



Hi, I'm Lori Townsend, an elementary science teacher in Charlotte, NC. I want to introduce you to a collection of new resources for teaching and learning about the environment in grades 3 through 5. Thanks to funding support from International Paper, PBS is happy to present this free, media-rich content to you and your students.

“EcoInvestigators” employs the Community Problem Solving model of inquiry-based instruction. In a CmPS curriculum, students work collaboratively to research, identify, and offer solutions to problems in their own communities. In “EcoInvestigators” students will be able to take advantage of PBS resources (such as video clips) to learn more about global environmental problems. With this global knowledge, students will be challenged to take the next step in — and to take control of — their own learning.

That means teachers will facilitate students and student teams in their investigations of local problems that result from – or are examples of – the global issues they previously learned about. You will guide your students to research, understand, evaluate, and synthesize what they learn about a local problem and task them with offering a solution. How students do that is up to them and to you as their teacher/facilitator. Ultimately, your students are in charge of their learning and their results.

To help you complete this program successfully, we've developed a series of lesson activities designed to build student understanding, as well as a broad program framework for teachers to use. We've also developed a continuum of support within that framework – with suggestions for teachers employing tightly-controlled inquiry-projects; for teachers employing a fully open-inquiry program; and everything in between.

We encourage you to look around the site to get a broad sense of the program's goals before diving in. But do dive in! We think you and your students will be very happy that you did!

Thanks!