

Editorial

In our opinion, environmental educators need to consider four essentials in designing and implementing environmental education curricula. These might be viewed as important elements in any well-structured environmental education program, and have here been labelled *world view, content, process* and *setting*. Together they offer an integrated framework in which to select materials and to act out exciting educational initiatives. We choose to view this framework as a set of appropriate concerns for environmental education, and in that light they can be stated as follows.

First, environmental education curricula should be concerned with developing a viable environmental world view or philosophy that deals with ethics, epistemology, and actions that support a unified view of life.

Second, environmental education curricula should seek to understand the world as an integrated system of life, and to identify and understand environmental problems and issues.

Third, environmental education curricula should involve learners directly in positive action that facilitates their developing an appropriate world view, seeking personal and cultural understanding, and facing real environmental problems and issues.

Fourth, environmental education curricula should select real settings to unite philosophy, content and process. In this way, a point of integration is provided for ethics, knowledge and action.

This collection of world view, content, process and setting, form the key elements in what we consider could be a successful curriculum project.

It is important to stress, however, that only in the dynamic of real learning situations can good curriculum begin to happen. It is a process more than a collection of materials or ideas, and this process lives and grows. When ideas categorized under world view, content, process and setting are drawn into practice, they lose their static appearance and become powerful reference points in an evolving and dynamic educational experience.

Nonetheless, it is necessary at least in the planning stages, to 'unnaturally' isolate them for a time. At this point they are simply tools that aid in the creation of different curriculum hypotheses, that must later be 'tried out', observed, reflected upon, and adapted through practice. It is this 'acting out' of curricula that leads into the idea of education as practical theory, worked out through the action of praxis. This must, of course, be the final goal of all curriculum.

In the case of this journal, we have set out to achieve one thing only. Our idea was to offer a selection of articles that could assist an educator in creating a curriculum experience around a Wetlands theme. The articles included provide a starting point and, it is hoped, 'ingredients' for those interested in developing Wetlands programs. For this reason the journal is divided into four sections. Each offers possible points of departure that could be helpful in developing environmental education curricula.

Section One surveys a broad range of environmental philosophies, each having different prescriptions for what environmental education should aim at. We've chosen three that address Wetlands merely to illustrate the importance of philosophy in environmental education.

Section Two deals with specific content and knowledge. In our view content should include the historical, geographical, political, economic and sociological dimensions. Case studies of problems and issues facing Wetlands environments, and an exploration of human perceptions and responses, are also important. This sample of articles offers a selection of ideas that educators can draw upon.

Section Three is concerned primarily with actions taken in education. While it is recognised that there are many educational activities designed for Wetlands, this section offers only a limited selection, and explores a few practical instances of programs in action. They cover a range of methods, processes and objectives, including video making, mangrove studies through aesthetics, a study of critical thinking in primary children, and experiments with teacher training and field studies. Political literacy, as a significant field of interest in environmental education today, is best covered by reference to articles by Gilligan and Hoeppe/Knight. It is a new emphasis in process that has come from an elaboration of the role played by different environmental philosophies, and how they shape environmental education. Political literacy is now seen as integral to the process of environmental education, and in time this journal might develop this theme more extensively.

Section Four offers a list of helpful resources for teachers. We are fortunate that work has already been done on Wetlands in compiling the directory included here. This is the kind of compilation that needs to be done for many environmental topics, with the aim of easy access for teachers.