

Lesson Five:

Pass the Word—DESIGNING AN ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION BROCHURE FOR THE BTE



“Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.”
~Albert Einstein

Welcome to the Quote Garden. (n.d.).
Retrieved March 21, 2005 from
<http://www.quote garden.com/nature.html>

Setting The Stage



Most people acknowledge that the keys to the solution of environmental problems are awareness, education and stewardship. How can anyone solve a problem if they are not aware of it? Following awareness is education to increase our knowledge of an issue and understand its connectedness to all aspects of an ecosystem. Appreciation of our environment comes from connecting environmental problems and solutions to their effects on our everyday lives. Once we appreciate the impact of the environment on our personal lives, this leads to a desire to protect it and preserve it. All citizens of every age can be led through a four-step environmental hierarchy of Knowledge-Understanding-Appreciation-Stewardship.

Can we use this four-step process to help solve the **seven priority problems** that affect the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary? Let's review them:

Hydrologic Modification
Habitat Loss and Modification
Eutrophication
Pathogen Contamination

Sediment Availability
Changes in Living Resources
Toxic Substances

To increase awareness about these serious issues and to educate the citizens of the BTE about them, we are going to design, reproduce and distribute environmental action brochures about the Seven Priority Problems. It will be interesting to see if our awareness and education campaign leads to understanding and stewardship!



Objectives

STUDENTS WILL

- **become better informed about the Seven Priority Problems of the BTE.**
- **use computer technology to produce a tri-fold environmental action brochure.**
- **identify four elements of an effective effort for environmental stewardship.**
- **design a brochure that not only informs citizens about one of the seven priority problems and the issues surrounding it but encourages them to take significant action.**

MATERIALS

- computers with word processing program & color printer
- BTNEP poster set of the *Seven Priority Problems*
- brochures/pamphlets as examples
- pictures, maps & other images that relate to the Seven Priority Problems

GETTING READY

1. Collect a number of brochures/pamphlets that inform and educate the public about an environmental issue. You can obtain them from BTNEP, the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, AMERICA'S WETLAND CAMPAIGN, Ducks Unlimited, or other organizations. (Teacher workshops and conferences are great places to pick these up for your classroom!)
2. Distribute a few brochures to each student group. Ask students to evaluate them. Allow ten-to-fifteen minutes to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the brochure's layout and text. Have each group share its conclusions with the class. Facilitate a discussion about eye-catching details and other appealing characteristics of an outstanding brochure.
3. Discuss expectations for the brochure. The final copy should be computer-processed or typed and should look professional. It should include the class's name, a purpose statement and information about the BTE, as well as how interested citizens can become involved.



4. Review the procedure for using a computer word-processing program, such as MS Word, MS Publisher, or Print Shop, to produce a brochure.
5. Assist students in obtaining pictures, maps and other images to incorporate into their brochures.
6. Brainstorm with the class where and how class brochures will be distributed to the public.
7. Distribute information/posters on the *Seven Priority Problems* (Available from BTNEP).

PROCESS

1. Assign students to groups of three or four and have them select one of the **seven priority problems** that affect the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary. Each group should have a different problem to research.
2. Have each group develop a brochure designed to inform concerned citizens about the problem and the issues surrounding it. While the main purpose of the brochure is to inform citizens, it should also encourage them to take significant action.
3. Review the following assessment criteria for the brochure:
 - The brochure must be scientifically accurate, grammatically correct and visually appealing.
 - It will need appropriate pictures, drawings, diagrams and maps.
 - The information in the brochure must be clearly organized. Each brochure should contain answers to the following questions:
 - a. What is the priority problem?
 - b. Why should we care about the priority problem?
 - c. What can we personally do about the priority problem?
4. Review specific tasks, such as:
 - **Everyone:** Gather information.
 - **Editor:** Select and proofread written information.
 - **Fact Checker:** Make sure that information is accurate.
 - **Artist/Illustrator:** Choose colors and layout; make diagrams, drawings and maps.
 - **Publisher:** Organize and print written information.
5. Have students list sources and resources used in the preparation of the brochure at the end of the brochure, along with a list of each member of the team and his/her role.



6. Enough copies of the brochure should be reproduced to distribute to the public according to the plans made by teacher and student groups. A special meeting or a local fair may accomplish this. Use it as an opportunity to meet local citizens and guide them through the four-step hierarchy of environmental stewardship!

QUESTIONS FOR JOURNALING

1. What new information did you learn about the BTNEP *seven priority problems*?
2. What can you personally do about one or more of the problems?
3. Were you able to generate interest among local citizens about this issue?
4. Do you feel that your efforts will lead others to environmental stewardship? Why or why not?

ASSESSMENT

1. Assess students according to the quality of their research, dedication to the task, group cooperation, journal entries and group brochures.
2. Use a scoring rubric to evaluate each group's brochure. This can be accomplished by teacher assessment and/or peer assessment. Have students participate in the rubric development process using these guidelines:

An **outstanding** brochure has all required elements. It is comprehensive, accurate, and well written; plus, there is evidence of creativity and extra research.

A **proficient** brochure has all required elements. It is fairly comprehensive, accurate, and well written; plus, it displays some creativity.

An **average** brochure has most of the required elements. It covers the subject, and it is, for the most part, accurate. But there are writing errors, and it is not creative.

A **below average** brochure will be missing most of the required elements. It is not accurate, well written, or creative.



EXTENSIONS

1. Students may design additional brochures/pamphlets on other issues.
2. Students may plan, coordinate and conduct an Environmental Awareness Fair during which they distribute flyers and/or pamphlets to educate other students in their school or the public.
3. Students may request a booth at an environmental fair such as the BTNEP *La'Fete d' Ecologie* in September to distribute brochures/flyers. Visit www.btnep.org for contact information.

RESOURCES

Assorted pamphlets/brochures from environmental organizations.

WEB SITES

Directions for producing a brochure using PrintShop can be downloaded at:

<http://www.fayar.net/admin/technology/curriculum/pamphlet.doc>.

(The site will ask for a password, but when “cancel” is clicked, the document will come up.)

Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program has many resources online that can be used as examples for this lesson. There is also contact information to request brochures and posters to be mailed to you.

www.btnep.org

Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation also has many resources online to help with this lesson. Many of their brochures can be downloaded. Use the contact information on this site to request information.

www.saveourlake.org

The Coastal Wetland Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act Website can provide many examples of brochures. There is also contact information to request brochures and pamphlets.

www.lacoast.gov

