

What is a PLT Educator Workshop?

Workshop Goals

PLT workshops vary widely depending on the presenter's style and the audiences' needs. However, the main goals of any PLT workshop are always the same:

- To encourage educators to approach learning and teaching from an environmental and multi-disciplinary perspective.
- To prepare educators to use PLT materials with young people by providing a sampling of teaching strategies and activities that will help young people become aware of the environment, their impact upon it, and their responsibilities for it.
- To create a setting in which educators, resource personnel, and others can meet and share information, and encourage continued communication and support for environmental education, using the environment as a focus.
- To provide a fun and motivating forum that encourages educators to enjoy their own learning processes.

The workshop format was established during PLT's organizational stage because it has been shown that educators will more readily use educational materials if they are shown how such use will actually enhance what they are already teaching. In the workshop setting, educators experience the modeling of various styles of activities and even select activities to present themselves. In this way, they see for themselves how activities can be adapted to fit their own curricula and styles. During the activity wrap-ups, where attendees are encouraged to share ideas, learning takes place from participant to participant, as well as from workshop leaders.

Workshop Format

The workshop format should show participants how to use PLT to teach science, math, language arts, social sciences, art, health, and even physical education. Non-formal educators—such as naturalists, outdoor school teachers, interpreters, docents, home school instructors, or youth organization leaders—should be shown how PLT can be used as

a resource of activities to enhance or complement their work with both students and adults.

Workshop Design

Workshops should model effective teaching strategies and encourage educators to explore new ways of teaching. Wherever possible, use hands-on instructional methods and help participants work out any problems they foresee using new methods with their students.

The entire workshop structure should follow the "AKCA" model, just as you would structure leading individual activities. The AKCA model leads students from awareness, to knowledge, to challenge, and finally to action. When applied to the workshop setting the same model will lead the educators from an awareness of PLT, to adding to what they know about PLT, to challenging them to experience PLT, and finally to them actively leading activities and exploring ways to use the activities with their students. For more information on this topic, see the Activity Components section in the PreK-8 Activity Guide or the Module Components section of the Introductory Handbook for the Secondary Modules.

Suggested Time Requirements

When planning your workshop, keep in mind that educators attend a workshop that is typically at least **six hours** in length to receive the PreK-8 Activity Guide, and typically a minimum of **two hours** (per module) in length to receive a secondary module.

If you are also a Project WILD or Project WET facilitator, you may wish to combine two (or possibly three in some instances) programs into one workshop. You should consult with your PLT state coordinator before deciding to do so, however – combined workshops are quite involved and must be planned and executed very carefully to give each program being presented the appropriate amount of time and attention. Still, the extra work can be well worth it, as participants can gain an understanding of how these education programs can be effectively integrated with one another, as well as with their teaching in general.

Fees

PLT workshops are typically conducted at either no charge or a nominal fee to participants. Because it is sometimes easy for workshop participants to sign up for a “free” workshop and then not attend, you may wish to pursue the idea of charging a workshop fee which can be refunded (in full or in part) if an enrollee actually attends the workshop, if you would prefer not to charge for training. Income from workshop fees is intended to be used to cover the costs of snacks, special materials, meeting room fees, and any other direct costs that you or the sponsoring organization incur in conducting the workshop. If you provide college or university credit, or “continuing education credits” for teachers, additional fees may be required by the specific college, university, or state education system.