The role of ecological literacy in the shift to a more sustainable future

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Presentation overview

Presentation focus:
• The role of ecoliteracy in the shift to a more sustainable future

Presentation objective:
• To explain what ecoliteracy is, why it’s important and how it works

Presentation message:
• Ecoliteracy must become a critical skill for politicians, business leaders and professionals, and should be the most important part of education at all levels
Why is ecoliteracy important?

• Alienation from nature is contributing to environmental problems
• We now are at a critical point with many issues, such as climate change, biodiversity, deforestation
• Ecoliteracy is imperative for political and business leaders, as well as in all levels of the education system
Thinking differently
The development of ecological understanding is not simply another subject to be learnt but a fundamental change in the way we see the world.

John Lyle, 1994
How is ecological understanding created?
Getting ecoliteracy into the curriculum

Key question:
• What should students know, do and value?

Key challenge:
• Ecoliteracy is difficult to teach – many teachers do not have this level of expertise

Key lessons:
• Simple themes of ecology can be woven into a general curriculum
Transformative education

Shifts in three related areas:

(1) Perception (seeing)
(2) Conception (knowing)
(3) Action (doing)
Conclusion

Important points:
• We need to recognize that the earth is an intricate system of relationships that we are part of, and to live accordingly
• Cultivating an ecoliterate worldview can help put us on a more sustainable path

Suggestions for the future:
• Ecoliteracy as the most important part of education at all levels
Thank you!

Mother and infant orangutans, nationalgeographic.com, Jami Tarris, 2011
Resources

Center for Ecoliteracy
www.ecoliteracy.org
GRASP: a tool for developing ecological literacy through rich performance tasks
http://www.tdsb.on.ca/wwwdocuments/programs/ecoschools/docs/GRASP%20FINAL.pdf
Schumacher College
http://www.schumachercollege.org.uk/
Ecoliteracy resources for teachers
http://www.agnt.org/earth/ecoliteracyexamples.htm
Eco-Schools
www.eco-schools.org
The Oberlin Project
http://oberlinproject.org/
Ecological Literacy: Educating our Children for a Sustainable World
http://www.ecoliteracy.org/books/ecological-literacy-educating-our-children-sustainable-world
Smart by Nature: Schooling for Sustainability