



Four Rs Action Program: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, & Rot Program Evaluation

Shankar, S. 2007. Four Rs Action Program: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, & Rot Program Evaluation. KIDS for the BAY.

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Program Profile	
Program Description:	The Earth Island Institute’s KIDS for the BAY’s (KftB) Four Rs Action Program is a hands-on environmental education program for third, fourth, and fifth grade students and their teachers. The participating classrooms join a KftB program instructor for a year long program. The program includes five two-hour long lessons focusing on reducing, reusing, recycling, and composting waste; in-class mini-action projects that reduce waste and conserve resources; a year long waste reduction action project that students choose, plan, and implement; and meetings with the teacher for program planning and evaluation. In addition teachers receive hands-on training in the curriculum, a curriculum guide, and an equipment kit to ensure they have the skills to teach the curriculum to future students once the year long program ends. Following the first year KftB follows-up with teacher to provide additional instruction and support as they implement the program on their own.
Program Goals:	The goals of the Four Rs Action Program are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>Thirty teachers learn to use the Four Rs message as an educational resource to stimulate students’ learning.</i> 2) <i>Nine hundred students increase their awareness of the issues of resource conservation and waste reduction and change their behaviors to help conserve resources and reduce waste.</i> 3) <i>The Four Rs message is integrated into the curriculum and culture of our target schools. Principals, teachers, students, and parents learn the value of reducing, reusing, recycling, and composting and practice these behaviors in their schools and at home.</i> <p>(Shankar, 2007)</p>
Program Funding:	KftB is a project of the Earth Island Institute and is funded through a variety of public, private and individual supporters.
Program Links:	http://www.kidsforthebay.org/programs/fourrs.htm
Evaluation Profile	
Evaluation Goals & Questions:	The goals of the evaluation were to determine the impact of the Four Rs Action Program on students and teachers and to determine the effectiveness of program content and delivery. <p>The specific questions that were:</p> <p>Program Effectiveness and Improvement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Are we reaching our stated program goals and objectives for teacher and student participants?</i> 2. <i>How can we improve the Four Rs Action Program based on feedback collected from teachers and the results of the evaluation process?</i>

	<p>Student Participants</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What was the students' overall experience of the program? 2. Was there any increase in students' knowledge due to participation in the program? 3. Were there any changes in students' attitudes, abilities, or behaviors due to participation in the program? 4. What was the impact of the program on students' families? In particular, have students' families become more aware of local environmental issues and/or engaged in environmentally responsible behaviors as a result of the program? <p>Teacher Participants</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What was the teachers' overall experience of the program? 2. What suggestions do they have to improve the program content and delivery? 3. Were there any increases in teachers' comfort level and perceived ability in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching environmental science concepts • Teaching about solid waste issues • Teaching about the Fours Rs- reduce, reuse, recycle, and rot • Facilitating a waste-reduction action project with their students 4. Do teachers feel prepared to teach the program next year? 5. How useful were the various program components (in-class modeling, curriculum guide, equipment kit) in providing teachers with what they need to teach the program? <p>(Shankar, 2007)</p>
<p>Evaluation Methods:</p>	<p>Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. Students' knowledge was measured with pre- and post- test surveys of randomly selected classes at a fourth grade level having the lowest number of English Language Learners. Teachers used a script provided by KftB to administer the surveys. Teachers' knowledge and attitudes were measured with pre- and post- surveys using likert scale response options. They also completed two program evaluation forms, the first following the completion of the in-class workshops and the second after completing all program elements. These forms measured overall thoughts on the program, satisfaction, students' knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors, and impacts of the program. Second year teachers were also given post program surveys.</p>
<p>Evaluation Instruments:</p>	<p>A complete set of evaluation instruments is available in the report.</p>
<p>How were results used?</p>	<p>Results are used to improve the program content and delivery, and also to improve the evaluation tools themselves.</p>
<p>Evaluation Cost:</p>	<p>Costs were covered in part from a \$5,000 grant secured from a private foundation. Staff time (personnel costs) accounted for most of the costs.</p>
<p>Evaluation Insights:</p>	<p>What worked well?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using an internal evaluator who knew the programs and the organization. This also cut down costs. • Working with a team of people who had different responsibilities (i.e. inputting data, creating/revising evaluation tools, writing evaluation reports). <p>What were important evaluation "lessons learned"?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow ample time for analyzing collected data. • When formulating evaluation tools, keep in mind how the collected data will be compiled and analyzed. <p>What could have been done differently?</p> <p>While we would not have done anything differently, we will be using our experiences and 'lessons learned' from this year's program evaluation to improve our processes next year.</p>

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Posted on:	February 2008