



# Key Issues: Bringing Environmental Issues to the Classroom

Keystone Science School



**Key Issues** is a national teacher professional development training that provides middle level educators with the process, skills, and confidence to investigate current environmental issues with their students using Keystone Science School's non-biased framework.



**The Key Issues Framework**  
The *Key Issues Framework* is a step-by-step process approach that can be applied as a systematic tool to guide students through their investigation of issues in a non-biased manner.

**Interdisciplinary**  
The curriculum integrates science, math, social studies, and language arts throughout the investigation. Teams of teachers from the same school or district are selected to integrate what they learn into their curricula.

**Integration of ideas**  
*Key Issues* incorporates effective and innovative ideas, activities, and methods, including conflict resolution and mediation, role playing and simulations, as well as small group work and lab activities.

**Standards-based**  
Our curricula is aligned to national and regional educational standards in a variety of disciplines.

**Easily Transferable**  
The *Key Issues Framework* is applicable to each educator's particular needs. Participants are encouraged to apply the steps of the Framework to any environmental issue.

**Advancing teachers, students, and communities**

**Teaching materials**  
We work with partners to develop science kits or labs that specifically relate to each program and increase teachers' ability to use curricula in the classroom.

**Course Credit**  
Educators who successfully complete Key Issues have the option of receiving two graduate level credits from Colorado School of Mines at a minimal cost.

**Networking**  
Teachers from across the country share best practices, successful classroom activities and form lasting professional connections.

**Infusion of 21st Century global competition skills**  
We incorporate the skills and concepts of global awareness.

**Service learning opportunities**  
Our curricula encourages teachers and students to use their knowledge to become active community members, both locally and globally.

"The Key Issues Institute was an outstanding, hands-on way to learn up-to-date environmental education activities to use with our students. The institute was engaging and inspiring. I recommend it for all middle-level educators!"

— Heather Brown, Bentonville, AR

## Components of the *Key Issues Institute*

### Simulation

Using a simulated issue allows educators to practice the steps of investigation.

From issue identification to potential solutions and implementation, each step of the Framework is actively modeled.

### Local Issue

Participants explore a local environmental issue as an example of how they can involve their students in an issue investigation in their community.

### Small Group Explorations

During the week-long session, teachers are grouped in grade level -subject area configurations to discuss and explore ways to adapt Key Issues lessons to better address issues with their students.

### Evaluation

A year-long evaluation of the *Key Issues Institute*, conducted by Collaborative Research Associates (CRA), found *Key Issues* to be “an effective, well-run teacher professional development program.”

85% of teachers rated *Key Issues* as either extremely beneficial or very beneficial to them professionally.

More than 75% reported that *Key Issues* had increased their ability to teach about environmental issues and/or had increased their enthusiasm for teaching.

More than 50% reported that their skill in using non-biased teaching methods had improved and/or their science and technology knowledge had increased.

On average, each teacher implemented *Key Issues* in the classroom with 96 students during the school year. 64% had used *Key Issues* in more than one lesson or class.

### New for 2012

In 2012, all *Key Issues Institute* curriculum and lesson videos will be available online at [keystonecurriculum.org](http://keystonecurriculum.org). This will enable participants to easily download and share curricula with other educators in their districts, and will serve as a great resource for teachers across the country to access nonbiased, standards-based lessons on environmental issues.

### 2012 Key Issues Institutes

(all sessions take place in Silverthorne, CO)

**Session 1**  
**June 26—July 1**

**Session 2**  
**July 10—15**

**Session 3**  
**July 24—29**

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