

MS in Environmental Studies, Environmental Education

Concentration Components

Students of environmental education are expected to:

1. Develop a working knowledge of natural history, earth systems science, social justice and environmental change.
2. Understand the social-political-economic dynamics of environmental change.
3. Develop competency in learning theory and educational design.
4. Develop a portfolio of effective educational methodologies and communication strategies.
5. Gain leadership, group process, and cultural competency skills to apply effectively in a variety of educational and community-based contexts.

Writing

Communication of ideas depends on clear and engaging discourse through writing. Assignments might include:

- Succinct and directed research and reaction papers that critique existing theory and practice
- Essays that identify personal and professional values and beliefs and support work in the field of environmental education
- Observations and anecdotal records of behavior drawn from a diversity of cultural, social, or environmental situations
- Text for exhibits, interpretive signs, public service announcements, radio scripts, and other venues of communication
- Effective use of electronic media venues like websites, blogs, etc.

Philosophy Statement and Portfolio

Formulating a succinct and comprehensive statement of the values and beliefs that underlie your professional choice as an environmental educator into a set of directives for action is one focal point of the program. Students write a paper stating the 'whys' that support their environmental values and actions, life-style choices, advocacy, and professional goals. This is a personal statement that helps one return to their core beliefs when encountering the jungle of possibilities and controversies that define this work. It is a professional directional arrow. The statement and a portfolio of exemplary work are updated throughout the program and culminate as a professional portfolio in the final semester.

Tree of Environmental Education

This assignment is a seminal activity in the Foundations of Environmental Education class and uses the metaphor of a tree to capture each student's personal and professional evolution as an environmental educator. It is a good example of the use of art and alternative forms of exhibiting learning used in this program. The 'roots' represent the supportive foundation of values, beliefs, and actions that have led students toward this

professional choice. Information listed here might include mentors, parents, books or academic coursework, epiphanies, and significant transformative experiences. The trunk contains the dynamic flow of transitions, transformations, controversies, and interchanges with significant others that occur as the influence of the 'roots' lead to behavioral changes. The branches and leaves contain the fruition of the rooted values and transformative experiences in the kinds of work, life-style or recreational choices, participation in advocacy or activism, and educational pursuits one chooses.

Program Planning and Design for Formal and Non-Formal Audiences

Environmental education takes place in public institutions and community-based settings like museums, nature centers, residential learning centers, zoos, governmental offices, universities, farms and for-profit businesses, as well as in public and private schools. Knowing how to develop of a course of study in a variety of settings is essential. Students have created curriculum design projects like:

- The Appalachian Mountain Club's Mountain High Classroom (a week-long residential program for 5th and 6th grade school children)
- Revised the Rainforest Alliance curriculum for their website
- Evaluated and researched curriculum for the CEEonline website
- Created curriculum for public schools in place-based bioregional education
- Designed teacher training curricula using the environment as an integrating context for all grade levels
- Sustainability education programs for municipal leaders and city planners

Environmental Communications and Media

Students actively learn to communicate about environmental issues, ecological events, and life-style choices through a variety of media venues. Classes may include a focus on:

- Writing for the Real World of magazines, newspapers, and journals
- Learning techniques for radio journalism and TV
- Writing children's books
- Designing websites and videos
- Conservation psychology and social marketing

Interpretive Trail and Educational Exhibit Design

Classes may involve students in the development of rich and engaging educational and interpretive projects for the public. This demands capturing an environmental concept like the essence of a landscape or the state of a particular habitat in a one-minute lesson. Whether in a zoo or museum setting or the construction of a nature trail, grabbing the attention of a person who wants both a recreationally entertaining and an educational experience in a short-shot is a challenge. Students work through the creation of a Big Idea into tactics and learning strategies to inspire curiosity, provocative questions, and conceptual understandings that enhance ecological literacy and educate about environmental change and responsible action. Examples of sites where classes have made significant contributions on-site include: Bronx Zoo, Harris Center for Conservation Education, the Appalachian Mountain Club huts, Children's Museums, urban parks, Audubon-certified golf courses, and nature centers.

Educating for Sustainability

Courses and projects challenge the student to explore new fields of ecologically responsive design and the creation of 'ecologically sustainable living and learning centers.' Students have opportunities to participate in designing learning experiences that guide public and private teachers through the comprehensive 'greening' of

their schools, or that help nature centers practice what they teach in their own building facilities. Students may be involved in projects that organize more local foods in school cafeterias, community-sustained gardening, or urban food projects.

Community-based Environmental Education

Engaging stakeholders and enhancing authentic participation within and among diverse youth and adult groups is essential to solving complex environmental challenges. Effective environmental educators have the facilitative leadership skills to collaborate effectively within a variety of community contexts. Through coursework and professional internships, students hone their group process skills and enhance their cultural competencies. Students can explore community-based efforts through the lens of citizen science as well. Across the globe, citizens are actively involved with biological monitoring, ecological restoration, and other conservation efforts. How can we best empower and engage community members in biomonitoring and restorative practices? Students may explore the individual, communal, and organizational impacts of citizen science and other community-based efforts among youth and adults. Antioch students have developed ecological restoration workshops for K-12 teachers, actively participated in national restoration-based education initiatives, and implemented local teacher workshops for developing rain gardens on school grounds and other community sites. Students are engaged in other locally based initiatives, including Antioch University New England's Monadnock Ecological Research and Education Project and Cheshire County's Monadnock Farm and Community Connection, which works to ensure a healthy community rooted in sustainable agriculture.

Capstone Project

Graduate students in the environmental studies master's programs have four capstone options for demonstrating their knowledge, skills, and competencies in environmental studies (ES). These options include:

- Thesis
- Master's Project
- Student Teaching Practicum
- Collaborative Service Initiative

