
Act Locally!

Your Community

Action Toolkit



GOALS AND GUIDELINES

Your students will want to share their projects and their enthusiasm for their study of biodiversity with other students, their parents and the community. Take advantage of this enthusiasm to promote the principles of biodiversity, showcase their accomplishments, and involve them in projects which will extend their knowledge and skill.

The goals of active learning

McLaren, et. al., 1993

1. To develop students' capacities and skills to effectively anticipate the consequences of their actions in advance of taking action;
2. To enhance student's self concepts by empowering them to be independent thinkers and instilling the confidence for leadership that comes from acquired knowledge, understanding, skills and experience built upon previous successes;
3. To develop in all students the spirit and requisite skills that inspire, motivate and prepare them to be full participants who can, with confidence, work within the frameworks of the democratic system to implement positive change.



Guidelines for action work*

1. Model all the critical elements and behaviours that are expected of students.
2. Be “value-fair”. Teachers must provide students with a wide range of viewpoints (preferably first hand interaction with stakeholders) on any value issues. *Teachers cannot ethically be advocates for a value point of view in a way that takes advantage of their special relationship with kids.*
3. Encourage students to be the ones to make the decision and commitment as to what the group action research project will be.
4. Give students many opportunities to practise important action skills.
 - observation, investigation and inferencing skills
 - group organization skills
 - communication (letter writing, phone calling, public speaking) and lobbying skills)
 - presentation skills (verbal and graphic)
 - conflict resolution skills
5. Focus on positive projects and positive courses of action.
6. Treat everyone as a person of high moral worth: avoid stereotyping and blaming.
7. Ensure that students do their homework before promoting or undertaking their biodiversity project. Emphasize that they must become experts on their topics.
8. Involve students in numerous role plays and case studies before embarking on the “real thing.”
9. Inform your principal, your school board and your parents about the projects your students are undertaking. Enlist their support. Get them involved where possible.
10. Be enthusiastic!
11. Plan well!

*Adapted from Hammond, 1976.



GREAT IDEAS FOR PROJECTS!!



- Restore an area of the school yard, a local pond, a stream or a beach to its natural state. Apply for assistance through a community group and plant native trees, shrubs and wildflower. Organize a ***Biodiversity in Our Backyard Day*** during the **Yukon Biodiversity Awareness Month in April**. Invite parents, your local politicians and the media.
- Plan a *curiosity project*!! Launch a toy sailboat on a neighbourhood creek. Follow it for a couple of hours. Record its journey in story, video or with photographs. Display your stories.
- Create a *hiking club*! Take turns selecting and guiding different routes, noting important features in the biodiversity of the area.
- Organize a *biodiversity models* contest. Plan and display models related to biodiversity.
- Plan a *science fair* around the theme of biodiversity.
- Organize a *film series* at your local library on the theme of biodiversity. Plan and implement the promotion.
- Write a *column* on biodiversity for your community newspaper. Students could take turns submitting articles.
- Plan a *poster contest* for all of the feeder schools in your community. Organize a special event or activity to display and promote the posters.
- Plan a series of *Backyard Biodiversity Detective Tours* through some of the stores in your community. Record evidence of the world's biodiversity you find in these stores. Examples: hardware stores, furniture stores, grocery stores, electronic stores, hairdressers, toy stores, lumber yards. Make maps to show where the various products come from that you identify in these stores. Invite the owners and staff to your wrap-up display.
- Plan and build a model of a *green city*. Use Ernest Callenbach's novel *Ectopia* as a catalyst. Integrate concepts related to urban geography and urban planning.
- Create a short video, a web project or your own blog on one of the many aspects of biodiversity.

Letter of Invitation

Date

*You are invited to our **BACKYARD BIODIVERSITY EXTRAVAGANZA!***

For several weeks we have been studying the principles of biodiversity and its importance and relevance to our homes, our community and our school.

*We have organized a special display of our **BACKYARD BIODIVERSITY PROJECTS**, and we would like to share them with you.*

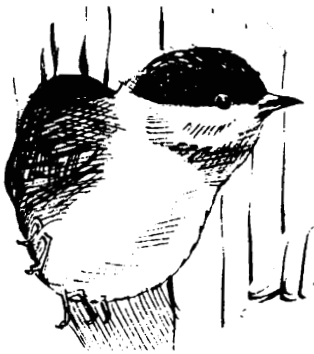
Please join us on _____
(Day and Date)

at _____
(Time)

The event takes place at _____
(Location)

(Address)

Thanks for your support.



Sincerely,

Media Release

Date _____

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BACKYARD BIODIVERSITY IS THEME OF XYZ SCHOOL EXTRAVAGANZA!

On _____
(Day, Date, Time)

students at XYZ school will welcome parents and special guests to a special presentation and display of BACKYARD BIODIVERSITY projects.

These projects represent the culmination of several weeks of study on the principles of biodiversity and its importance and relevance to their homes, their school and their community.

Activities completed during the project included investigations and comparisons of biodiversity in various sites near their school and in their backyards, biodiversity walks through community parks and ecological reserves, and completion of a biodiversity project selected by the students.

Throughout the study, biodiversity was the theme for activities in a variety of subject areas. Science was the focus, but data was provided for interesting math activities; stories, poetry and videos provided a language arts focus; painting, sculpture and modelling brought in the fine arts; and issues discussions and historical and geographical concepts were introduced through social studies.

Projects include: _____

Guests are welcome any time between _____

For further information and photo opportunities contact:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

After students have successfully completed their study of this aspect of wildlife, award their progress. copies can be made of this award and presented at the end of your unit of study.

