning Tree as a resource for their pre-service education programs.

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