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Step 1: Identifying My Goals

My engagement goal is to inspire and foster a sense of appreciation and interest in the environment for young kids. I want them to be able to ask questions and observe the concepts at hand in their own natural environment. I want them to grow up to be stewards of the environment and the wildlife that inhabit it. I personally, want to create a sense of purpose in myself and create a community with like-minded individuals who will create a better future together.

Step 2: Define Your Audience

My intended audience can be described as children ages from 5-8. I want to frame ideas building off of their own observations. By exploring nature together and then learning more about it based on what they saw. I think kids (especially me) learn best from observing and developing interests and questions on my own after an experience. For this reason, I will let the kids guide the conversation based on what they saw and what they want to know about. (Ex. questions about animals, the environment, etc.) I will directly engage with kids and indirectly engage with their families/parents/households because the kids will talk about what they learn at home. I will also be indirectly engaging with the children's future families/friends/coworkers and acquaintances because they will take what they learn and teach it to others.

Step 3: Develop your message

1. Explore
2. Appreciate and learn
3. Better future

Explore- Observe the outdoors and the environment around you. What do you see?

What do you have questions about?

Appreciate and learn- Be very respectful to the environment and animals. Make sure to leave no trace. Talk about your questions and observations in a group discussion format. Address questions and learn together.

Better future- foster a sense of appreciation in the kids and teach them things that they can carry with them into the future. Do group reflections (maybe through art) to reflect on what they take away from these activities.

Step 4: Find Opportunities to Engage

One way I would like to engage my audience is to contact local summer camps and have them contact the families that have engaged in their services before to get them

engaged in something similar during school year. I would also contact the local schools of the Madison area to potentially contact their families to see if they would be interested. Also making a website/Instagram page will increase traction and engagement from families and will also increase trust in the legibility of the program.

A few next steps I can take are to recruit a partner to help me. With my current workload I am not sure that I could dedicate time to this consistently. I would plan to meet weekly every Sunday around noon. Some resources I would need to complete the club are journals for the kids to draw/write what they see, hear, smell, have questions about. I would also need demo materials to educate the kids in a captivating way. This might include puppets or sample materials of plants, rocks, etc.

Step 5: Plan your Evaluation

The impacts on my audience I would like to measure are their increase in interest or knowledge about the environment and environmental issues and solutions. I would also like to increase their overall appreciation and love for nature as a whole. I would love for them to have more conversations centered around the environment and the issues that threaten it.

The impacts on myself and other scientists that I'd like to measure are our increase in passion and sense of purpose in the field. I think a main takeaway for public engagement is an increase in motivation and fulfillment in what you do.

The ways I plan to gather feedback are open conversations with the kids. I think kids generally are very open and honest about what they think about things. They will give you honest feedback that will help you guide new activities and adjustments to old ways.

With the other educators/facilitators I also think one on one conversations would be ideal. I am very much a face-to-face kind of problem solver and would benefit greatly to having an open and honest conversation/relationship with my counterparts.

Ways I will use the results of the evaluation to adjust my approach to public engagement in the future is by listening openly and honestly to all feedback. I would adjust according to their feedback because the most important part of the program is that it is enjoyable to the kids and it is something fun to do rather than a burden or considered to be an extension of school.

