

Survey of Teachers using OSE Water Conservation Materials

During the 2000-01 school year, the Water Use and Conservation Bureau (WUCB) mailed out over 35,000 pieces of school material to approximately 230 teachers, principals and educators in New Mexico. To determine if these materials were meeting the goals of the WUCB and the needs of the New Mexico teachers, a follow up survey was sent to all the names on the WUCB education distribution list.

Approximately 230 teachers received the survey (blank survey is attached). As incentive for a quick response, the first ten teachers to complete and return a survey were sent a water education video. Fifty-three teachers or 23% completed and returned the survey. The survey was kept simple and short. The questions were mainly objective. However, the survey also included two open-ended opportunities for the teachers to express their opinions. They were asked to express what they liked and what they did not like about the materials.

The responses came from across the state, with the largest percentage (40%) coming from Albuquerque. This closely represents the distribution of the materials. Albuquerque requested 37% of the materials with the remaining requests scattered throughout New Mexico.

The results of the survey were extremely positive. Ninety-eight percent of the teachers responding (52 out of 53) replied that they used the material they were sent. The one teacher who did not use the materials stated that she was already using materials from PNM and planned on using the WUCB materials the following year in conjunction with the PNM materials.

The teachers were asked to rate a series of questions from one to five with one being “I don’t think so” and five being “Yes, definitely.” The results have been averaged.

- Did learning occur? 4.42
- Were students motivated to take action? 4.02
- Was it easy to use? 4.57
- Do you plan on ordering next year? 4.66

It is interesting to note that “motivating students” received the lowest score. Even though it received an averaged high score of 4.02 out of 5, it was often singled out for a lower score even when the teacher rated everything else a 5.

The most requested materials were *Conserve Water*, published by The Watercourse (64%) and *Water: A Never Ending Story*, published by the Intermountain Section of the American Water Works Association (53%). The *Coyote Tales* books, which were partially funded by the WUCB and the City of Santa Fe, were close behind with 49%. *Agua Action* and *Hey Kids* were requested by 30% and 28% of the teachers respectively. The last three titles were all developed and/or published by the WUCB. The higher response to *Conserve Water* and *Water: A Never Ending Story* could be in part due to the age level. Both are middle school materials, where water is most often taught.

Seventy-two percent of the teachers were first-time users of the WUCB materials. This could be a result of the order form that was mailed directly to each school and to any teacher that had supplied us with an address at one of the many festivals the WUCB attended last year. In fact 49% of the teachers replied that they heard about our free materials from the direct mail-out and 38% from an appearance at a festival or event.

In looking to the future, the WUCB asked the teachers what additional services from the WUCB would be most helpful.

- 62% wanted a newsletter with current issues, activities, and web sites,
- 58% wanted teacher workshops for Project WET, Conserve Water and other national programs,
- 43% wanted water festivals and events with local sponsorship, and
- 19% wanted additional curriculum on a variety of water topics.

Most of the teachers commented in the “likes and dislikes” section of the survey. Very few had anything negative to say about the materials. The most common complaint was that the materials were not interesting enough and that not all of the materials were available in Spanish. The interest levels of students will always vary and depend heavily on presentation. However, additional material and guidance could be recommended to help the teacher increase the interest levels. The following quotes represent the responses.

“Video not in Spanish. (Water). Need more visuals (colorful also) to present materials, also posters.”

“Some kids thought they were boring, some kids said we already do these things at home.”

“The 3rd grade materials weren’t interesting enough to get them involved.”

The teachers had far more to say about what they liked about the material. The most common compliments were that the materials were easy to get and to use, they fit easily into existing programs, they were relevant to New Mexico and available in Spanish, they were geared to the appropriate grade level and they were free. The following quotes represent the responses.

“Well organized. Readily available materials. Addresses an important issue for New Mexicans.”

“These educational materials were extremely helpful for conservation awareness.”

“The material was easy to use and it was in Spanish.”

“Bright and attention getting, good information but not too much, written on 4th grade level.”

The results of the teacher survey show that the Water Use and Conservation Bureau is getting the message of water conservation to the teachers and students of New Mexico in an appropriate manner. The teachers approve of the materials and are successfully teaching water conservation in the classroom. The challenge has been set for the WUCB to provide more motivation for the students to conserve water, find or translate additional Spanish materials, increase interest levels, and potentially add programs of newsletters and/or teacher workshops.

LIKES

What do you like about the OSE water conservation education materials?

- Booklet and video both interesting and well done (W:NES, CW, 8)
- They applied to the state of New Mexico (CT, CW, K-6)
- Materials in Spanish – Overall very informative and motivational (CT, W:NES, 1)
- It gave good ideas in saving water (CW, O)
- Easy to use in a teaching/elementary setting (HK, CW, AA, O, 5)
- Good information provided (CT, CW, W:NES, 1-5)
- Appropriate level, ease of use, fit into other units (HK, CW, 4-5)
- It engaged the children. The learning was fun – yet educational. (CT, HK, W:NES, CD, 2)
- All materials were free to students (CT, HK, CW, W:INES, AA, 5)
- The Coyote Tales book was handed out in class and the children enjoyed coloring it after we read it, The Agua Action was a good follow up to take home to the parents. (CT, AA, K)
- Everything (CT, 3)
- Interesting to students, related to the southwest. (CT, 1)
- Teacher friendly & students understanding. (CW, O, 5)
- They were easy to use and fit in with our science curriculum on water. (AA, 3)
- Books were excellent. (CT, K)
- The Tales were cut – somewhat simplistic and they complimented other materials I use in a fun way. (CT, O, K)
- It was easy to follow and it went perfectly with our curriculum. (CT, HK, CW, W:NES, 3)
- Attractive layout and graphics – invites students' interest – good information – the students really enjoyed the culturally linked Coyote Tales. (CT, CW, W:NES, 4)
- Easy to connect with curriculum. (CW, 8)
- Concise/ good information/ clean (HK, CW, AA, O, K-12)
- They were an added resource to my curriculum and gave current information and were meaningful topics. (CT, HK, CW, W:NES, Special Ed 2-5)
- They were made available to the students, information they would not originally have gotten. (CT, W:NES, Special 1-5)
- They were geared to the appropriate age level and easy to use. (CW, W:NES, 4)
- It was easy to understand. (CT, CW, W:NES, 8)
- How easy they were to get, and variety – thank you so much. (CW, O, 5)
- Fun activities for the kids (HK, CW, 5)
- The kindergarteners enjoyed receiving their own book. The story was a simple one they could understand. (CT, K)
- I was able to easily modify materials. (CW, W:NES, AA, 4)
- Written at kids' level. High interest, good graphics & good translation too. (CT, AA, 5-Bilingual)
- Very easy to use and incorporate into my science curriculum. (HK, CW, W:NES, 5)

- The information was great. Water conservation needs to be part of everyone's daily routine. (CW, W:NES, AA, O, 6)
- Great (CT, HK, CW, W:NES, 4)
- Hands-on options – simplicity. (Special Ed.)
- Type of curriculum. For example, the water trivia game and non-point source pollution. (CW, W:NES, 7)
- Individual booklets for students. I would use it with “Every Drop Counts” from PNM. (CW, W:NES, 5)
- Very informative (CW, W:NES, 4)
- Easy to use. (W:NES, 6)
- Bright and attention getting, good information but not too much, written on 4th grade level. (CW, 4)
- I wish to have the Conserve Water booklets. I liked the Coyote Tales. The kids found it interesting. (CT, 3)
- They applied to NM. (W:NES, AA, 5)
- Relevant (W:NES, AA, O, K-6)
- Easy reading level. (CT, K)
- It was great to have cuentos in Spanish to hand out to my students after my lesson on cuentos. (CT, 7)
- A lot of information contained in an easy to handle booklet and pamphlets. (CW, W:NES, AA, O, 4)
- The children loved the Coyote Tales. (CT, HK, CW, W:NES, AA, 3)
- Entertaining for kids, fun activities, educational. (CW, O, 4)
- Ease of use, advance planning was minimal. (CW, W:NES, AA, 5)
- Well organized. Readily available materials. Addresses an important issue for N Mexicans. (CW, W:NES, AA, O, 5)
- These educational materials were extremely helpful for conservation awareness. (CT, HK, CW, W:NES, AA, O, 4)
- The material was easy to use and it was in Spanish
- Comparing water use (Keeping Track, p.2), game (You Saved Water) (CW, 4)
- The Coyote Tales and Video, The “Never Ending Story” teacher's edition was so easy to use, Materials for investigations were E-Z to collect, I used the scientific method for all of them with no extra preparation. (CT, HK, W:NES, 2-3)
- Material at reading level and relevant to NM children

DISLIKES

What do you dislike about the OSE water conservation education materials?

- Some materials were difficult for students to read. (CT, CW, K-6)
- Video not in Spanish. (Water). Need more visuals (colorful also) to present materials, also posters. (CT, W:NES, 1)
- I see so much information that I am not always sure how to access it. (HK, CW, AA, O, 5)
- Need more activities. (CT, CW, W:NES, 1-5)
- Students took them home and shared with parents (CT, HK, CW, W:NES, AA, 5)
- Nothing really, the two I received were great. (CT, AA, K)
- Nothing (CT, 3)
- I did not get enough materials for my entire grade level (my fault). (CW, O, 5)
- Some kids thought they were boring, some kids said we already do these things at home. (AA, 3)
- Nothing (CT, K)
- It was all great. (CT, HK, CW, W:NES, 3)
- Would like to order bulk – is that possible? (HK, CW, AA, O, K-12)
- It teaches the students how to conserve water. (CT, CW, W:NES, 8)
- I had a problem with the portion in Coyote Tales when coyote takes the water without being truthful about his intentions. I found it necessary to point this out to the class. Any ideas for revision? Coyote was too deceptive. Your explanation did not work for me. (CY, K)
- No Complaints. (CW, W:NES, 4)
- First 3 or 4 pages almost had too much information. (CW, 4)
- None (CT, 3)
- Reading level difficult for elementary school. (W:NES, AA, O, K-6)
- A lack of bilingual materials. (CW, W:NES, AA, 4)
- The 3rd grade materials weren't interesting enough to get them involved. (CT, HK, CW, W:NES, AA, 3)
- I liked it all. (CW, O, 4)

Key

AA: Agua Action

CT: Coyote Tales

HK: Hey Kids

CW: Conserve Water

W:NES: Water: A Never Ending Story

O: Other – includes Xeriscape 101, Enchanted Xeriscape, How to Xeriscape, Rainwater Harvesting, Low Volume Irrigation, and Lean and Green

Numbers are grade levels taught. K: Kindergarten