

b organization  
Ok, the whole thing I'm trying to do is to help [redacted] set up programs for finding out what the students are learning.

a  
Right.

b  
And I've been observing, So I've been to what, maybe 3 or four [redacted] field days...

a  
uh huh

b  
...and maybe four [redacted] field days. And I've seen, it's kind of funny, like, I've taken lots of notes...

a  
yeah

b  
...and then I, like, write 'em out afterwards and fill in all the gaps...

a  
right

b  
...that I didn't catch during the field day.

a  
right

b  
But when I look back through 'em I just think...'so', you know. I mean it's interesting.

a  
right

b  
...but I don't know what I should be looking for. So, I wanted to get your ideas on what should be done

a  
I see. As far as, um, where we should look to see how they're, how and what they're learning?

b  
yeah, we could have a whole list of things, like where to look, when to look, how to...

a  
uh hu

b

what's for example



how to look. Like things that you think are practical or not for interviews...

a  
uh huh

b  
...or, what do you call it, like, focus groups...

a  
uh huh

b  
or

a  
yeah, yeah

b  
just surveys

a  
well, um, you know the, the extent of the assessment that we've done [and you probably know this from talking to, to Dan and Mary, um, is that we'll go into the classroom, mid year or so – around now – after 2 or 3 field days – and talk to the students. That can vary from the whole class to just a group of 5 students that can break away. We'll ask them questions, you know, "what do you think about lunch", and "How do you like the journals?", and, you know, "do you feel a connection to your site?", and those kind of questions. Um, and for that, for that setup it's been, you know it just depends on, on the group. Sometimes it works really well to do it with the whole class and take, you know a long time. and there's discussion you know the whole time, sometimes the whole class is timid or quiet and so you don't get many answers, or you get one answer and every one says "yeah, yeah that's what I think too", or you know. And then, so then the smaller groups have been effective – pretty good actually. Uh, you know, the 5 to 10 students sitting down and, um, and going 'round and just asking them all those sorts of questions um some good discussions and, you know, it's shown us areas where we could improve.

→ And then the next, the next time we evaluate is at the end of the year with, just a document that we've created. And so rate, you know, how much, you know "rate, uh, the degree to which you think your knowledge of these areas has increased". You know it's 1 through 5.

b  
I think I've seen that one

a  
habitat restoration, or whatever. They, they rate it. And then we compile that information and, you know, put it into a final document for the year. Um, and that's given us some good information too, and a lot of that I think, the best for us, um, is the stuff that they write at the end which is like, you know, "what do you think, how do you think the program



could be better?, What do you like most about the SLEWS program?" You know they'll say things like, "I want to learn more about wildlife", or, you know, "I want to learn more about snakes". You know kind of really specific things like that. There are things that are really tangible that we can work on. Um, from my perspective the things like, you know, 90% of the students said that they felt like their knowledge of ecological concepts was at a 4 out of 5 level, you know, to me that that... it's nice, you know, it's nice to know. But it doesn't really, it doesn't really mean that much to me because I feel like a lot of times, if they like the program they just go down and write 5,5,5,5,5, you know, they're not really paying attention to what exactly we're asking them. You know sometimes it will be like "How much did you enjoy photography?" and that class didn't even do photography but they circled 5, you know.

b

uh huh

a

Um, so I guess the, in summary the, the things that I see that have worked as far as getting evaluations from students, has been you know, small, small groups, from each of the schools, recording it and having the same questions, um letting them just talk it out and kind of taking some notes about some specific things that they'd like to see more of. Um, and as far as, as far as being focussed on what they are learning and, I think that's, you know, something that we would have to survey, you know ask them questions about, you know, "what is a native plant?" – at the beginning of the year – before they've gone through SLEWS. Ask them the same question at the end of the year. And, that, I think that would be great. Just, just that. You know, asking the same question because I, I think that a lot of our student right now couldn't answer that question at the end of the year. I think that, certainly a lot of them couldn't last year. Cause we did this thing at the BBQ, you know our end of the year celebration, we did this thing where we had a dunk tank and you could knock a person into the tank [one of the mentors], but you got as many throws as you could answer questions correct. You know, simple questions like "name one native plant", "what is a native plant", "what was the point of our project". and they can't answer the question. they're like "uh, the red thing, the red...." – "Red Bud?"... "yeah, yeah, that one." You know, so I don't, partly I don't know, what to expect from them, because I'm not a teacher. You know, I don't know what we should be, what they should be taking away, you know how much they should be absorbing from how much we giving it to them. Um, I think we've done a lot better this year at, um. I think largely because of the BBQ and some of the feedback. We've done better at focussing what we're telling them. Instead of, you know before it was like "what is a watershed, what is habitat restoration, what is habitat, what is the restoration cycle?" All these concepts and they, you know, we just kind of threw them out there



and it wasn't really focussed and I think that this year we've done a lot better um, really defining...focussing on habitat. Just throwing away the watershed concept, um focussing on habitat and really trying to get them to understand that. Um, and then also getting them more connected with the, with the plants. So I think that this year we'll probably see something different. Um, but those are the kind of things that if we could find that out for sure without making assumptions based on people throwing balls at, at a BBQ that would be great. And it seems, it seems to me, like, and I don't really have much expertise in evaluation or assessment, but it seems to me that if you survey them before and survey them after that you could make some pretty clear assumption about what's going on. So...

b

I think so too. I had no idea that you guys went into [maybe somebody told me but]

a

yeah

b

...in the middle of the year that you go into schools...

a

Yeah, right about now we start...

b

Is it a whole class period, or...

a

Uh, no...

b

How much time do they give you?

a

That, I mean it just depends on the teacher, like I was saying. Some teachers will, will say "yeah, go ahead, take the class". You know we'll call them ahead of time or email and set up a time to come into the classroom. Um, we'll show up and the teacher will either say, you know, it kind of depends on the situation too if the teacher, if the whole, if one whole class is coming out you know consistently, then they, you know it may make more sense for them to let us do it with the whole class whereas if a teacher's pulling from 3 or 5 classes, um, you go into any one class there's only 5, you know, 5 or 10 students in each class that are in. And so then we would pull them out. We would go to like a picnic table somewhere and, and figure out the things about the, the program. Um, I actually don't know if we're gonna do it this year. Um, Dan was saying something about combining it with the community action projects – I don't know if you heard about those. Um, trying to combine it with this project that they do trying to bring back the knowledge that they've gained to their community. Uh, so, I think, I think we will do it again, um, but yeah that is something we do is, is go in and talk to them.



b

Um, one of the other things, we were, you were talking about figuring out what they remembered from what they did...

a

uh huh

b

...and a lot of that, kind of like you say, is based on what you tell them because...

a

uh huh

b

...it sounds like year to year you try to develop it in different ways to make it better...

a

yeah

b

you're telling them different things.

a

sure

b

So it's good that they remember that, but I was reading, I don't even know what it's from, but it was like a [redacted] brochure or something.

a

yeah

b

...And there was this sentence, this really long...

a

...run-on sentence...

b

...sort of eloquent run-on sentence about the goals of the [redacted] program. It was about, like, um, stewardship for their, you know, local, I don't think it said watershed, but you know...

a

yeah

b

...the land around here they are out working on.

a

yeah

b

How could that be measured do you think? Because it's not so much...

a

I think it's...

b

"do you know what a native plant is?"

a



right

b

It's

a

Right. I think it's, you know, one of the questions we have on the evaluation, and one that we do in, in the mid-year assessment is "do you feel connection to you site?" It's, its part of the 'this is our project', um 'we are the ones that are stewarding this piece of land to become a better place for wildlife'. So, and I think that a lot of times it misses, as far as feeling like it's their local project. You know, we've got a school from [redacted] coming out to a place – they don't even know where it is.

They don't know where [redacted] is. They just get on the bus and they're driving and they're off. They don't know if they're going East or West or South. You know it's an hour away from school. Um, so I think there's a pretty big disconnect there between, you know, 'are these our native plants or are these the same native plants we'd find in [redacted]' Um, but the students at [redacted] that come 10 minutes away they know [redacted] because they've grown up in this area. They have a clear understanding of, of the fact that they're close to, close to home and I think that it's probably, and this is just an assumption, but I think that it's probably more real for them. But as far as how to evaluate that, I think that just, I don't know, just asking them: "Do you, you know, do feel, do you feel responsible for, for protecting this area?" You know, "does it, does it matter to you, you know do you think it's important, how important do you think it is that we conserve these resources that are around you?" You know, and uh, I think the difficulty is, is how to get, I think is how to get the most honest answer, you know how to get them to answer something that they're thinking and not something you want them to think.

b

I was just reading something about that, like somebody was doing some study where they were interviewing school children and found out that when they interviewed the kids one on one they just got like real wrote sort of answers...

a

sure, sure

b

..and real adult-type answers.

a

yeah

b

Ones that they think are expected. But when they did groups of students then they got the students talking together and it was like

a