

Summary of EIC

What is EIC?

Using the Environment as an Integrating Context for learning (EIC) defines a framework for education: a framework for interdisciplinary, collaborative, student centered, hands-on, and engaged learning. It has begun to transform curricula in a growing number of schools across the United States and may have the potential to significantly improve K-12 education in America.

EIC-based learning is not primarily focused on learning about the environment, nor is it limited to developing environmental awareness. It is about using a school's surroundings and community as a framework within which students can construct their own learning, guided by teachers and administrators using proven educational practices. EIC programs typically employ the environment as a comprehensive focus and framework for learning in all areas: general and disciplinary knowledge; thinking and problem-solving skills, and basic life skills, such as cooperation and interpersonal communications. The observed benefits of EIC programs are both broad-ranging and encouraging. They include:

- better performance on standardized measures of academic achievement in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies;
- reduced discipline and classroom management problems;
- increased engagement and enthusiasm for learning; and,
- greater pride and ownership in accomplishments.

Some Research Results

Improved Test Scores in:

<i>Subject</i>	<i>EIC students outperform others</i>	<i>typical case</i>
Language Arts	80% of students	10% improvement
Math	65% of students	13% improvement
Science	67% of students	9% improvement
Social Studies	77% of students	7% improvement

Improved Discipline	100% of students	referrals reduced 90%!
Improved Attendance	81% of students	1% in elementary; 3% in high school
Thinking Skills	89% of students	
Interpersonal Abilities	93% of students	

Teachers

In addition to student benefits, teacher benefits include:

- more enthusiastic and engaged
- greater willingness to pursue new teaching methods
- become change agents in their schools

Sources

Closing the Achievement Gap: Using the Environment as an Integrating Context by Gerald A. Lieberman, Ph.D. and Linda L. Hoody, M.A. (available on site below)

State Education and Environment Roundtable, <http://www.seer.org/>

Place Based Education by David Sobel (available from Orion, <http://oriononline.org/>)

Place-Based Education Evaluation Collaborative (PEEC), <http://www.peecworks.org/>