

## OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS FOUND AT WETLANDS ON CAMPUS

Many children have become addicted to their TVs, computers, and smart phones because of much easier access to these devices in the modern world. One might ask whether these children still care for Nature while they spend so much time indoors.

Environmental education now plays a role in developing our sensibility to Nature. Therefore, many schools in Taiwan have endeavored to improve their facilities, hoping to facilitate teaching and learning in the field. For instance, projects on sustainable campuses (or constructions) have been launched to enhance students' understanding of their local community. In fact, they have become more aware of its history, culture, and rather fragile ecology; students are more sensible to Nature as they immerse themselves in these programs.

In New Taipei City, a great number of schools have manifested uniqueness by constructing wetlands for green teaching and learning on their campuses. These "constructed" wetlands provide not only habitat for animals but sites for education purposes and leisure. Although the constructed wetlands may serve slightly different needs at various schools, ensuring students' hands-on experiences with Nature is the most important among all.

The following is a brief list of the projects mentioned above:

1. Students reap their rice paddy at JuGuang Elementary School;
2. Students learn about ferns and guide visitors around the campus at GuaShan Elementary School; and
3. Frogs and fireflies are conserved at YouMu Elementary School.

In a nutshell, it takes much time and work to construct and to maintain wetlands on campus. However, what these "real sites" have to offer in terms of environmental education makes every bit of efforts worthwhile!

