

## **Ollie Saves the Planet Program Evaluation**

The process used to evaluate the Ollie Saves the Planet Program involved developing a set of criteria for the analysis of the Program to ensure that the aims of environmental education were being achieved to the highest possible level.

This involved exploring the Australian environmental education goals in the *Environmental Education for a Sustainable Future: National Action Plan* as well as North American Association for Environmental Education criteria. The process of evaluation was interactive - providing advice and suggestions about how sections could be improved to achieve as many of the aims and goals of environmental education as possible.

It is important to note that it is difficult for any one program to achieve all the aims of environmental education. Ollie Saves the Planet offers the very best in environmental education opportunities available to teachers and students through the CD ROM environment.

The evaluation criteria used for the evaluation of Ollie Saves the Planet included:

### **1. Fairness and Accuracy**

Environmental education materials should be fair and accurate in describing environmental problems, issues, and conditions, and in reflecting the diversity of perspectives on them.

- 1.1 Factual accuracy
- 1.2 Balanced presentation of differing viewpoints and theories
- 1.3 Openness to inquiry
- 1.4 Reflection of diversity
- 1.5 Makes substantiated claims

### **2. Depth**

Environmental education materials should foster awareness of the natural and built environment, an understanding of environmental concepts, conditions, and issues, an awareness of the feelings, values, attitudes, and perceptions at the heart of environmental issues, as appropriate for different developmental levels.

- 2.1 Awareness
- 2.2 Focus on concepts  
To what extent do the materials focus on the following concepts?
  - the planet earth as a finite system
  - the resources of the earth, particularly air, soil, water, minerals, their distribution and their role in supporting living organisms
  - the nature of ecosystems, their health and interdependence within the biosphere
  - the dependence of humans on the environmental resources for life and

sustenance

- sustainable relationships within the environment
- the implications of resource distribution in determining the nature of societies and the rate and character of economic development
- the role and values of science and technology in the development of societies and the impact of technologies on the environment
- the interconnectedness of present political, economic, environmental and social issues, and
- processes of planning, policy-making and acting to solve problems.

2.3 Concepts in context

2.4 Attention to different scales: personal, local, regional, national and global

### 3. **Values**

Environmental education needs to develop values and attitudes that move towards the development of a sustainable society. These values and attitudes allow us to challenge our accepted practices and beliefs.

3.1 respect for an appreciation of the interdependence of all life forms and the resilience, fragility and aesthetic qualities of the natural environment

3.2 appreciation for the dependence of human life on the finite resources of the earth

3.3 appreciation of the role of human ingenuity and creativity in ensuring survival and in the search for appropriate and sustainable progress

3.4 a sense of balance and fairness to all in deciding among conflicting priorities

3.5 an appreciation of the importance and value of individual responsibility and action

### 4. **Emphasis on skills building**

Environmental education materials should build lifelong skills that enable learners to prevent and address environmental issues.

4.1 Critical and creative thinking

4.2 Applying skills to issues

4.3 Stories of actions others have taken

4.4 Define and explain fundamental concepts such as environment, ecological systems, community, development and technology and being able to apply them to specific situations using a range of relevant resources and technologies

4.5 Analyse problems, and frame and investigate relevant questions

4.6 Assess and evaluate differing points of view

4.7 Develop hypotheses based on balanced and accurate information, engage in critical analysis and careful synthesis, and test new information and personal beliefs, explorations and experiences against these hypotheses

4.8 Communicate information and points of view effectively

4.9 Develop partnerships and the foundation for cooperative and consensual

action

- 4.10 Develop strategies for action, including locating appropriate resources, and means for their implementation

## 5. **Action orientation**

Environmental education materials should promote civic responsibility, encourage learners to use their knowledge, personal skills, and assessments of environmental issues as a basis for environmental problem solving and action.

- 5.1 Individual action
- 5.2 Group action
- 5.3 Direct action
- 5.4 Indirect action

## 6. **Instructional soundness**

Environmental education materials should rely on instructional techniques that create an effective learning environment.

- 6.1 Learner-centred instruction
- 6.2 Different ways of learning
- 6.3 Connection to learners' everyday lives
- 6.4 Expanded learning environment
- 6.5 Interdisciplinary
- 6.6 Goals and objectives
- 6.7 Appropriate for specific learning settings
- 6.8 Assessment

## 7. **Usability**

Environmental education materials should be well-designed and easy to use.

- 7.1 Clarity and logic
- 7.2 Easy to use
- 7.3 Long-lived
- 7.4 Adaptable
- 7.5 Accompanied by instruction and support
- 7.6 Navigation through materials or website easy to follow

The use of these comprehensive guidelines enabled the producers of the Ollie Saves the Planet Program to incorporate many key messages of environmental education into an engaging and user friendly interactive program utilising the latest in multimedia technology. The end result is a state of the art interactive sustainability resource that can be used in schools, community groups or as a stand-alone education program in the home.

A full evaluation of the Ollie Saves the Planet program was also carried out using the guidelines mentioned above. This was performed by the Centre for Innovation and Research in Environmental Education at Griffith University - Australia's leading environmental education institution. A full transcript of this evaluation can be seen on the Ollie Saves the Planet Website at [www.olliesworld.com/planet/aus](http://www.olliesworld.com/planet/aus).

### **References**

Department of the Environment and Heritage (2000) *Environmental Education for a Sustainable Future: National Action Plan*, Environment Australia, Department of Environment and Heritage, Canberra.

NAAEE (1996) *Environmental Education Materials: Guidelines for Excellence*, North American Association for Environmental Education, Troy, Ohio.

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