

KEEPING IT REAL:

Using schools and communities as a
context for environmental education

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Defining Place-Based Learning (PBL)

- Holistic approach
- Uses local community
- School-community partnerships
- Project-based learning
- Tailored locally

6 Core Qualities of PBL

1. Grounded in attributes of place
2. Hands-on learning
3. Contributes to community vitality
4. Grounded in local community
5. Local learning foundation for regional/global
6. Supported by local partnerships

12 “Promising Practices”

1. Project-based
2. Supported by local community
3. Administration support
4. Tailored to individual learning styles
5. Relevant to learners
6. Initiated by students
7. Driven or led by students
8. Interdisciplinary
9. Collaboration between educator and local community
10. Includes service-learning component
11. Students work cooperatively AND independently
12. Reflection

Quantifying a Relationship Between PBL and Environmental Quality

Education programs CAN improve the environment

There were three types of programs in our sample: Those that provided information only, those that took some kind of action, and those that measured changes before and after an action.

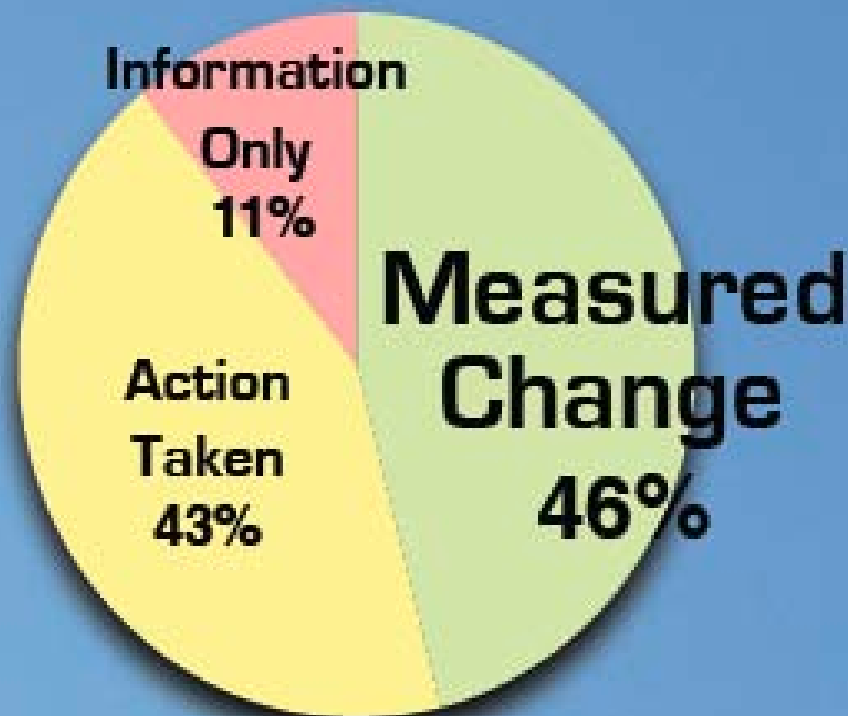


Table 1: PBL qualities and practices in programs studied

*All programs surveyed embody many PBL qualities and practices.
Two-thirds of programs surveyed rated strong on four of six PBL core qualities.*

	% of programs reporting quality as 'strong'
Program was personally relevant to learners.	89%
Program was experiential or hands-on.	85%
Promoted understanding on larger scale.	85%
Used the local environment as context for learning.	80%
Students worked individually and in groups.	76%
Program was project-based.	74%
Supported by school/organization leadership.	74%
Contributed to authentic community needs.	72%
Content was interdisciplinary.	67%
Tailored to individual learning styles.	56%
Promoted attachment to local place and/or community.	54%
Included a service-learning component.	46%
Included structured reflection by students.	39%
Utilized existing or created new local partnerships.	35%
Fostered collaboration with local community.	33%
Program was driven by students.	32%
Supported by local community.	30%
Program was initiated by students.	11%
<i>n</i> of programs with rating of 'strong' on 4 or more of the 6 core qualities	34/54 (63%)
<i>n</i> of programs with rating of 'strong' on 3 or fewer of the 6 core qualities	20/54 (37%)
<i>n</i> of programs with rating of "somewhat" or "strong" on 4 or more of the 6 core qualities	54/54 (100%)

Denotes PBL core quality

Practice Implications

- Add measurement/assessment component
- Focus on specific educational practices

Benefits of Place-Based Education

- Helps students learn
- Invites students to become active citizens
- Energizes teachers
- Transforms school culture
- Connects schools and communities
- **Encourages students to become environmental stewards**

Place-based Education Evaluation Collaborative (PEEC)