

MWEE SUPPORTING PRACTICES

The MWEE also includes four supporting practices that describe “what teachers do,” along with their partners, to ensure successful implementation with students. The supporting practices are ***Teacher Facilitation***, ***Learning Integration***, ***Sustained Experiences***, and ***Local Context***.

Teacher Facilitation

MWEEs require that teachers support student learning for the duration of the MWEE, both inside and outside the classroom. Teachers balance roles of facilitation, direct instruction, and coaching to create a student-centered learning experience where the essential elements of the MWEE come together to support goals for learning and create opportunities for students to take active roles in the learning process. Teachers provide space for student choice and voice by creating learning experiences that center on what students value. Even when activities or lessons occur at partner sites or are primarily led by partners at the school, teachers should be actively engaged. Teachers should connect these experiences to prior learning, foster critical thinking, and lead reflection after the experience so, regardless of the facilitator, the entire

MWEE experience feels cohesive to the students. To support this level of engagement, teachers should have access to professional development opportunities that support their content knowledge, understanding of the MWEE framework, and confidence and intention to implement MWEEs independently.

Learning Integration

The MWEE is an educational framework that helps teachers meet their learning objectives in an engaging way. MWEEs are not meant to be something “extra,” but rather a means of enhancing lessons for deeper student learning while meeting academic standards. To achieve this vision, MWEEs should be embedded into the school curriculum to support goals for learning and student achievement. They can



The Pacific Center for Environmental Studies, Hawaii, graduates and peer mentors (Jon Rosen, Jayten Galario, Sarah Weible) and Coordinator Manning Taite help students learn molecular genetics. (*Manning Taite*)

also provide authentic, engaging interdisciplinary learning that crosses traditional boundaries between disciplines. Finally, the MWEE essential elements can also be used by educators in out-of-school settings (for example, after school programs, clubs, or summer camps) to enrich activities and complement school-based programming.

Sustained Experience

MWEEs rely on teachers to plan and implement a series of rich and connected learning opportunities where each essential element — from asking questions during *Issue Definition* through implementing *Environmental Action Projects* — builds upon and reinforces the others. To accomplish this, MWEEs are incorporated into a unit or multiple units, where learning happens both in and out of the classroom. This provides adequate time for students to not only reflect on the individual lessons and experiences, but also on how all of the elements cohesively come together. While an individual lesson may occur in one class period or field experience, that lesson or experience should be explicitly connected to the larger learning sequence of the MWEE.

Local Context

MWEEs have teachers use the local environment and community as a context for learning that is relevant to students' lives. Situating the MWEE within local contexts promotes learning that is rooted in the unique culture, history, environment, economy, literature, and art of a students' school, neighborhood, or community. To enrich MWEEs, local resources (e.g., partners, expertise, field sites) should be incorporated. Partnerships, such as those with local community-based organizations, create opportunities for students to engage with members of their community of diverse cultures, values, and expertise that can create a more equitable and inclusive experience.

Emphasizing the local context enables students and teachers to develop stronger connections to, and appreciation for, their local environments and communities. This also enables students and teachers to explore how their individual and collective decisions affect their immediate surroundings and in turn affect larger ecosystems and watersheds.

FACILITATOR'S GUIDES TO MWEE TRAINING

Facilitator's guides are companion texts to the MWEE Guide, designed to support effective MWEE professional learning experiences for teachers and educators. They are intended for practitioners who are deeply familiar with the MWEE and who will be training other educators on how to apply the tools and resources found in the MWEE Guide to their own classrooms and programs. Facilitator's guides provide easy-to-use training resources and consistency in MWEE professional development with modular activities that can be adapted to support your local context.



For more information about designing MWEE professional development, see the Facilitator's Guide to MWEE Training, available at:

noaa.gov/office-education/bwet/resources/mwee-resources

New facilitation resources will be added to the webpage as they are developed.

PLANNING A MWEE

GETTING STARTED

There are many ways to generate ideas for planning a MWEE ranging from an inspiring learning objective that lends itself to field-based learning to a compelling local environmental issue. During this phase, it may be worthwhile to consider existing field trips and district-, community-, or school-based initiatives for natural opportunities to build off. What outdoor assets do you have at or around your school?

Remember, MWEEs are not meant to be something “extra,” but rather a means of enhancing lessons for deeper student learning while meeting academic standards. You may want to start by exploring and gathering information on local environmental issues and/or reviewing your curriculum for lessons that address environmental issues. Also, consider existing teaching resources at your school and partnerships with other teachers. Working with teachers of the same and different subjects can foster collaboration, connect to multiple disciplines, and engage more students in the MWEE.

Successful MWEEs often involve the support of partners who play important roles in planning, delivering, and/or sustaining MWEE programs. Environmental education professionals from the school district or local nonprofit organizations have extensive experience and can often assist with MWEE planning and implementation, including brainstorming MWEE ideas, offering teacher professional learning, and assisting with **Outdoor Field Experiences** and/or **Environmental Action Projects**. School district content specialists

are typically experts when it comes to identifying where in the scope and sequence of a curriculum a MWEE could fit and be sustained. They may also be able to provide access to information, materials, and resources maintained by the school district. Community-based organizations can support the local context of the MWEE, often bringing cultural and social expertise. Additionally, community partners such as businesses, universities, and government agencies can often be called on to support MWEEs by offering time, expertise, and supplies. Remember that while these are wonderful resources, Teacher Facilitation for all elements of the MWEE is an important practice so the experience feels cohesive to students.

With so many things to consider, planning a MWEE might seem both exciting and overwhelming at the same time. To organize your ideas, start with the MWEE Think Cloud planning tool. This tool can help you with some initial brainstorming about program ideas, collaborators, and resources and can be used to facilitate planning conversations with partners and team members.

“The biggest takeaway of participating in the Mālama Learning Center’s project is observing my haumāna (students) grow their love for our land, resources, and watershed through closely collaborating with community partners to work and learn in the watershed.”

Shannon Bucasas

Hawaiian Studies Teacher, Wai’anae High School