



Green Classroom Professional Group Trainings

How-to Guide for Planning and Conducting Green Classroom Professional Workshops

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CONTENTS

- CONTENTS 1**

- Introduction 3**
 - Group pricing 3

- 11 Steps to a successful GCP workshop 5**
 - 1. Gauge interest (*ideal timing: 4-6 months before workshop date*) 5
 - 2. Design the workshop basics (*ideal timing: 4 months before workshop date*) 5
 - 3. Lock in a date and location (*ideal timing: 3 months before workshop date*) 5
 - 4. Prepare the syllabus, agenda and course material (*ideal timing: 3 months before workshop date*)..... 5
 - 5. Register for professional development credit (*ideal timing: 3 months before workshop date*) 5
 - 6. Promote your workshop (*ideal timing: 2 months before workshop date*) 6
 - 7. Request GCP exam access (*ideal timing: 6 weeks before workshop date*) 6
 - 8. Prepare the exam logistics (*ideal timing: 1 month before workshop date*) 6
 - 9. Get feedback (*ideal timing: 3 weeks before workshop date*)..... 6
 - 10. Host your workshop! 6
 - 11. Evaluate the success of the workshop (*ideal timing: immediately following workshop*) 6

- Sample workshop syllabi 7**

- Sample materials..... 9**

- Sponsorship and partnership ideas..... 10**

- Speaker ideas 11**

- Sample post-workshop evaluation.....12**

- Facilitation resources13**

The Green Classroom Professional certificate program provides pre K-12 educators and school staff with the knowledge to identify what supports or impedes healthy, resource-efficient and environmentally sustainable learning spaces.

Introduction

“Green Classroom Professional: Group Trainings” is a how-to guide designed to help those organizing group training sessions around the Green Classroom Professional (GCP) certificate program. The Green Classroom Professional Certificate is ideal for school teachers, school administrators and school operations staff (facilities, foodservice, custodial, wellness), as well as school building designers, school board members and parents. We’ve seen that in-person workshops help attendees learn collaboratively by interacting with their colleagues and their surroundings, and as such, we’ve designed this guide to help YOU plan and execute successful in-person sessions for school stakeholders. Informed by USGBC’s in-person education know-how and input from past GCP workshops, this guide outlines ways to conduct effective sessions and includes information and examples for planning, session schedules, facilitation, selecting guest speakers and leveraging local resources for maximum benefit for schools, students and staff.

Organizers of past GCP group trainings shared advice and materials that shaped the formation of this how-to guide. In particular, we acknowledge the following individuals and organizations for their leadership and guidance in supplying best practices for this publication:

- ▶ Gail Suzuki-Jones, Melanie Islam and Chris Parker, who organized a workshop in 2012 on behalf of USGBC Hawaii
- ▶ Theresa Lehman from Miron Construction and Amanda Thompson from Lake Mills Elementary School, who organized a 2013 workshop for teachers at Lake Mills Elementary School (Wisconsin)
- ▶ Becky Brodsky and Stephenie Preseller, who organized a workshop as part of the 2014 USGBC Illinois Healthy and High Performing Schools Symposium

Before you start

The basics of the Green Classroom Professional Certificate can be found in the [GCP Candidate Handbook](#) (which is required reading for anyone interested in organizing an in-person workshop). While all candidates for the GCP Certificate must successfully pass the assessment, the course may be offered either online or in-person via workshops like the ones described in this guide. The Candidate Handbook was written for an individual pursuing the GCP Certificate via the online course; this guide describes the process for delivering the content found within the course, but via an in-person setting.

Group pricing

Because discounted group pricing is offered for the GCP course and assessment, it’s advantageous to seek group pricing once you have a good idea of your workshop’s anticipated headcount. You can receive the group discount either by paying as one group in advance, or by having each person pay individually using a promo code that you have requested in advance. Regardless, we recommend you complete [this form](#) to request group pricing about 2 months before your workshop date.

Connect to LEED®

Did you know that GCP certification contributes toward satisfying the [School as a Teaching Tool](#) innovation credit under LEED v4? Schools pursuing LEED certification are encouraged to work with their project designers to include the GCP in their LEED certification strategy.

11 Steps to a successful GCP workshop

1. Gauge interest (*ideal timing: 4-6 months before workshop date*)

Read this document all the way through, read the GCP Candidate Handbook, [purchase access to the GCP](#) and familiarize yourself with the content contained within, including the official accompanying GCP Guide. Who are you hoping will become a Green Classroom Professional and what will motivate them to do so? Recruit a few stakeholders (teachers, principals, designers) who can help champion a workshop by vetting the agenda, providing input on scheduling, getting word out and recruiting attendees. Engage your [local USGBC community](#). Determine the business model for the workshop by considering direct expenses (GCP access, refreshments, materials, rentals, etc.) and opportunities to have them offset, reduced or sponsored.

2. Design the workshop basics (*ideal timing: 4 months before workshop date*)

Who will help lead the workshop? Where do you want to hold the workshop? What is the appropriate length of time needed for the workshop, and will attendees complete the exam on-site, or on their own afterwards?

3. Lock in a date and location (*ideal timing: 3 months before workshop date*)

Think about dates and times that are convenient for attendees (e.g., teacher in-service days, weekends, summer days, etc.). What dates and times are convenient for your speakers and venue? Will you serve refreshments? Do you need A/V? Will you need internet access in order for attendees to pay for their access on-site and/or to take the assessment on-site, immediately following the workshop? If the host site is at a school, ensure that the district or school firewall will allow course and exam access.

4. Prepare the syllabus, agenda and course material (*ideal timing: 3 months before workshop date*)

Using examples found in this guide, draft the outline for the workshop and create materials (slides, worksheets, activities) that will support learners. Make a list of any additional resources you want to provide to workshop attendees. Consider including information to make the content within the GCP local and relevant. Estimate timing of each topic to be covered, including interactive activities and/or walk-throughs. Set up a couple of strategy and rehearsal sessions with your co-instructors and presenters, so everyone has plenty of time to gather info, prepare and practice.

5. Register for professional development credit (*ideal timing: 3 months before workshop date*)

All GCP candidates who successfully pass the exam receive a printable certificate, which they can use as documentation in pursuing professional development (PD) credit. To further incentivize attendance and lighten the workload of educators, we recommend registering your workshop to provide professional development credit to teachers. Because professional development for teachers is dictated on a state-by-state basis, we recommend visiting your state Board of Education website to learn more about how PD is coordinated in your state. You might be able to find a list of pre-approved PD providers and reach out to partner with them to be able to offer credits. You may be able to submit an application to become an approved provider. Feel free to [reference this list](#) of each state's PD coordinator. The particular employee listed might have moved on, but the department and relevant position should remain the same.

6. Promote your workshop (*ideal timing: 2 months before workshop date*)

Work with the “champions” you identified early in the process (see step #1) to advertise the workshop through the most relevant channels; include PD information, pricing and logistics, as well as compelling persuasive language that will appeal to a range of motivations.

7. Request GCP exam access (*ideal timing: 6 weeks before workshop date*)

Request GCP access and pricing from USGBC by filling out [this request form](#). Will you purchase access for all participants together, before the workshop? If so, you will need to know how many people will be participating in the workshop. Will participants purchase the course and exam on-site? If so, you may be able to receive a discount code from USGBC to give out to participants. Generally, groups larger than 20 individuals qualify to receive a bulk discount. The request form will allow USGBC to collect the information it needs to get back to you about access and pricing.

8. Prepare the exam logistics (*ideal timing: 1 month before workshop date*)

If you will be using computers on-site, check on access and capabilities of the computers, as well as internet access. Depending on the method you’ve chosen for the attendees to take their exam, how will you check-in on their completion? If they will take the exam after they leave the training site, what will motivate them to pass? Are any incentives available from local businesses? Opportunities for public recognition?

9. Get feedback (*ideal timing: 3 weeks before workshop date*)

Review the list of workshop registrants to know your audience. Ask your “champions” to review your plan for the workshop and weigh in on whether it is sufficiently tailored to its audience. Make final tweaks to your presentation materials, agenda and supporting resources.

10. Host your workshop!

See tips in this guide for materials, facilitators, room setup and optimized learning environments.

11. Evaluate the success of the workshop (*ideal timing: immediately following workshop*)

Distribute evaluations after the workshop to understand what worked well and what can be improved for future GCP workshops. Positive feedback can be repurposed as testimonials about the value of the certification to school stakeholders, which can spur additional GCP workshops or green schools initiatives. Send USGBC a recap of the workshop—what worked well, what you might improve on, what additional resources should be added to this guide—by emailing schools@usgbc.org.

Sample workshop syllabi

Sample 1: Half-day workshop

TIME	ACTIVITY
8:00 am	Registration opens
8:30 – 9:00 am	Introductions, Green Schools and Classrooms, Green Basics & LEED
9:00 – 9:30 am	Indoor Environmental Quality: air quality, green cleaning, integrated pest management, acoustics; IEQ activity/discussion
9:35 – 10:05 am	Energy & Atmosphere: lighting, plug loads and HVAC; E&A activity/discussion
10:10 – 10:40 am	Water Quality & Efficiency
10:45 – 11:15 am	Materials & Resources; Innovation; activity/discussion and course conclusion
11:15 – 11:30 am	Review practice exam questions
11:30 am – 12:00 pm	Optional: lunch
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Optional: on-site GCP assessment

Sample 2: Full-day workshop

TIME	ACTIVITY
8:00 am	Registration opens
8:30 – 9:00 am	Introductions, Intro to GCP, opening activity
9:00 – 9:15 am	Green Schools and Classrooms, Green Basics & LEED
9:15 – 10:30 am	Guest speaker/industry professional: Indoor Environmental Quality (to cover air quality, green cleaning, integrated pest management, acoustics); IEQ activity/discussion
10:30 – 10:45 am	BREAK
10:45 – 11:30 am	Energy & Atmosphere: lighting, plug loads and HVAC; E&A activity/discussion
11:30 am – 12:15 pm	Water Quality & Efficiency; WQ&E activity/discussion
12:15 – 1:00 pm	Optional: lunch
1:00 – 1:45 pm	Materials & Resources; Innovation; activity/discussion and course conclusion
1:45 – 2:15 pm	Review practice exam questions
2:15 – 3:00 pm	Tour or hands-on activity to practice concepts
3:00 – 4:00 pm	Optional: on-site GCP assessment

Upgrade your learners' experience through this hands-on activity:

“Get to know your classroom” from the Illinois workshop

Provide participants with 1-2 sheets of 11 x 17 paper and drawing tools. Participants will draw their classrooms and/or school grounds and should be instructed to be as detailed as possible to create a good sense of the space. Allow 5 minutes for this exercise. They will reference their drawings many times throughout the workshop, so it is okay if they need to add more detail later. Some participants may not have their own classroom; they may be the building engineer or even the principal. If that is the case, they should be instructed to create a schematic of whatever they have jurisdiction over, the school hallways and grounds or the principals' office space and entire school grounds, for example.

The organizers of the Illinois workshop have shared the detailed notes and PowerPoint slides from their session, in order to help other communities organize their own workshops. [Check out their resources here.](#)

Sample materials

Promotional text for fliers, emails

Sample 1:

Green Classroom Professional Certificate Workshop

In this 3-hour workshop, our trainers will teach you how to turn your classroom into a living laboratory by creating foundational awareness of environmental issues and sustainable solutions in the classroom. Learn how to implement, communicate, and advocate for changes that enhance learning and student performance. Participants will come away with an appreciation for sustainable practices and will learn about practical solutions that support the health of school occupants and that can also result in energy, water, and other resource savings. *(If applicable: CPDU's will be available.)*

Open to teachers, educators, facility managers and other school staff and parent advocates. Participants will be given the option to complete the online course assessment at the conclusion of the workshop or at home. *Register early, as space is limited.*

Sample 2:

Green Classroom Professional Certificate Workshop

Teachers and administrators: are you interested in learning how to make your classroom healthier and more sustainable?

The Green Classroom Professional Certificate will help you:

- Gain knowledge in green classroom practices for your school
- Support energy and water saving practices at your school
- Create a healthier classroom for you and your students
- Provide the best environment for student success
- Foster an appreciation among students for environmental stewardship and to become role models for sustainable practices

Attend this upcoming in-person workshop (insert workshop details here)

Graphics for workshop and promotional materials

- ▶ [PowerPoint slide deck template](#)
- ▶ [Green Classroom Professional logo](#)
- ▶ [Modules image](#)

Also, see sample promotional materials from USGBC Hawaii's workshop [here](#).

Sponsorship and partnership ideas

“I think the key thing for local organizers is to reach out to their community of experts to really make the workshops something of their own. Our sponsors and partners were instrumental to the execution of the program along with the follow-up by our mentors.”
– Melanie Islam, co-organizer, USGBC Hawaii’s GCP workshop

Who will cover the cost of GCP access and other event-related costs, such as refreshments or materials—the individual, the school, a partner, a sponsor? Pricing for bulk GCP access is [found here](#), and discounts apply for employees of USGBC Member companies. Here are some ideas for keeping costs low, maintaining high quality and leveraging existing resources to support your local classroom professionals.

Did you know that K-12 schools and districts can join USGBC for free for their first year? Check it out at centerforgreenschools.org/membership

Potential sponsors

- ▶ Establish a separate ticket price for teachers (lower) and industry professionals (higher), so that the industry professional cost serves as a “scholarship” for teachers to attend.
- ▶ Seek donated meeting space, preferably at a school or other learning environment, and preferably with A/V, screen, whiteboard and wireless internet accessibility. Give credit to the owner of the space for this contribution.
- ▶ Architecture and engineering firms, manufacturers and vendors with products and services in local schools may be interested in providing sponsorship to cover workshop costs (GCP registration, materials and refreshments).

Potential partners

- ▶ Local PTA, teachers unions, student clubs
- ▶ Universities with sustainability, building sciences and/or teacher preparation programs
- ▶ Local environmental agencies (Public Works, Environmental Protection, Energy) and non-profits

Upgrade your learners’ experience by sustaining their new green knowledge:

USGBC Hawaii’s GCP workshop featured two additional, low-cost and high-value resources for schools whose staff participated in the workshop:

- Green Classroom Tool Kit – includes energy, water, and air quality monitoring equipment, green cleaning supplies, recycling organizers, and more (\$200 value, one per school or team)
- Classroom Mentoring Program - provides professional support (members of the local USGBC community) to workshop participants for environmental monitoring and improvement projects in their classrooms and schools.

See the resources that USGBC Hawaii created to support these enhancement programs [here](#).

Speaker ideas

Guest speakers can enrich learning by providing perspectives on green classrooms from different professions and by describing actual projects and challenges. They can also provide a change of pace in sessions and energize participants. Examples of the wide variety of potential speakers include:

- ▶ Design team members
- ▶ School facilities managers
- ▶ District sustainability and/or facilities staff
- ▶ Local USGBC community staff or volunteers
- ▶ Local utility companies
- ▶ Local environmental agencies and non-profits
- ▶ Student, teacher or parent green team leaders
- ▶ School custodial staff

Upgrade your learners' experience by inviting school building designers and operators to talk about the school space:

In Lake Mills, Wisconsin, two of the companies responsible for the school's LEED certification participated in the GCP workshop for teachers. Miron Construction (LEED Project Administrator) and EUA (Architect of the school) presented basic green building concepts, who USGBC/GBCI are, what LEED is about, what LEED for Schools is about, and what "green" features, systems, equipment and finishes would be incorporated into the new Lake Mills Elementary School. Members of the design team discussed the importance of "occupant responsibility" and maintaining the green features of the school once it was occupied. They detailed strategies for incorporating sustainability into the daily operations of a classroom. The school's staff was so interested in the presentation that they invited the school designers to attend future "Green Team" meeting to further discuss how sustainability could be incorporated into the daily operations of a classroom and how they could integrate environmental education into their classroom curriculum.

Sample post-workshop evaluation

We suggest using a low- or no-cost online survey tool like Survey Monkey or Wufoo to distribute an evaluation to attendees immediately after the event. Or, if time allows at the workshop, print and hand-out and then collect an evaluation – your response rate will be highest with this option.

1. For each of the statements below, provide these answer options: Strongly Agree / Agree / Not Sure / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

- ▶ This event met my expectations
- ▶ After this workshop, I understand the pieces and parts of what makes a school green and healthy
- ▶ After this workshop, I understand my role in supporting the health of school occupants, including teachers, students and staff
- ▶ After this workshop, I understand my role in providing the best physical environment possible for student academic performance
- ▶ After this workshop, I understand my role in decreasing absenteeism due to environmental factors
- ▶ After this workshop, I understand my role in supporting environmentally responsible practices by saving energy, saving water and improving indoor environmental quality
- ▶ After this workshop, I understand my role in fostering an appreciation among future generations for environmentally sustainable practices
- ▶ After this workshop, I understand opportunities to become part of the green schools and green building communities
- ▶ After this workshop, I better understand what resources are available to support me and my green schools efforts
- ▶ Because of this workshop, I am better equipped to identify collaboration opportunities with other school stakeholders

2. What were the least useful elements of the workshop?

3. What were the most useful elements of the workshop?

4. Are there topics/areas related to green schools that you would like to learn more about and/or receive more training? If so, please detail.

5. Please share any additional comments or recommendations for future GCP workshops.

Upgrade your learners' experience by sharing resources for classroom curriculum:

Once your workshop has concluded, provide school staff with resources to extend green school knowledge to students. Learning Lab, presented by the Center for Green Schools at USGBC, offers hundreds of lessons to help K-12 teachers embed sustainability concepts into their classroom via standards-aligned, bilingual curriculum. Visit learninglab.usgbc.org to view the growing curriculum catalog and learn more about providing access to teachers.

Facilitation resources

The publication, [Learn LEED: How-to Guide for Planning and Conducting LEED Study Groups](#), includes a number of fantastic resources for anyone planning, executing and/or facilitating an in-person session, such as a Green Classroom Professional Certificate workshop. Check out these topics:

- ▶ Facilitation Tips, p. 49
- ▶ Ways to Enhance Learning, p. 51
- ▶ Ways to Encourage Participation, p.53
- ▶ Media Know-How, p. 55
- ▶ Body Language, p. 57
- ▶ Room Setup, p. 58

Access Learn LEED for free at any time at the above link or by typing “Learn LEED” in the search bar at usgbc.org.