



USDA-CSREES 2006 National Water Quality Conference

Best Education Practices for Target Audiences

A new Water Outreach Education website, <<http://wateroutreach.uwex.edu>>, provides tools and resources for water management and outreach professionals. Our goal is to provide professionals with education techniques and approaches that have been tested and found successful! Incorporating best education practices (BEPs) into water management strategies is critical for achieving management goals.

An important element for assuring successful outreach or education initiatives is to identify one or more target audiences and to determine audience goals, needs, and interests. A target audience is a segment of the population that has a specific opportunity to take action on the identified problem or is specifically affected by the identified problem.

To make it easier for water management and outreach professionals to take initial steps in designing a program or resource, we undertook a literature search for studies about 16 target audiences identified by our project Advisory Committee. Our purpose was to identify best education practices for educating specialized audiences about water and to make study results available on our website. The study involved identifying, finding, and reviewing the appropriate literature, developing procedures for organizing the relevant literature into useful categories, and drafting a summary of the results.

A project review of thousands of research abstracts – through an extensive search of multiple education, environmental, resource, and resource management journals and journal databases – identified about 120 studies of adult outreach and education that could claim to identify *best* education practices for specific audiences learning about water. Ninety six papers met our research criteria and resulted in recommendations for specific target audiences.