



Hi-Tech and Lo-Tech Ways to be a Greener Health Educator

Amy Versnik Nowak, PhD,

Assistant Professor of Health Education, University of Minnesota Duluth
aversnik@d.umn.edu

Heidi Hale, BAS,

Alumna, University of Minnesota Duluth
hale0121@d.umn.edu

Reduce. Reuse. Recycle. We hear these messages all the time, but what does it really mean to the health education profession? How can we use technology to decrease our ecological footprint while increasing the environmental citizenship of our selves and our communities? In this session, explore hi-tech and lo-tech ways to become a greener health educator.

Think Green, Act Green, Teach Green

As health educators, we have the opportunity to share the value of environmentally friendly behaviors with our students. By thinking green, acting green, and teaching green, we plant the seeds of environmental citizenship into our school culture (Figure 1).

Benefits of Green Schools

The benefits of green teaching & green schools include:¹⁻⁴

- Financial savings
- Healthy environment for students and instructors
- Productive learning environment
- Improved teacher retention
- Hands-on learning
- Environmentally friendly effects

Hi-tech & Lo-tech Strategies for Teaching Green

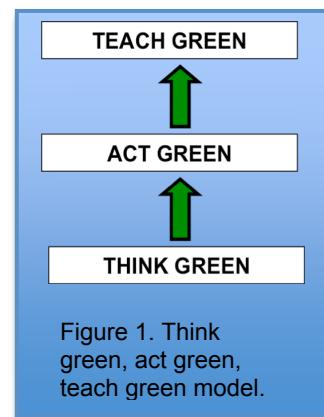
From hi-tech strategies involving electronics and computers to lo-tech methods, such as turning off the lights, there are countless ways to help the environment and benefit our students and schools at the same time.

Lo-tech strategies include:

- Teaching outdoors^{5,6}
- Turning down classroom thermostat²
- Reusing handouts

Hi-tech strategies include:

- Using online course management systems or blog-based courses⁷
- Incorporating environmental content into core courses such as math, English, science, art, physical education
- Using wikis, YouTube videos, podcasts, and other web-based technologies.



References

- ¹ Hamann A. Taking initiative. *American School & University* [serial online]. March 2008;issue 80.
 - ² Kennedy M. Greener pastures. *American School & University* [serial online]. September 2007;issue 80.
 - ³ Rydeen JE. It pays to update. *American School & University* [serial online]. October 2008;issue 81.
 - ⁴ U.S. Green Building Council. Green schools 101. *Build Green Schools*. Available at: <http://www.buildgreenschools.org/gs101/index.html>. Accessed March 1, 2009.
 - ⁵ Wu Z. Green schools in China. *Journal of Environmental Education* [serial online]. 2002;34:21-26.
 - ⁶ St. Gerard V. Savvy schools are going green. *The Education Digest*. 2008;73:32-33.
 - ⁷ Versnik Nowak A. HLTH 3500 Environmental Health homepage. Available at: <http://www.d.umn.edu/~aversnik/hlth3500/index.html>. Accessed March 1, 2009.
-

About the Authors



Amy L. Versnik Nowak, PhD

Amy is an Assistant Professor of Health Education at the University of Minnesota Duluth. Her research focus encompasses alternative teaching strategies and emerging technologies in Health Education. She has presented her research internationally and nationally. She is co-creator of an emerging research methodology called FotoFeedback.



Heidi M. Hale, BAS

Heidi is an alumna of the University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD). She has a BAS in Health Education with a concentration in Community Health. She is the 2009 UMD Health Education Major of the Year. She intends to pursue her graduate degree in Health Education after a one-year work-abroad program in Australia.