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PLACE-BASED EDUCATION: PEDAGOGICAL CONCEPT THAT FOSTERS CHANGE

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Abstract — this article investigates the concept of Place-Based Education through analyzing its potential for the students, educational institutions, communities, regions etc.

Key Terms — Place-based education, sustainability education, community, professional responsibility.

In growing numbers, educational institutions and communities around the world are building academic curricula around the power of place. Individuals and organizations interested in educational reform are utilizing the power of place as a way to improve educational institutions and build communities. [3] A community's surrounding landscape, the local history, the businesses, organizations, and individuals outside the school walls offer rich lessons that can help students achieve high academic standards and develop valuable citizenship skills. [4] The experience of place may also provide environmental educators opportunities for valuable influence on curriculum content and development.

Moreover, with the emergence of project-based and personalized learning as the next step in educational transformation, the time is right to take these approaches one step further by focusing the project and personalized learning on locally, regionally and globally relevant projects. With the increase in student agency, the students gain experience in the application of knowledge and the community gains a massive resource in the human capital of responsible and eager students wanting to improve the long-term well-being of the community.

[5] Consequently, Place-Based Education approach can serve as a framework to connect learning models, increase the power of our educational system and serve as the foundation for developing professional responsibility of the new generation.

As ecosystems of learning emerge, Place-Based Education (PBE) sits squarely in the middle of formal and informal education partners, serving as the philosophical connector to all potential learning experiences.

The concept of PBE is not new. In some ways, learning has always been locally connected. In modern educational history, formal PBE has reemerged at various times to address the disconnection between educational institutions and communities. In the early 20th century, John Dewey affirmed the usefulness of this approach to increase relevance and agency for students. Nowadays many scholars seek to provide frameworks and support for educators and institutions interested in connecting educational institutions to community. Among them are A. Verbitskiy, I. Alekseyev, P. Galperin, J. Athman, G. Smith, D. Proctor, K. Kesson etc.

The work investigates the concept of Place-Based Education through analyzing its potential for the students, educational institutions, communities, regions etc.

The tasks of the work are to define the concept of PBE, analyze its benefits, and outline its structure, main principles and integral parts.

[2] Of importance is the definition of the main term of the work: thus, Place-Based Education (PBE) is an approach to learning that takes advantage of geography to create sustainable, meaningful and engaging personalized learning for students. [4] More

specifically, PBE is defined as an immersive learning experience that “places students in local heritage, cultures, landscapes, opportunities and experiences, and uses these as a foundation for the study of different subjects across the curriculum.”

[1] Having reviewed the relevant literature we can outline three main benefits of PBE:

- PBE contributes to deeper, richer learning experiences that are highly relevant and engaging.
- Students experience higher degrees of agency in PBE environments, boosting their motivation and persistence.
- Students who experience PBE have a greater appreciation for their places they experience, including their own communities and regions.

[4] The next model represents the seven principles of PBE for sustainable educational organizations, developed by Hargreaves and Fink (2006).

1. Depth. Leadership for learning and caring for others. Deep learning, not superficial testing and narrowly defined achievements.

2. Length. Preserving and advancing the most valuable aspects of life over time, from one generation to the next.

3. Breadth. Developing and depending on the leadership of others, not just one person at the top.

4. Justice. A Place-based educational institution does not steal the best students/teachers from surrounding institutions; it does not prosper at the expense of other institutions. It collaborates.

5. Diversity. Learning from diversity, creating social inclusion and cohesion.

6. Resourcefulness. Recognizing, rewarding and developing talent from early on in an individual's career.

7. Conservation. Honoring and learning from the past to create a better future.

Considering the above-mentioned, it is possible to highlight that PBE is a concept that moves beyond the traditional definition connected to environmental education and directly into a future vision for a rich and

engaging curriculum in educational institutions.

[5; 6] The structure of PBE has several key components essential to its implementation. Here we list five main components of the PBE approach.

1. Connection and Relevance: Learning is grounded in local communities. Symposium presentations connected to the fundamental constructs of communities (ecological, political, economic and social lenses).

2. Partnerships and Permeability: Place-based education relies on the commitment to strong permeability between educational organizations and community partners.

3. Inquiry and Design: These components encourage staff and students to understand the world through questioning, hypothesis, data collection, project work and solution making via design learning principles. The inquiry and design format supports the development of agency and responsibility in all learners.

4. Student-Centered: The most favorable outcomes in terms of both learning and engagement emerge through student-centered and personalized learning pathways. Providing opportunities in this area are critical in the success of a place-based education approach.

5. Interdisciplinary: Place-based education creates interdisciplinary learning experiences to increase authenticity.

Thus, it is fairly evident that through projects and problems, entrepreneurship, community-centered design and service learning, PBE offers relevance to students and teachers, infinite pathways to professionalism and tools for students to experience a sense of ownership for community sustainability and improvement.

[6] Experts highlight that students involved in PBE efforts are expected to finally acquire the sense of responsibility for the region, so called “place values”. Below, we use some examples of “place values” to substantiate the meaning of those values.

Value 1: A sense of place: education for living well ecologically.

Value 2: A sense of civic engagement: education for living well politically.

Value 3: A sense of worth: living well economically.

Value 4: A sense of connection: education for living well spiritually.

Value 5: A sense of belonging: education for living well in community.

Thus, Place-based education has the potential to dramatically influence the culture of education. Educators who incorporate place-based education into their institutions teach from a variety of disciplines, use hands-on interdisciplinary techniques that can respond to the interplay of economic, ecological and cultural systems in their regions.

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