

DRIVING AND SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

Criteria for Effective Driving Questions

- Supports learning objectives (i.e., knowledge, skills, and attitudes)
- Serves as a context for both increasing content knowledge and practicing inquiry and methodological skills
- Open-ended (i.e., arguable, with no single, final, or correct answer)
- Relevant and related to students' lived experiences
- Anchored in real-world environmental and social problems
- Affords the opportunity for continuity and coherence across the MWEE
- Provides the opportunity for students to develop and explore supporting questions as knowledge and understanding evolve
- Provides opportunities for environmental action
- Allows students to design and enact investigations that yield answers
- Calls for higher-order thinking, including analysis, inference, prediction, and evaluation
- Allows for the exploration of both natural and social systems

Supporting Questions

Supporting questions help students find information needed to develop potential answers to the driving question. Ideally, they are generated by students or co-developed by students and teachers. They should uncover the students' current knowledge about the issue, create interest, and begin to frame an investigation that addresses the driving question in a local context.

Supporting questions provide an opportunity to bring in a variety of subject disciplines, strengthening the life-relevant and authentic contexts for learning.

“In the study *Model my watershed: An investigation into the role of big data, technology, and models in promoting student interest in watershed action* published in the *Journal of Environmental Education*, researchers found, “...that MWEE aligned curricula help move students from isolated content learning to interest and knowledge to carry out civic and environmental action.”

Marcum-Dietrich et al. in *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 2021



For more research and references supporting MWEEs please see:
noaa.gov/office-education/bwet/resources/mwee-resources