



Building Your Program on Solid Ground

This Info Sheet gives a brief overview of the wealth of helpful information you can find in *Best Practices Workbook for Boating, Fishing, and Aquatic Resources Stewardship Education (Workbook)*. See the back for details.

Using Best Practices to guide the design, development, delivery, and ongoing evaluation of your programs can mean more effective use of your time and money and greater long-term results. Research conducted over the last decade provides a foundation for a successful program that has long-term impact; not just “feel-good” numbers for board reports and newspaper articles. The Best Practices that incorporate this research are listed below.

Have You Planned It?

All the Best Practices for building your program are based on the assumption that you already have successfully planned your program (goals, objectives, etc.). There is a separate set of Best Practices to guide the planning process, and you should consult these before doing anything else—see Workbook Chapter 1.

▶ Select Delivery Systems

Before you obtain or develop curriculum materials, select the delivery system. Where will you deliver the program (your own educational center, a school, a city park, community center)? Who will deliver it (educational staff, volunteers, teachers)?

The Best Practices presented here are not stand-alone principles. They overlap and each one relies on the others to be truly effective.

Don't try to do everything alone. Evaluate potential partners and select those who will be most beneficial to your program. Involve key partners in planning the program materials and implementation strategies. When working with partners, consider:

- How can you make your programs relevant to those who deliver them?
- How can you align your curricula with national and state learning standards?
- How can you provide ongoing training, support, and professional development to those who implement your program?

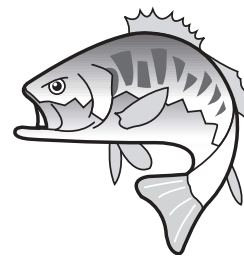
▶ Develop Tools and Delivery Approaches

After you identify delivery systems, select the materials you need for the program. Don't re-invent the wheel. Identify and review existing materials to see if they meet your goals and objectives. Many existing programs can be modified easily by adding state/local information and/or adding lessons. Start from scratch only if you are certain there is no program available that meets your needs.

There are many Best Practices that should be applied to both the development of tools and how the materials are delivered. For example, when developing tools, consider the age, developmental level, and background of your participants. However, instructors also need to understand how to teach different age groups, development levels, and backgrounds.

► Make Sure That Your Tools and Delivery Approaches:

- Reflect the educational goals and objectives you have established for your programs, as well as those set by your parent organization/agency and by national and state bodies.
 - Present accurate and balanced information, incorporating many different perspectives.
 - Incorporate evaluation from the very beginning through implementation.
 - Are planned and carried out in a manner that clearly addresses safety and regulations, and reduces real risk to everyone involved.
 - Are experiential and include observation and reflection, formation of concrete and abstract concepts, and application of knowledge and skills in new situations.
 - Are relevant to the everyday life of the learner.
 - Empower learners.
 - Teach learners *how* to think, not *what* to think.
 - Are learner-centered—focusing on the learner rather than on teaching or the administrative structure of a school or educational program.
 - Match the developmental stages of learners.
 - Use multiple teaching methods to accommodate diverse learning styles.
- Use an interdisciplinary approach to help learners develop skills, formulate concepts, and examine issues.
 - Consider the social context in which the education takes place and provide avenues to enhance the social support for the learner.
 - Identify and target one or more outcomes or skills, beyond the subject matter, that are broadly useful to the participant.
 - Inventory and utilize a variety of educational resources and environments.



FOR MORE INFORMATION...

This information sheet is just the tip of the iceberg. MUCH more information on planning, developing, and evaluating education programs can be found in the *Best Practices Workbook for Boating, Fishing, and Stewardship Education*. The more Best Practices you can incorporate into your program, the greater the chance that your program will achieve the goals you set for it.

To review and/or order copies of this and other Information Sheets, the *Workbook*, or other Best Practice tools and materials, go to: www.RBFF.org/educational/bestpractices.cfm or contact RBFF at: 601 N. Fairfax St. • Ste. 140 Alexandria, VA 22314-2054 • 703 519 0013