

Basics of Environmental Education Independent Study

Responses to the following questions are required to receive credit for the *Basics of Environmental Education Independent Study* for the North Carolina Environmental Education Certification Program. Questions will require you to read articles and complete modules online. Note that some questions have two or more parts. All parts of each question must be answered completely for credit; incomplete or vague responses will be returned for revision. Completed answers should be between 40-200 words, depending on the depth of the question or stated otherwise. The *Basics of EE* can be completed on your own time. However, it is a prerequisite for taking the *Methods of Teaching Environmental Education* workshop, which is a required course for NC EE Certification.

Participants are encouraged to complete the questions in the sequential order below for full understanding. Please do not submit answers to the discussion questions until all 11 are completed. Your answers should be sent as an attachment to eecertificationnc@lists.ncmail.net. Please include your full name and “Basics of EE” in the email subject line. *Example: Jane Doe – Basics of Environmental Education.* Please refer to the *Basics of EE Checklist* to make sure you have answered all questions adequately:

https://files.nc.gov/deqee/documents/files/basics-checklist-revised-july-2019_0.pdf

1) Personal Reflection - Please record your thoughts before beginning the readings.



Congratulations on enrolling in the N.C. Environmental Education Certification Program! As you begin this independent study section, reflect on your involvement and role in environmental education. How would you describe environmental education to a friend or family member?

2) What is EE? – eePRO Module

Complete this [eeLEARN module](#). Submit learning module results with this document (on “Congratulations!” page of module). There is no written requirement for this question.

To access module:

- a. Visit <https://naaee.org/eeepro/learning/eelearn/what-is-ee>
- b. Select [login](#) under the video (if you have an eePRO account)

- c. Select [register](#) under the video (if you do not have an eePRO account)
To register:
 - i. Fill out information (name and organization)
 - ii. Go to your e-mail for eePRO account and follow link to set password
 - iii. Select  Learning in the left-hand sidebar
 - iv. Select > eeLEARN in the left-hand sidebar
 - v. Select module “What is EE?”
- d. Select 


3) The Tbilisi Declaration – The Beginnings of EE

List the five objectives of environmental education as outlined in the Tbilisi Declaration. Select a goal, objective, or guiding principle from the document that you strongly believe or practice and describe why. Discuss the challenges of achieving this goal/objective/principal with your audience(s).

4) The History of EE – eePRO Module

Complete this [eeLEARN module](#). Submit learning module results with this document (on “Congratulations!” page of module). There is no written requirement for this question.

To access module:

- a. Visit <https://naaee.org/eepr/learning/eelearn/history-ee>
- b. Select Login, if not already logged in
- c. Select 

5) Captive and Noncaptive Audiences – A Story about How I Arrived at the Idea and What I Mean by It (Appendix 4 from Making a Difference on Purpose), Sam H. Ham

This question has several parts—please place the individual corresponding letter next to your responses.

- a. What did Ham discover was the real difference between interpretation and other forms of information transfer?
- b. What is the key difference between noncaptive and captive audiences, according to Ham?

- c. What are three errors interpreters make about noncaptive and captive audiences?
- d. Ham gives instructors of captive audiences some advice—treat them as if they are a noncaptive audience. Describe (or give an example of) how interpretive techniques could be used with a captive audience.

**See Appendix for an additional resource regarding best practices in interpretation.*

6) Sense of Wonder for Young Minds, David Orr

Why does Orr feel early childhood is a crucial time for positive outdoor educational experiences?

Orr seems to advocate for “local, place-based” education as a way to connect children to the natural world and to foster life-long environmental education. Describe some examples of “local, place-based” education from your experience or community. Or, if you do not have an example, what are some potential opportunities or strategies to create them in your community?

7) Beyond Ecophobia, David Sobel

Explain the difference between *ecophobia* and *ecophilia*.

To what do environmentalists attribute their development of environmental values?

8) Two Hats, John Hug

Why do you think John Hug and other environmental educators make a careful distinction between environmentalism (advocacy) and environmental education? How do you personally separate environmentalism and environmental education when working with audiences?

**See end note regarding difference between issue advocacy and advocating for the environmental education profession.*

9) Should Action Be a Goal? Yes or No, Richard Wilke and Jo Kwong

Cite one argument for and one argument against including an “action” component in environmental education.

Pick one or more guiding principle(s) from the Tbilisi Declaration and explain how

it could help environmental educators avoid some of the issues mentioned in Kwong's article.

10) The Guidelines for the Preparation and Professional Development of Environmental Educators - National Project for Excellence in Environmental Education

Please review the information provided regarding the *Guidelines for the Preparation and Professional Development of Environmental Educators*. Then, complete the self-assessment, using the guidelines as a reference. Participants are encouraged to keep their self-assessment as a reference tool as they progress through the EE Certification program.

You can complete the self-assessment in two ways:

1. Paper version: <https://files.nc.gov/deqee/documents/files/naaee-self-assessment.pdf>
2. Online version through eePRO: <https://naaee.org/node/add/self-assessment>

Upon completion of the self-assessment, which theme(s) do you need to strengthen? What are some steps that can be taken to develop these areas?

11) EE Organization and Agency Information

Environmental educators often confuse the roles of the various EE organizations in North Carolina. Click on the link above to review the EE organizations and agencies in North Carolina. You can save this document for easy access in the future.

12) Reflection

At the beginning of this independent study, you were asked to record how you would describe environmental education to a friend or family member. Upon completion of these readings and the discussion questions, would you change or add to your previous description of environmental education? If so, how did your perspectives on EE change?

If you feel your description of EE would not change after completing these readings, read <https://www.epa.gov/education/what-environmental-education> . Do you feel your description is in agreement with the EPA's definition of EE? Why

or why not?

**Note. Advocating for the Environmental Education Profession:*

John Hug's Two Hats article cautions against taking an advocacy position on a particular environmental issue and emphasizes that each environmental educator is partly responsible for the credibility of the entire EE profession. The environmental educator's role is to help others develop the knowledge, skills, and attitude to make their own informed decisions. It should be carefully noted that being an advocate for or against a particular environmental issue is different than being an advocate for the EE profession.

The relatively young EE field is finally gaining awareness and credibility. Part of this credibility results from environmental educators carefully refraining from environmental advocacy in their lessons. Another part of this credibility and awareness results from dedicated environmental educators who emphasize the value of EE. There are increasing opportunities to improve the field by supporting local, state and federal legislation and policies integrating EE into the formal education curriculum and to increase funding for EE. Advocating for EE outside of the classroom can help foster individuals and communities that are better equipped to address important environmental issues. Some people shy away from advocacy because they think of it as "political activity," but advancing the EE profession is the responsibility of every environmental educator. Your EE advocacy should be based on research (which is limited, but growing), a "message" that is consistent within the profession, as well as your own personal experiences and observations about the value of EE.

Optional: *If you are interested in learning more about best practices in interpretation, watch this video by Sam Ham, using the questions as a guide.*

A) Meaning Making as the Endgame of Interpretation, Sam H. Ham

- a. How many and which of Tilden's principles does Ham agree with and say are "far ahead" of their time? Do you agree?
- b. What are the three endgames of interpretation, and what assumptions are they based on? Do they work? Why or why not?
- c. What is "success" in interpretation? Why is this the case?
- d. What are themes, and what are other names for them? Do you utilize themes?
- e. According to Ham, how can you evaluate your program? What do you think is another method you could use to evaluate your lesson, program, etc.?

