

Investigating & Evaluating Environmental Issues & Actions: Skill Development Program

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In a Nutshell

This material is designed to give students the tools to investigate and evaluate environmental issues. Students are first introduced to definitions of "environment," then are led through processes of identifying issues and research questions, conducting investigations, interpreting data, and developing action strategies based on research. Topics addressed include: understanding the differences between conclusions and inferences, doing research on issues in libraries, recognizing values associated with belief statements, and how to organize and present data. As part of the curriculum, students are responsible for completing and reporting on an issue investigation. The material is interspersed with case studies, quotes from original documents on specific environmental discussions, cartoons, photographs, and charts. The teacher's guide provides additional background information, a discussion of environmental literacy, and suggestions for teaching the unit.

What the Reviewers Said

Key Characteristics

Strengths Noted

Fairness and Accuracy	Case studies reflect diversity of issues and geographic areas. References sources of information. Provides balanced presentations and encourages inquiry.
Depth.....	Promotes an awareness of issues. Students encouraged to explore own beliefs. Teaches concepts in context.
Emphasis on Skills Building.....	Strong on critical thinking and application of skills to issues.
Action Orientation.....	Includes entire section on action. Stresses looking at problems from a variety of perspectives and acting only after careful reflection of the issues.
Instructional Soundness.....	Goals and objectives are clearly spelled out.
Usability	Adaptable and easy to use. Instructions are clear and concise.

The Bottom Line

"Great job on getting kids to think for themselves and to analyze their own ideas."

"Teaches the learners how, not what, to think."

From *The Environmental Education Collection — A Review of Resources for Educators, Volume 3*, North American Association for Environmental Education, 1998.