

# LEARN GLOBALLY, TEACH LOCALLY: PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' TRANSFORMATION THROUGH CRITICAL PLACE-BASED ECOSERVICE LEARNING

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## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### CRITICAL PEDAGOGIES OF PLACE

“A focus on the lived experience of place puts culture in context, demonstrates the interconnection of culture and environment, and provides a locally relevant pathway for multidisciplinary inquiry and democratic participation...” - (Gruenewald, p.148-149)  
Learners anywhere can ask...

- What is happening here?
- What happened here?
- What should happen here?
- What needs to be transformed, conserved, restored, or created in this place?

### ECOJUSTICE EDUCATION

“This field that we call Ecojustice is not ‘just about the environment’. Our first task is to analyze the cultural roots of all sorts of intersecting social and ecological violence that are created when we naturalize the superiority of some humans over others, and all humans over other living creatures.”  
(Martusewicz, 2018)

“An Ecojustice orientation calls for education to develop the habits and skills to critique cultural norms and structures that create and sustain unjust and unsustainable practices and attitudes.”  
(Lupinacci & Happel-Parkins, 2016; Turner & Donnelly, 2013)

### RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To increase participants’ understanding of issues of sustainability in a global context
- To expand preservice teachers’ understanding of the multiple dimensions of sustainability issues, e.g. the human elements, economic, environmental
- For students to explore multiple paths to addressing issues of sustainability, e.g. Responses by governments, NGOs, private citizens
- For participants to use their collaboration with others (on the ground with locals, NGOs and in-service teachers) towards the development of curriculum materials.

### EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY MODEL

#### Eco-service Learning Experience

- Place-based socio-environmental issues
- Values local knowledge
- Participatory research experience

#### Collaborative Lesson Development

- In-service teacher + preservice teacher
- Themes from eco-service experience
- Aligned to standards/curriculum

#### Lesson Implementation and Reflection

- Taught in elementary classrooms
- Reflective writing
- Focus group dialogue

## ECOSERVICE EXPERIENCES



The term critical masses was introduced to us on this trip and it truly stuck. The concept speaks to the idea that although you might not be able to change everyone’s mind, you can find likeminded people who are committed to change just as much as you are and build a network with those people.



It all started with a package of Oreos and two local food activists. This led to a very insightful conversation about ingredients, where food comes from, and what is ‘good for our bodies’. We learned ways we can continue this positive, existence movement and how to share this knowledge, that balance and choice are important, in classrooms. “You cannot force people to make a change, present them with the facts, and the change is up to them.”



The San Clemente community has such a rich ancestral knowledge passed down generation to generation, that they still use today. We were brought on a medicinal walk in the community. We learned about the natural ways they heal their bodies; making their own bandages from a plant, eating fruits to cure sickness, to natural medicine they use during childbirth.



We learned the importance of nutrient rich soil and how it can make or break the replenishment of land that has been over-farmed. Steve gave us the opportunity to tend to avocado trees that needed to have their soil turned, watered and covered up for protection from the sun.



We went to Mindo Chocolate Factory and while we walked through their little factory, we learned about the chocolate making process; starting with the fruit on the tree, to the bar we eat! Although they are a ‘little factory’, they do not have plans on expanding. They use ethical and sustainable production. Every particle from the fruit they grow in their backyard is used in so many different ways! Nothing goes to waste.



Another thing the San Clemente community shared with us was their way of life. We learned that their entire calendar is run by the moon. Depending on what phase the moon is in is what tells them when seeds need to be planted, plants need to be pruned, and fruit needs to be picked. The community is very in touch with the earth and believe you have to listen to it and be kind, and it will do the same in return.

## STUDENT VOICES

### LEARNING FROM LOCALS & EDUCATION

“I agree with one of the workers on the farm (in the San Clemente community) when he said education needs to be shaped more like a circle. Education does not need to be a narrow funnel. This trip has taught me the power of experiential learning. It has taught me things I did not learn in a classroom and transformed me; I wish to bring this knowledge into my future classroom and upon my students.”

“The way of life here is very similar in a sense that positivity, trust, and family are evidently core values that the community holds. This is an environment I would like to cultivate in my classrooms because it creates a harmonious community.”

“Local knowledge is so meaningful. It is so powerful that locals, even with a language barrier, can teach so much to outsiders. Entering an indigenous community as an outsider, I found it remarkable that they, cared for us, taught us, and most of all welcomed us. It is important be welcoming to ALL students in our future classrooms.”

### FOOD JUSTICE

“Food is the primary cause of our world’s problems, which include death, diabetes, illnesses, and is the greatest source of poverty as well as global warming. It is so easy to overcome these circumstances in order for individuals to live a healthy long life; however, the media and government seem so powerful and strategic in their advertisements and sales to make people believe a lie.”

“Learning about food made me question what ‘eating healthy’ really means. I thought eating fruits and vegetables is healthy, but those foods, (especially because the US imports so much food) can be covered in chemicals. I have begun to question where my food comes from. At Steve Sherwood’s farm, I was able to see my food from dirt to table, but this is not the case for me growing up in Northern New Jersey. Initially I thought to myself, why doesn’t everyone buy or grow foods that are best for our bodies. I realized I am privileged to have this choice, not everyone has access to these healthy foods!”

### PRODUCTION / CONSUMPTION

“I have always been interested in nutrition, but this trip made me realize it is much more than food being ‘healthy vs unhealthy’. I never realized how brainwashed I was by the system and producer/consumer culture. I was woken up by the damage big American corporations, are causing. I want to support small businesses (like the ones we had the pleasure of learning about in Ecuador, Waykana Tea and Mindo Chocolate) and what they stand for, ethical and sustainable production. It took me going to Ecuador to realize this; people often go searching for things, when in reality we should be looking in our own backyard.”

“When learning about certain foods or products, I felt fooled to learn many of their truths. It’s incredibly fascinating thinking my entire life that modernization for most communities is the end goal — something similar to what people believe is the American Dream.”

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