



Using the Environment

as an Integrating Context for Learning (EIC)

What is Using the Environment as an Integrating Context for Learning (EIC)?

A **school improvement process** designed by the State Education and Environment Roundtable, a partnership of 16 states' education agencies (www.seer.org).

Data collected in 60 schools in 13 states, since 1996, indicates that EIC has **significant positive effects on academic achievement, classroom behavior and instructional practices**. EIC students exhibit:

- ✓ Improved performance on standardized tests in reading, writing, math, science and social studies.
- ✓ In 92% of the schools, students in EIC programs academically outperformed their peers in traditional programs.
- ✓ Reduced discipline and classroom management problems in some cases by as much as 95%.
- ✓ Increased engagement and enthusiasm for learning, resulting in substantially improved attendance; and.
- ✓ Heightened contributions to their communities through effective service-learning projects.

A **partnership project** of the Georgia Department of Education, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division, the University of Georgia, the State Education and Environment Roundtable, and the Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia with support from Arrowhead Environmental Education Center, Chattahoochee Nature Center, City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management, EEinGEORGIA.org, Elachee Nature Science Center, Georgia Adopt-A-Stream, The Georgia Aquarium, The Georgia Conservancy, Georgia Forestry Commission, Georgia Learning Connections, Georgia Project Learning Tree, Georgia Project WET, Georgia Project WILD, Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful, Jekyll Island

4-H Center, Keep Georgia Beautiful, Keep Sandy Springs/North Fulton Beautiful, the National Wildlife Federation, Oxbow Meadows Environmental Learning Center, the State Botanical Garden of Georgia, UGA Cooperative Extension Service, Wonderland Gardens, and Zoo Atlanta. Funding is provided by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division, the Improving Teacher Quality State Grants Title II, Part A of the No Child Left Behind Act, and the Environmental Education and Training Partnership (EETAP).

Fourteen schools employing the following **fundamental educational strategies**:

- ✓ Integrated, interdisciplinary instruction
- ✓ Collaborative teaching methods
- ✓ Community-based investigations that incorporate hands-on service-learning activities
- ✓ Cooperative and individual learning strategies
- ✓ Learner-centered, constructivist approaches
- ✓ Performance-based assessment practices
- ✓ Local community and natural settings as the context for learning and instruction

<p>Allen Elementary in Muscogee County * Armuchee Elementary in Floyd County Arnold Magnet Academy in Muscogee County * Centennial Place Elementary in Atlanta Columbia High in DeKalb County * Gainesville Middle in Hall County Henderson Middle in DeKalb County * Kimberly Elementary in Atlanta Midway Elementary in Baldwin County * Minor Elementary in Gwinnett County St. Simons Elementary in Glynn County * Shakerag Elementary in Fulton County Stewart-Quitman High in Stewart County * Toney Elementary in DeKalb County</p>
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