

“Meaningful” Outdoor Experience (MOE)

The Bay Watershed and Education and Training (B-WET) Hawai'i as administered by NOAA's Pacific Services Center defines the essential elements to a “meaningful” outdoor experience (MOE) as follows:

- Investigative, hands-on and or project-oriented
- Structured to align with current academic content standards appropriate for public, private or charter school system goals
- Integrated or potential to integrate with existing instructional program
- Views the watershed as a system, from summit to sea
- Part of a sustained activity
- Involves external sharing and communication
- Promotes stewardship of local, island natural resources
- Enhanced by local knowledge of local resources
- Open to all students and teachers

In the context of environmental education and stewardship of local resources MOE may be further defined as way to develop a more knowledgeable population of students and teachers in sustainable resource management as follows:

a. Meaningful outdoor experiences should make a direct connection to the marine or estuarine environment and the watershed system: Experiences should demonstrate to students that local actions within an island watershed can impact the greater environment. Experiences do not have to be water-based activities; as long as there is an intentional connection made to the watershed and water quality, outdoor experiences may include terrestrial activities (i.e., erosion control, buffer creation, groundwater protection, and pollution prevention, etc.). These activities may also include but are not limited to the study of weather and climate; coastal impacts from natural or man-made hazards (tsunami, floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, erosion, landslides, urban development near watersheds, etc.) and the study of traditional resource management knowledge and practices. Activities may also include, restoration and community service projects, Global Positioning System/Geographic Information System (GPS/GIS) monitoring and mapping, Kupuna interviews, or any other activities that result in the environment changing, such as a clean-up, re-growth of native species, etc.

b. Meaningful outdoor experiences are an integral part of the instructional program: Experiences should be clearly part of what is occurring concurrently in the classroom. The experience should be part of the instructional coursework and be aligned with relevant academic content and performance standards appropriate for the public, private, independent and charter school systems (i.e. The Hawai'i Department of

Education Public School system is aligned with the Hawai'i Content and Performance Standards [<http://doe.k12.hi.us/standards/hcps.htm>]). Experiences should occur where and when they fit into the instructional sequence appropriate for each school system.

c. Meaningful outdoor experiences are project-oriented, hands-on, and investigative: Experiences should be focused around questions, problems, and issues that are investigated through data collection, observation, interviews, and hands-on activities. These experiences should also include pre and post activities. Experiences should stimulate observation, motivate critical thinking, develop problem-solving skills, and instill confidence in students.

d. Meaningful outdoor experiences are part of a sustained activity: Experiences are not meant to be tours, gallery visits, demonstrations, or "nature" walks. Meaningful experiences are a substantive part of a sustained activity that stimulates, engages and motivates the student from beginning to end, and that the outdoor experience contributes to student and/or teacher participant's learning. The total duration leading up to and following the experience should involve a significant investment of instructional time. An experience should consist of three general parts - a preparation phase; an outdoor phase; and an analysis, reporting phase. Projects should provide teachers with the support, materials, resources, and information needed to conduct these three parts:

<u>PHASE I</u>	<u>PHASE II</u>	<u>PHASE III</u>
<u>Preparation:</u> Focus on a question, problem, or issue to engage and involve students in discussions about it.	<u>Action (Outdoor Learning and Analysis)</u> Include outdoor experiences that are sufficient to conduct the project, make the observations, collect the data required or monitor results.	<u>Reflection</u> Refocus on the question, problem, or issue; analyze the conclusions reached; evaluate the results; assess the activity and the learning outcomes; and include sharing and communication of the results with a wide audience.

e. Meaningful outdoor experiences reflect an integrated approach to learning: Experiences do not have to be based solely on science disciplines. Experiences should involve the use of materials, resources, and instruments to address multiple topics, such as traditional resource management knowledge and practices, watershed education, technology, maritime heritage, cultural traditions, history, economics, math, English, art (including traditional art), and the cultural significance of our natural resources. Experiences should make appropriate connections between subject areas and reflect an integrated approach to learning.

f. Projects involve external sharing and communication: Projects should promote peer-to-peer sharing and emphasize the need for external sharing and communication. Projects should include a mechanism that encourages the students to share their experiences with other students or other members of a community, (i.e., through a mentoring program, newsletters, journals, local conferences, websites, community presentations or other venues for outreach). External communication may also include the creation of new songs, dances and other forms of expression that are consistent with

the native Hawaiian oral and artistic traditions. Many of these interpretive forms convey traditional beliefs of man's direct connection with the environment and role as a steward.

g. Projects demonstrate partnerships: Project proposals should include partners that will directly benefit from or contribute to the project. A partnership is a collaborative working relationship between two or more organizations. All partners should be actively involved in the project, not just supply equipment or curricula. **Signed Letters of Support from each partner shall be submitted with the application package to demonstrate the level of commitment and involvement. Only letters dated in the current calendar year of this announcement will be considered.** The B-WET Program strongly encourages applicants to partner with a school or school system. Preference will be given to applicants that partner with a Hawai'i school or system.

h. Experiences are for all students: The B-WET Program is strongly committed to expanding the knowledge and participation of a low income and underserved student population in environmental education. It is crucial for all citizens to have an understanding of and connection with their own environment, therefore all students should be provided an outdoor experience regardless of where they live or go to school. Preference will be given to those applicants that work with a low income or underserved student population (e.g., Title I school, minority groups, academically low-performing students, etc.).

As the potential leaders of our nation, it is vital that all students have an understanding of and connection with their own environment. In order to work towards accomplishing this, the Hawai'i B-WET Program strives to provide an avenue that will provide students with an outdoor environmental experience regardless of their location within Hawai'i.