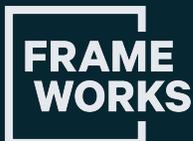


How to Tell a More Effective Story about Environmental Education

A Framing Guide for Advocates, Educators, Program Leaders, & Other Communicators

November 2020

Jessica Moyer, PhD, Principal Strategist
Anna Marie Trester, PhD, Fellow
Jennifer Nichols, PhD, Director of Research Interpretation & Application



Created through a partnership with the **Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education (CAEE)** and with support from **Environmental Education of New Mexico (EENM)**

Contents

Contents	1
Introduction to Framing Environmental Education	2
Framing Guide <i>At-a-Glance</i>	3
5 Framing Recommendations	5
Set the scene. Provide a clear definition of environmental education.	5
Invite people into the story. Paint a big picture of why environmental education matters to all of us.	7
Reveal the plot. Explain key processes and cause-effect relationships.	9
Feature the full cast of characters. Use inclusive language to place disparate outcomes in the context of universal needs and shared responsibilities.	12
Offer a compelling conclusion. Provide concrete solutions that we can implement together to strengthen environmental education and become the global society we want to be.	14
Conclusion	16
Glossary of Public Thinking	17
Endnotes	19
About FrameWorks	21

Introduction to Framing Environmental Education

It would be hard to overstate the importance and role of environmental education in ensuring both human and planetary wellbeing. After all, we can't fully appreciate and utilize, much less steward and maintain, what we don't sufficiently understand. More specifically, as experts know well and a mountain of evidence corroborates, the positive impacts of environmental education are experienced acutely in many sectors of society, such as public health, conservation, K-12 education, child development, and social justice. Among the general public, however, the connection between environmental education and these other social issue areas is poorly understood.

Given the complexity of such relationships, as well as the intricacy of the processes they implicate—including how we learn, how inequities are perpetuated, and how social factors affect the health of an entire community—conveying the true value of environmental education can be a heavy lift. Fortunately, an evidence-based framing strategy can significantly lighten the load.

The following guide equips environmental education advocates to communicate in ways that help the public connect essential dots. We know from FrameWorks' extensive research in several relevant issue areas that it is not enough to simply assert that environmental education delivers significant benefits: we must demonstrate how those benefits are delivered by highlighting the associated mechanisms. The tools offered here were designed, developed, and tested to help communicators achieve this goal.

By adopting a shared and empirically proven framing strategy, advocates, educators, program leaders, and other communicators can tell a more effective story about environmental education: what it entails, how it works, and why it's essential to our current health and happiness as well as future prospects. Most importantly, a shared framing strategy will assist the field in providing a clear and compelling vision for how we can work together to strengthen and expand access to environmental education opportunities for everyone.

Framing Guide *At-a-Glance*

How to Tell a More Effective Story about Environmental Education

5 Framing Recommendations

- 1. Set the scene.** Provide a clear definition of environmental education.
- 2. Invite people into the story.** Paint a big picture of why environmental education matters to all of us.
- 3. Reveal the plot.** Explain key processes and cause-effect relationships.
- 4. Feature the full cast of characters.** Use inclusive language to place disparate outcomes in the context of universal needs and shared responsibilities.
- 5. Offer a compelling conclusion.** Provide concrete solutions that we can implement together to strengthen environmental education and become the global society we want to be.

Evidence-based Tools (*and when to use them*)

When you're talking about environmental education <i>and ...</i>	The tools to reach for include:
Child and Adolescent Development	<i>Future Preparation</i> (value) <i>Cultivating Connections</i> (metaphor)
K–12 Education	<i>Future Preparation</i> + <i>Human Potential</i> (value) <i>Wiring Up</i> (metaphor)
Community Health & Wellbeing	<i>Future Preparation</i> + <i>Human Potential</i> (value) <i>Cultivating Connections</i> (metaphor) <i>Foundation of Community Health</i> (metaphor)
Conservation and Climate Change Mitigation	<i>Future Preparation</i> + <i>Protection</i> (value)
Social Justice*	<i>Attribution of Responsibility</i> <i>Inclusive Opportunity</i>

General Framing Tips

- **Avoid reinforcing harmful assumptions.** Take care to avoid cuing up unproductive models of reasoning and unhelpful associations in the public mind. (Refer to the Glossary of Public Thinking to be sure you’ve navigated around the most likely culprits.)
- **Appeal to a value early and often.** Shared values prime thinking about why an issue matters and what’s at stake, so appealing to one right at the outset of a communication can increase your audience’s receptiveness to everything that follows.
- **Provide step-by-step explanation.** To build the public’s understanding of how environmental education works, connect the dots and offer detailed examples. Illustration goes much farther than declaration. Also, steer clear of jargon and other field-specific terminology.
- **Interpret your data.** Select data points for inclusion only when they directly support your intended takeaway. Most importantly, don’t let them stand alone. Statistics can help frame your message, but they shouldn’t *be* the message.
- **Consider what story your visuals are telling.** Keep in mind that photos, logos, imagery, lighting, and even music or other sounds should support the overarching framing strategy. They have important communications jobs too.
- **Capture the spotlight.** A great way to use the framing tools to maximum impact is by building them into high-profile text, like titles, headings, pull-out quotes, and photo captions.
- **Be consistent.** Framing requires repetition. For maximum frame effect, stick with a consistent set of tools, not just within a single message, but across all the communications you produce.
- **Get creative!** None of the words or phrases introduced in this guide are silver bullets. The best way to engage the tested tools is by evoking their underlying concepts. A range of different synonyms, images, and turns of phrase can all be used to do that while still allowing you to adapt the framing strategy to your particular voice, style, and situation.

***Note:** While we highlight two specific tools for communicating more effectively *about* social justice, all of the recommendations offered in this framing guide were designed to advance it. They do this by (1) building the public’s understanding of the structural causes of poor outcomes, which are too often attributed to individuals, (2) productively shifting public attitudes, for example away from stereotypes and blame and instead toward a curiosity about future possibilities, and (3) garnering public support for needed solutions, not just at the household level, but within our social systems, policies, and institutions.

5 Framing Recommendations

Whether explicitly or implicitly, we tell a story every time we communicate. If we don't specify the setting, it will be deduced; if we don't name the characters, they will be assumed; if our plot line fails to connect the dots, our audiences will do the connecting; and if we leave out the moral of the story, one will be intuited.

Leaving room for interpretation may be an effective tactic in fiction writing, but in advocacy communications it's a sign that we've lost control of our message. The following recommendations serve as a guide for communicators who want to build public understanding of and support for environmental education. Taken together, they help ensure that the story being told is the one that will most effectively advance this mission.

Recommendation #1

Set the scene. Provide a clear definition of environmental education.

The Task:

For people who don't work in the field of environmental education, the term has little, if any, significance. At best, it prompts some head scratching; at worst, it invites speculation and misassumptions.

A dominant pattern within public thinking, which increases the likelihood that people will draw unhelpful or mistaken conclusions about environmental education, is the view that educational experiences decrease in value the further they stray from ***Just the Basics*** of reading, writing, and arithmetic.¹ Similarly, a common tendency is to view formal classroom-based learning as distinct from and more essential than the learning that takes place everywhere else. This ***Learning Hierarchy*** makes it hard for people to see serious education and the outdoors as a comfortable pairing.² (See the Glossary of Public Thinking to learn more about the two models of reasoning mentioned above.)

Wherever a void in public understanding exists, dominant patterns in current thinking are relied upon to fill the gap. Given this hazard, the first task for people wanting to communicate about the value of environmental education is to demystify the term.

The Tool:

Sometimes the most effective tool is also the most straightforward one, and the only trick is remembering to use it. In this case, it's a simple definition. Rather than assuming that the term "environmental education" conveys significance on its own, take the time to articulate its significance.

It's a good idea to include a comprehensive and detailed definition of environmental education when introducing the term for the first time, especially in long-form communications. In smaller pieces where space is limited, an abridged definition will do. What's most important is to explicitly describe the key features of environmental education in a given context to render this fairly abstract concept into something conceivable and concrete.

Here's an example of this tool in use ...

Original text	Reframed with a clear definition
To develop an environmentally literate population that is able to solve the environmental and social challenges we will face this century, environmental education must be part of our nation's K-12 curriculum.	To cultivate an engaged citizenry that is able to solve the environmental and social challenges of this century, we must integrate field trips, hands-on science lessons, and other outdoor activities into our nation's K-12 curriculum.

Recommendation #2

Invite people into the story. Paint a big picture of why environmental education matters to all of us.

The Task:

A significant communications challenge for environmental education advocates is that members of the general public, in addition to lacking a clear sense of what environmental education is, largely see it as an issue that doesn't concern them. While some parents, educators, or self-identified environmentalists may take interest in associated communications, people outside of these groups are likely to pay them little mind. Even within these groups, many people will count themselves out of the discussion early on—assuming, for example, that environmental education is just for kids who are “outdoorsy”, or who love animals, or who are urban, middle class, able-bodied, and white. In other words, stereotypes and other assumptions about who environmental education is (or isn't) for can easily get in the way. (See *Us vs. Them* in the Glossary of Public Thinking to learn more.) Knowing this, the task for communicators is to cast a wide net, right from the outset, by framing environmental education as an issue of critical importance to everyone.

The Tool:

When you want to convey broad relevance, inspire big-picture thinking, and prime a common good mindset, the most effective framing tool is a shared value. Values are deeply held principles and universally cherished ideals. They reflect who we are as a culture and what we care about as a society. Appealing to a value early on in a communication can productively orient public thinking toward the universal importance of the topic at hand. The key, however, is to use the right value because different values have different frame effects.

FrameWorks has tested a long list of values in a range of contexts related to education and the environment. One in particular, which has a proven ability to generate public engagement and build understanding of the social relevance of both education and the environment,^{3,4} is *Future Preparation*. The idea behind this value is that, **as a society, we can prepare for whatever the future brings by equipping ourselves, and particularly our younger generations, with rich experiences, deep understanding, and wide-ranging skills.** The *Future*

Preparation value effectively primes people to think collectively about a range of topics, from formal as well as informal education and job training, to environmental conservation and even the role of government.

Here's an example of this tool in use ...

Original text	Reframed with <i>Future Preparation</i>
Everyone deserves the opportunity to have meaningful outdoor experiences, because when people connect with nature, we all benefit.	Meaningful outdoor experiences bring us together to learn about our world, including how to best care for and sustain it for future generations.

When you're talking about environmental education *and* ...

Advocates and experts know that environmental education programs can enhance public health, support positive youth development, improve K–12 education, further conservation efforts, and even promote social justice—yet these connections are not readily made in the public mind. To spark more productive multi- and cross-issue thinking, the value of *Future Preparation* can be combined with another shared value—either *Human Potential* or *Protection*^{5,6}—as described below.

Education, Public Health, and Community Wellbeing

The value of *Human Potential* orients thinking toward the principle that, **to reach our collective human potential, we must nurture a range of skills and interests, and help realize every single person's unique gifts.** This value productively primes public thinking about issues like education, public health, and community wellbeing—importantly, by broadening the public's focus on individual success to create a vision of shared success and a common future to which we can all contribute. (See *Individualism* in the Glossary of Public Thinking to learn more.)

Conservation and Climate Change Mitigation

The value of *Protection* effectively primes people to see environmental conservation as an essential and universally shared responsibility. It underscores the notion that **preparing for the future means protecting the people, places, and planet we cherish and depend on.** *Protection* disrupts unhelpful patterns in public thinking about climate change and other environmental issues, such as *Nature Will Fix Itself* and *Consumerism*.⁷ (See the Glossary of Public Thinking for more detailed explanations.)

Recommendation #3

Reveal the plot. Explain key processes and cause-effect relationships.

The Task:

Once you've laid the groundwork for why environmental education matters at a societal level, the next communications task is to explain how it works. *How does environmental education enhance positive youth development? How does it make our communities healthier? How does it link to K–12 curricula?* The answers to these and other questions involve complex processes, which are largely invisible to the general population. (See **Invisible Process** in the Glossary of Public Thinking to learn more.) Giving people a better understanding of these processes is critical to building the public knowledge and will to actually implement needed programs, policies, and other initiatives.

The Tools:

Explaining intricate social processes to nonexperts can be difficult, and it often takes time. One framing technique that can help is to offer an analogy between a new or abstract concept and a comparable but more familiar and concrete one. In other words, when the task is to explain a complex idea or process, the best tool for the job is often a metaphor. Which metaphor is the right one, however, depends on the subject matter of a given communication and, accordingly, the particular aspect of environmental education that needs to be explained.

Explain how environmental education improves developmental outcomes for young people

In recent research on how to frame adolescent developmental relationships, FrameWorks found that the **Cultivating Connections** metaphor improved people's ability to understand the variety of relationships and experiences that young people need for healthy development.⁸ We recommend using this metaphor as a way to explain the role environmental education plays in child and adolescent social-emotional and developmental wellbeing. Here's the idea: **Just like a root system supplies nourishment to a plant to help it flourish, environmental education provides kids with enriching experiences and supportive relationships that foster lifelong stability and continual growth.**

Here's an example of this tool in use ...

Original text	Reframed with <i>Cultivating Connections</i>
<p>Outdoor service-learning programs for young people provide invaluable opportunities for interaction with adult mentors and peers, which are explicitly linked to positive youth development. Such opportunities lead to significant increases in self-efficacy, social and political awareness, and connection to nature, as well as increased knowledge, leadership skills, and commitment to civic action.</p>	<p>Outdoor service-learning programs help young people cultivate stable, supportive relationships with adult mentors and peers, which are the roots of positive development. Beyond sustaining young people through their adolescent years, such opportunities nurture growth in areas like self-efficacy, social and political awareness, and commitment to civic action, allowing them to blossom in adulthood.</p>

Explain how environmental education actively promotes good physical and mental health

The metaphor of *Foundation of Community Health* explains how shoring up a base of essential supports across an entire community elevates health outcomes for everyone. It can be applied to facilitate public thinking about the many ways that a robust environmental education system props up physical, mental, and social wellbeing. Here's the idea: **Healthy communities are built on solid foundations, assembled by many different professional sectors, institutions, and people. A dependable foundation includes reinforcements, like access to green space, occasions to socialize, and quality learning opportunities. Environmental education programs supply these essential components of a strong and stable foundation and, therefore, support healthy, thriving communities.**

The *Foundation* metaphor facilitates thinking about the connections between environmental education and health by helping people think more expansively about health itself.⁹ Specifically, it defines good health in terms of the social factors and environmental conditions that enable a full life, rather than as merely the *Absence of Illness*.¹⁰ (See also *Individualism* in the Glossary of Public Thinking to learn more.)

Here's an example of this tool in use ...

Original text	Reframed with <i>Foundation</i>
An evaluation of garden-based learning sessions undertaken by a group of sixth graders in San Francisco indicates that the program increased students' knowledge of vegetables, preference for vegetables, consumption of vegetables, and variety of vegetables consumed.	By actively engaging with the ecosystems that sustain us, we can strengthen the foundation that our community's health depends on. For example, garden-based learning sessions in San Francisco supported a group of sixth graders to learn about and eat more vegetables.

Explain how environmental education is integral to the lifelong learning process

Finally, the metaphor of *Wiring Up* helps explain that learning happens all the time, everywhere, and that our formal and informal education systems should make the most of this fact.¹¹ Here's the idea: **We can energize learning by establishing connections between the different places that ignite our passions and generate deeper understanding. This involves linking classroom lessons to hands-on experiences and establishing networks of educators to ensure that knowledge and skills can circulate.** (*Wiring Up* redirects public thinking away from *Just the Basics*. See the Glossary of Public Thinking to learn more.)

Here's an example of this tool in use ...

Original text	Reframed with <i>Wiring Up</i>
The most important thing environmental education provides for students is passion and interest in learning. Environmental education creates meaningful learning experiences and engages students in ways that help them grasp and retain new information more effectively than conventional curricula.	The most important thing environmental education does for students is spark curiosity. Through an extensive circuitry of learning sites, environmental education helps ensure that the knowledge and skills students gain in one place can easily flow into new contexts, powering further exploration and boosting ongoing innovation.

Recommendation #4

Feature the full cast of characters. Use inclusive language to place disparate outcomes in the context of universal needs and shared responsibilities.

The Task:

Any communication that highlights disparities in environmental education or other related social inequities risks activating unproductive patterns in public thinking. Three patterns in particular, which are deeply entrenched in the public mind, routinely intercept equity-focused messages: (1) *Individualism* assumes that a person's successes and failures are a reflection of their own life choices, determination, and discipline (or lack thereof); (2) *Us vs. Them* divides people into social categories and leads us to either identify with or distinguish ourselves from others accordingly; and (3) *Fatalism* is the voice in our heads telling us that some problems are just too big to solve and that we might need to resign ourselves to an ill fate. (See the Glossary of Public Thinking to learn more.)

The task for communicators who want to address social inequity is to avoid cuing up these default patterns in thinking and instead help the public flex a different set of cognitive muscles—ones that account for structural influences, focus on commonality over competition, and build a sense of collective efficacy.

The Tools:

Inclusive language helps ensure that messages aimed at advancing social justice through environmental education are engaged with productively and interpreted as intended. It can take many different forms, some of which are subtle yet significant. As one example, replacing third-person plural pronouns (e.g., they, their, them) with first-person equivalents (e.g., we, our, us), goes a long way to foster a common good mindset and fend off latent victim-blaming. Similarly, using active verbs (e.g., build, problem-solve, create) rather than passive voice descriptions (e.g., X is needed to ...) stimulates productive thinking about our collective responsibility and capacity to address systemic inequities. Two targeted tools for implementing inclusive language are offered below.

Paying careful attention to the attribution of responsibility is an essential tool for communicators who want to advance social justice. This refers to the many different features of language that indicate—sometimes explicitly, but often implicitly—who or what causes a problem and who bears responsibility for fixing it. Because the public routinely blames poor outcomes on individual character deficits, it is especially important to name who’s responsible when highlighting data about disparities.¹²

Here’s an example of this tool in use ...

Original text	Reframed with collective responsibility
A recent study shows that high school students of color are up to 19% less likely than their white counterparts to apply and enroll in a college-level science program, but that introducing more environmental education into the curriculum can reduce that gap by nearly half.	A recent study shows that we do a much better job of supporting white high school students to apply and enroll in college-level science programs than we do for students of color. By introducing more environmental education into the curriculum, we can cut the 19% percent discrepancy rate nearly in half.

In conjunction with the intentional attribution of responsibility, an appeal to **Inclusive Opportunity** can facilitate more productive public thinking about the essential supports we all depend on to thrive. FrameWorks developed this tool for advocates of family, school, and community engagement.¹³ Subsequently, we have tested it in relation to other adjacent social issues as well.

Here’s the concept to be conveyed: **Opportunity is more than a vaguely inspirational notion—it’s a set of practical measures and material conditions that are required to fulfil universal needs. These measures are already in place for some communities, but where they’re lacking or missing altogether, we have more work to do.** *Inclusive Opportunity* helps communicators avoid activating the default public assumption that some groups are “needier” than others, and instead call attention to the ways that our social policies and institutions can be restructured to better serve us all.

Here's an example of this tool in use ...

Original text	Reframed with <i>Inclusive Opportunity</i>
Educators have called environmental education an “equalizer” for kids who are struggling, as well as for those excelling or those with special needs. In fact, many educators find that the kids who are hardest to reach become enthusiastic and absorbed in the learning process.	Kids thrive when they're encouraged to experience a range of educational settings and allowed to discover how they learn best. Environmental education provides essential opportunities for all kids, whether their best learning happens inside the classroom or outside.

Recommendation #5

Offer a compelling conclusion. Provide concrete solutions that we can implement together to strengthen environmental education and become the global society we want to be.

The Task:

Effective communications have the power to build public knowledge and productively shift attitudes about the importance of environmental education. Moreover, they can inspire, direct, and drive needed action. A frequent obstacle to required education reform, however, is the public's sense that the ***System is Broken***¹⁵. (See also ***Fatalism*** in the Glossary of Public Thinking.) Somewhat counterintuitively, this model of reasoning impedes support for policy change by feeding a deep cynicism about the education system in general—including its fundamental capacity to serve students and meet society's needs. Fortunately, the limitations of this mindset can be overcome through strategic framing.

The Tool:

To build the public's sense of collective efficacy and spark productive thinking about our shared capacity to create positive system-level change, the right framing tool for the job takes the form of ***Solutions***. Simply declaring that large-scale improvements are needed and possible is not sufficient to help people envision the way forward.

Communicators must name specific collective solutions—in the form of targeted initiatives, proposed policies, and model programs—to mobilize the broad base of public support and political muscle required for implementation.

Here’s an example of this tool in use ...

Original text	Reframed with a scaled-up solution
<p>We need better and more coordinated outreach and education efforts at every level, from local communities up to the federal government. Let’s build our capacity and step up our commitment to addressing climate issues. We need to learn about how to counter the effects of climate change, including extreme weather events and rising sea levels. And teachers should find ways to bring more climate change science into the classroom.</p>	<p>We need a national Climate Change Education Program (CCEP) to support and strengthen every community’s capacity to address local climate issues. The program will fund education about resilience strategies to counter the effects of climate, including extreme weather events and rising sea levels. The CCEP will also provide teacher training in STEM and related fields to incorporate climate change science into K–12 curricula.</p>

Conclusion

Without a deeper understanding of environmental education, the general public will continue to assume it's a “nice extra” for families with the available resources, whose nature-loving children are particularly inclined. Educators, program leaders, and advocates will continue to be frustrated by constrained thinking, harmful misperceptions, and inadequate support. Most of all, society will miss out on countless opportunities to meaningfully engage with our natural surroundings and prevent further degradation of the places and ecosystems on which we all depend. We can't let that happen.

By telling a more effective story about environmental education, we can set the record straight. This is a story about all of us—our common values, our combined human potential, our preparedness for the future, and our shared fates. It's a story that makes us all smarter because it illustrates the processes that drive our communities forward and highlights mechanisms for needed change. It's a story that cultivates and deepens our connections to this earth we call home and to *all* of our fellow inhabitants. Ultimately, the story of environmental education is one of hope. It conveys that, by coming together to gain a deeper knowledge of ourselves, each other, and our world, we can learn how to thrive.

Glossary of Public Thinking

The following models of reasoning are deeply embedded within, and widely shared across, American culture. They reflect patterned associations and taken-for-granted assumptions, rather than carefully considered opinions or staunch convictions, and remain largely constant over time. These models can lie dormant in the public mind at times but are easily activated by various stimuli, including subtle cues in language and imagery. Knowing which models exist, and how people rely on them to interpret information, equips communicators to frame messages more strategically.

Model of Reasoning	Issue Area
Absence of Illness: A way of thinking about health as an individual-level indicator of the absence of illness and disease, rather than a holistic measure of wellbeing. Instead of a set of conditions to be actively promoted and maintained, this model of reasoning understands positive health as the default state of a person's body and mind, which is degraded by an inevitable accumulation of pathologies and dysfunctions over time.	Health
Back to Basics: A nostalgia for traditional education that prioritizes the three Rs—reading, writing, and arithmetic—as the foundational skills that all children need and the rightful focus of the education system. This model is defined in largely zero-sum terms, premised on the idea that failures in education occur because we have turned our pedagogical focus away from the fundamentals in favor of new skills, which are seen as peripheral or even distracting add-ons.	Education
Consumerism: A conception of the environment as a marketplace that likens natural resources to tradeable commodities. Within this model of reasoning, environmental outcomes are seen as the natural result of decision-making by rational actors, who have calculated the costs and benefits of available options to maximize their profits in a free market system.	Environment
Fatalism: A habitual way of disengaging from expansive social issues that carry a wide range of disparate implications or involve daunting large-scale challenges. This model of thinking is typically rooted in a superficial understanding about the underlying causes of problems, as well as a skepticism about the willingness or ability of our public institutions to solve them.	<i>Multiple Issues</i>

<p>Health Is a Lifestyle: An assumption that healthy communities are composed of healthy people who lead healthy lives. This model understands good health as a function of disciplined lifestyle choices, like eating right, avoiding smoking and other “bad habits”, and getting plenty of exercise. It also obscures structural risk factors as well as protective factors, like access to nutritious foods, stress relief aids, and inviting places to exercise.</p>	Health
<p>Individualism: A way of viewing social issues through the lens of personal decision-making and individual behaviors. This model reasons that positive outcomes result from good choices and responsible actions, while negative outcomes result from bad choices and irresponsible actions (or inaction). Likewise, it backgrounds the social and environmental conditions that facilitate, constrain, or otherwise shape individual decision-making.</p>	<i>Multiple Issues</i>
<p>Invisible Process: A default gap in reasoning that emerges from a void in understanding about the forces at work in relation to a particular social issue. This model glosses over key mechanisms and cause-effect relationships, instead implicitly assuming that complex processes—such as cognitive development, social-emotional learning, and skills acquisition—occur naturally or simply happen on their own.</p>	<i>Multiple Issues</i>
<p>Learning Hierarchy: An assumption that any learning that takes place outside the classroom is supplemental rather than essential. This way of thinking creates a hierarchy between formal and informal education, in which the latter is seen as nice but not necessary.</p>	Education
<p>Nature Will Fix Itself: A way of reasoning that endows nature with the virtually unlimited capacity to repair itself. Accordingly, the planet is assumed to be robustly resilient, impossibly vast, and—in the long term, at least—immune to human harm. Reasoning from this assumption, pollution and other human effects might momentarily disrupt nature, but larger natural processes will restore balance eventually.</p>	Environment
<p>System is Broken: A way of thinking about education in America that assumes reform is inevitably fraught or even futile, given the enormity and intractability of root problems. When this model of reasoning is activated, people become easily overwhelmed and fearful of dramatic changes, and less willing to imagine big improvements to the education system.</p>	Education
<p>Us vs. Them: A tendency to position ourselves in relation to other people, whom we see as either similar to and aligned with or somehow different from ourselves. As a mechanism for reasoning through social issues, this model leads to unproductive and divisive thinking, and sometimes even a competitive or adversarial mindset—most frequently along the lines of gender, class, and race.</p>	<i>Multiple Issues</i>

Endnotes

- 1 Bales, S.N., Kendall-Taylor, N., Lindland, E., O’Neil, M., & Simon, A. (2012, February 12). *Talking about skills and learning*. FrameWorks Institute.
- 2 Frameworks Institute. (n.d.). *Afterschool STEM Hub*.
<https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/toolkit/afterschool-stem-hub/>
- 3 Bales, S.N., & O’Neil, M. (2014). *Putting it back together again: Reframing education using a core story approach: A FrameWorks MessageMemo*. Washington, DC: FrameWorks Institute.
- 4 Bales, S.N., Sweetland, J., & Volmert, J. (2015). *How to talk about climate change and the ocean: A Frameworks MessageMemo*. Washington, DC: Frameworks Institute.
- 5 FrameWorks Institute. (2020). *Making the case for equitable and just public education*. Washington, DC: FrameWorks Institute.
- 6 Bales, S.N., Sweetland, J., & Volmert, J. (2015). *How to talk about climate change and the ocean: A Frameworks MessageMemo*. Washington, DC: Frameworks Institute.
- 7 Volmert, A., Baran, M., Kendall-Taylor, N., Lindland, E., Haydon, A., Arvizu, S., & Bunten, A. (2013). *“Just the Earth doing its own thing”: Mapping the gaps between expert and public understandings of oceans and climate change*. Washington, DC: FrameWorks Institute.
- 8 O’Neil, M., Volmert, A., Pineau, M.G., & Levay K. (2018). *Reframing developmental relationships*. Washington, DC: FrameWorks Institute.
- 9 Moyer, J., L’Hôte, E., & Levay, K. (2019). *Public health reaching across sectors: Strategies for communicating effectively about public health and cross-sector collaboration with professionals from other sectors*. Washington, DC: FrameWorks Institute.

- 10 L'Hôte, E., Volmert, A., Davis, C., & Down, L. (2019). *Public health reaching across sectors: Mapping the gaps between how public health experts and leaders in other sectors view public health and cross-sector collaborations*. Washington, DC: FrameWorks Institute.
- 11 Moyer, J., O'Neil, M., Levay, K., & Volmert, A. (2019). *Wiring across sites so STEM learning can flow: Strategies for communicating more effectively about connecting STEM learning environments (A FrameWorks Strategic Brief)*. Washington, DC: FrameWorks Institute.
- 12 FrameWorks Institute. (2020). *Making the case for equitable and just public education*. Washington, DC: FrameWorks Institute.
- 13 Frameworks Institute. (n.d.). *Reframing Family, School, and Community Engagement*. <https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/toolkit/reframing-family-school-and-community-engagement/>
- 14 Bales, S.N., Volmert, A., & Kendall-Taylor, N. (2015). *The power of explanation: Reframing STEM and informal learning: A FrameWorks MessageMemo supported by the Noyce Foundation*. Washington, DC: FrameWorks Institute.
- 15 Bales, S.N. (2009). *Framing Education and Education Reform: A FrameWorks MessageMemo*. Washington, DC: FrameWorks Institute.

About FrameWorks

The FrameWorks Institute is a non-profit think tank that advances the mission-driven sector's capacity to frame the public discourse about social and scientific issues. The organization's signature approach, Strategic Frame Analysis®, offers empirical guidance on what to say, how to say it, and what to leave unsaid. FrameWorks designs, conducts, and publishes multi-method, multi-disciplinary framing research to prepare experts and advocates to expand their constituencies, to build public will, and to further public understanding. To make sure this research drives social change, FrameWorks supports partners in reframing, through strategic consultation, campaign design, FrameChecks®, toolkits, online courses, and in-depth learning engagements known as FrameLabs. In 2015, FrameWorks was named one of nine organizations worldwide to receive the MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions.

Learn more at www.frameworksinstitute.org

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the FrameWorks Institute.

Please follow standard APA rules for citation, with the FrameWorks Institute as publisher.

Moyer, J., Trester, A.M., & Nichols, J. (2020). *How to Tell a More Effective Story about Environmental Education*. Washington, DC: FrameWorks Institute.

© FrameWorks Institute 2020