



Choosing a program delivery strategy



When you deliver your program, theory meets reality. What you do determines whether youth are attracted to, and stay involved with, water education. Often the people who are most effective at successfully delivering programs are teachers or other education professionals. Natural resource professionals should ask their education partners for help in planning how to deliver the program and in carrying out its delivery.

This section addresses such questions as: How will you manage the program? What will youth actually do? Have you taken advantage of the unique locations and qualities of water to make your program fun and memorable? Have you incorporated appropriate instructional strategies? How will instructors make sure that activities meet program goals? What mechanisms have you set up to recognize the contributions of participants, volunteers and staff?

According to directors of successful water education programs, youth are attracted to and remain interested in programs because:

- Activities use water (the real thing) and water has unique and fun properties. For example, it contracts when cold but expands just before freezing. In the right conditions it can form uniquely shaped crystals (snowflakes). Frozen it floats on water. Its surface is thick enough to support the weight of some living things like water insects. Things dissolve in it.
- Water education can be conducted anywhere that water is present including from a hose or in a bathtub or sink, but is especially enjoyable when conducted near or on a water resources such as a beach, stream, or lake.
- Water and its surrounding ecosystem lend themselves to investigation and solving a “mystery” or problem.
- Most youth already have a recreational interest in water (fishing, boating, swimming) that can be combined with an education theme.

You are encouraged to take their advice as you plan for program delivery.

What will be the key activities of your program?

What will be the unique strengths of your program?

Success elements addressed (see p. 6)

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Youth needs

5

Youth as partners

9

Effective delivery

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strategy*

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Section 7,
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continued

DONE PLAN TO NO PLAN

Have you attended to basic management issues to ensure smooth program operation?

- Is there a code of conduct for participants? staff?
- Have instructors/leaders participated in a structured training program?
- Do you have health insurance, emergency information and parental/guardian permissions on file?
- Do you have an emergency plan on file in case someone is injured?
- Are staff directly involved with youth trained in first aid and CPR?

DONE PLAN TO NO PLAN

How will you use the following general instructional strategies that help lead to successful programs?

- Incorporate fun as a part of the education experience
- Use appropriate science education strategies, e.g. the learning cycle approach (exploration, concept introduction or application) or inquiry method (asking questions and designing a method for answering questions)
- Apply age-appropriate science processes (observing, communicating, comparing, organizing, relating, inferring, applying)
- Encourage development of critical thinking skills which emphasize dialogue, reflection, and questioning
- Use educational strategies that address the various learner abilities and learning styles, e.g. visual, auditory, manipulative and global learning styles
- Share the learning responsibility between teacher and student

DONE PLAN TO NO PLAN

*How will you ensure that the following strategies identified as **important to teaching about water** are part of your program delivery?*

- *Practice in learner objectives (hands-on or interactive)*
- *Close-up observation/handling of plants and animals in a water habitat or in a laboratory setting*
- *Observe changes in water quantity or quality over time*
- *Learn water conservation or protection ideas youth can use in the community or at home*
- *Encourage youth to express a desire or intention to use a water conservation or protection skill*
- *Allow youth to choose a project of interest within the water program*
- *Model appropriate behavior concerning the water topic, e.g. youth can practice conserving water in a program targeting water conservation*
- *Positively reinforce or recognize youth choosing an appropriate behavior*

DONE PLAN TO NO PLAN

Does the program provide appropriate recognition for each of the following?

Participants
Volunteers
Staff

As you deliver your water education program to your target audience, how will you incorporate sound management, appropriate education strategies, and a recognition scheme?

Go on to any other section of the Planning Checklist. Information from this section can expand your responses to questions 4, 6 and 7 of section 1.



8 Evaluating your program

Success element
addressed (see p. 6)

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Evaluation

Evaluation helps you reflect on a program, make changes in it, and make decisions about it. While the most obvious time to evaluate is at the end, you must plan ahead for it. You can also include evaluation along the way to help check that the program and its activities are on track.

For detailed suggestions on how to evaluate the program, see the Evaluation Checklist starting on page 32.

How and when do you plan to evaluate your program?

DONE PLAN TO NO PLAN

In your program how will you plan to use the following evaluation strategies?

- *Measure expectations against outcomes*
- *Measure how program objectives, materials and activities relate to goals*
- *Measure participant perceptions of satisfaction including comfort, participation, opportunity, and information*
- *Take external impacts into consideration, such as unforeseen weather conditions, accident, or education materials being unavailable*
- *Evaluate at multiple levels of program delivery from planning and organizing to the actual event*
- *Formally review personnel*
- *Assess how well youth attained learning objectives and other impacts using pre/post tests, verbal valuations, youth presentation of results to demonstrate comprehension, etc.*

- *Provide opportunities for coordinators and instructors/leaders to evaluate each other's performance*
- *Verify that the program ties in with community or regional water issues or needs*
- *Ensure that evaluation is viewed as an important part of the program*
- *Design evaluations to be conducted regularly*
- *Summarize and use evaluation results*

Summarize the steps you will take during the program to ensure that you have enough information to evaluate the program when it is completed.

Go on to any other section of the Planning Checklist. Information from this section can expand your responses to questions 8 and 9 of section 1.