

Wisconsin Environmental Education Research Database
Procedures for Completing Database
10-14-08
Prepared by Abigail Enlund

My involvement in the WEERD project began with several meetings with the designers: Dr. Daniel Sivek, Dr. Jennie Lane, and Dr. Scott Ashmann. After getting a clear picture of what needed to be included in the database and what should be left out, I met again with Dr. Jennie Lane and Dan Menzel to see the actual Access database and get acquainted with how the resources would be entered. Once I learned all the background information about the project and felt comfortable with the database I began the process of gathering and entering resources.

I decided to begin the process with the PhD dissertations because this category would have the fewest entries. I then moved on to the journal articles, theses written at other universities other than UW–Stevens Point, and then finally the theses from UWSP. The bulk of the resources would fit into this final category so it was necessary to have a smoothly working system before getting to this group.

The general process for finding, reviewing and entering the resources was identical regardless of the type of resource. Once the resource had been discovered its title, author, date, and, when available, abstract, were examined to see if it needed to be looked at closer. Many resources were eliminated through this first step as they were not directly linked to environmental education, not peer reviewed research or not directly linked to Wisconsin. Those that needed to be examined further were obtained either online or through the university library.

For the dissertations I did a search using Dissertation Abstracts (OCLC) database. The bulk of the remaining resources were located through either WisCat database or WorldCat database. Searches were also done through numerous other databases on subjects such as science, education, natural resources, physical education, psychology and all environmental topics.

The bulk of the information needed from each resource was obtained through the abstract, when available. Some of the more specific and detailed information was gained through a closer examination of the content. One such item was the methods of determining validity and reliability. If it was mentioned, this was most often found in the methods chapter. Other items that were not frequently found in the abstract include how a population was chosen, specific information on survey questions, types of activities included within curriculums, number of references, implications and recommendations for future research.

A master list was kept of all located resources which had been printed off from the library databases mentioned above. Once a resource had been reviewed, necessary information gathered and entered into the WEERD database the resource was then marked as “done”.

Certain problems were faced throughout this process. Obtaining some of the theses and resources from other universities has taken longer than expected and is still ongoing. The thesis collection at UW–Stevens Point is not well kept, making the library catalog numbers almost meaningless. It was difficult to obtain the theses of recently graduated students because it can take over a year for the library to process and file the work in the stacks.

The entry of resources into the database is almost complete and then the analysis of the data will begin. The process by which this will occur has yet to be determined.