



Ollie Saves the Planet 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 standard.

A panel of leading environmental educators developed the evaluation criteria, based largely on the *Environmental Education Materials: Guidelines for Excellence* published by the North American Association for Environmental Education. The process of evaluation was interactive – with the panel providing ongoing advice and feedback on how sections could be developed and improved to meet the criteria and achieve the overall goals of the Program.

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 the following:

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 environments; an understanding of environmental concepts, conditions, and issues; and 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 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;



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- 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. Enhancing Appreciation

Environmental education should provide an opportunity for learners to develop an understanding and appreciation of the concept of a sustainable society.

- 3.1 Respect for and 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 Analyze 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.



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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-centered 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, utilizing 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 edutainment program in the home.

Reference:

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