



**Title:** Programming to Reach New Audiences: The Product

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**Organization:** NCA&T State University/Cooperative Extension

**State:** NC      **Region:** Southern

**Year of Funding:**

**Theme:** Pollution Assessment and Prevention

**Situation:** Characteristics such as fear of change, feelings of powerlessness and the risk of failure are common among people with low literacy skills. Therefore, it can be difficult to get this group to participate in educational programs. The content and delivery method must be appropriate for their involvement and acceptance. Based on previous experience, creating multi-faceted programs that combine education and entertainment (edutainment) holds promise for reaching this target audience.

**Objectives:** To test a progressive shift in program delivery (emphasizing need-to-know rather than nice-to-know information) based on the evolution of previously developed water quality educational pieces. To encourage greater participation of limited-resource learners (people with low educational attainment and low literacy skills) on how to become more informed and proactive water stewards.

**Methods:** A CD-ROM called WATER: Chopper Ride was produced with an accompanying publication called Water Quality One-on-One, designed for individuals with low literacy skills to increase their knowledge of water quality problems and solutions. Learning such information is enhanced using a process that combines interactive learning with fun (edutainment). The accompanying publication reinforces the information presented on the CD-ROM.

**Partnerships:** NC State University provided financial support, review and marketing of products, and assistance with program implementation. County Extension Centers provide contacts for additional information.

**Research:** Water quality information presented in the program emerged from a statewide needs assessment. The project was built on personal interviews, literature searches, literacy studies, and practical experiences with the target audience. The development of the project followed an evolutionary process that tested and evaluated key program pieces prior to its final modification. Ultimately, educators have at their disposal a variety of formats for information delivery to the target audience.

**Resources:** Internal funding supported program design and production. The project evolved as a collaborative effort with NCSU who provided a portion of the financial and technical support. Additional funding came via a USDA grant.

**Results:** Currently, the CD-ROM and the accompanying publication are being pilot-tested in North Carolina. Other states are invited to participate in this effort.



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