

# 4. Improve Student Achievement through Ecological Literacy



GUIDING QUESTION Does your school make an intentional and coordinated effort to have ecological literacy become a regular part of teaching and learning? ◆ Hold this question in mind as you rate your performance. ■ Initial ▲ Final		No evidence	Emerging	Credible	Accomplished	Comprehensive
<b>Team Self-Assessment and Documentation (70% this year)</b>		0	1	2	3	4
<p><b>How to rate your school in this section:</b> Assess the level achieved in each question below based on the extent to which you have intentionally planned the teaching and learning of ecological literacy. <b>Level 1</b>=an individual teacher; <b>Level 2</b>=two or more teachers planning together; <b>Level 3</b>=a division or department planning together; <b>Level 4</b>=more than one division or department planning together.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> We would expect to see a range of scores that reflect your school's areas of strength and weakness in planning for ecological literacy across the grades.</p>						
<p>◆ <b>EDUCATION IN THE ENVIRONMENT</b> <i>Education in the environment means making use of the environment as a context and a setting. It denotes direct observation and experiential learning.</i></p>						
4.1	Does the school maximize the potential of its school ground for diverse learning opportunities (e.g., through lessons that develop observation skills, mapping use patterns; by using trees/other features of the grounds for activities, such as interpretive hikes, learning trails, sketching, photography)?					
4.2	Do teachers enrich student learning beyond the school ground by providing access to nature and the built environment (e.g., through neighbourhood walks; trips to parks and ravines, Outdoor Education Centres, Toronto Wind Turbine, TRCA sites, Humber Arboretum, Downsview Park)?					
<p>◆ <b>EDUCATION ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT</b> <i>At the core of education about the environment is the study of how land, air, and water ecosystems work, and the knowledge that human well-being is dependent on ecosystem health.</i></p>						
4.3	To what extent do teachers offer students learning opportunities about how nature works (e.g., exploring our connections to each other and the world around us through examining our food, water, energy, air, and land, and our interaction with all living things; understanding energy flow, life webs, and matter cycles; uncovering our dependence on the environment by asking "In this situation, what living and non-living resources did we use?")?					
4.4	To what extent do teachers highlight the importance of systems thinking (e.g., by learning to use the language of systems—sense of scale; parts, wholes, relationships; exploring multiple causes of environmental issues; mapping consequences of events, trends, and decisions; by asking "What might the immediate and local effects be? What might the longer-term and global effects be?")?					
<p>◆ <b>EDUCATION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT</b> <i>Education for the environment helps students develop skills to examine human impact on the environment; research ways to reduce that impact through conservation, adaptation, and innovation; advocate for change and actions that will reduce individual and collective ecological footprints.</i></p>						
4.5	To what extent do teachers and students work to understand and reduce the impact of their choices (e.g., by calculating their ecological or carbon footprints; by collecting, graphing, and analyzing local school data from monitoring charts or Facility Services' energy website; through action-based projects that connect EcoSchools initiatives to their lesson planning; by asking questions such as "Is there any way that I can use less energy, and/or fewer living and non-living resources?")?					
4.6	To what extent do teachers tap the potential of environmental issues to build active citizenship skills as part of their learning (e.g., send letters to national and community newspapers; write, e-mail or call elected officials; set up and submit petitions to inform and gather opinions; participate in community planning meetings; monitor energy use and sorting of wastes; use programs such as Plant Watch, Worm Watch, Frog Watch)?					
<b>School Visit "look-fors" (30% this year) Scored by EcoSchools Auditor</b>		0	1	2	3	4
4.7	Is evidence of the planning described above included in the Portfolio Binder (samples of unit and lesson plans, evidence of collaboration with other teachers)?					
4.8	Does student work from several grades/courses appear in the Portfolio Binder and elsewhere that demonstrates learning in, about, and/or for the environment?					