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Experiential Learning: Education for Sustainability

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Abstract

With the continuation of global temperatures increasing at worrying rates, and the decline of biodiversity, all due to the product of human behaviour, the need to understand our relationship with the wider natural environment and how we can support ideas of sustainability, has become an increasingly important part of the education agenda. With our connection with nature being associated with the development of pro-environmental behaviours (Zylstra et. al., 2014), this presentation considers the idea that 'nature-connectedness' needs to become recognised as a crucial strategy for every education system. However, fostering a connection with nature and developing knowledge that incorporates actions and personal pro-nature transformation, based on emotions, thoughts, identities and beliefs, is often difficult when teaching and learning takes place indoors (Collado, et al., 2020). Drawing on participant observations of undertaking Forest School with university students, and their feedback, I want to demonstrate in this presentation how a nature-based educational approach that supports active and experiential learning could provide a powerful transformative device needed to take up the challenges of sustainability.

Keywords: Nature-based education; Nature Connectedness; Pro-environmentalism; Sustainable Development