Immersion and Place-Based Learning: Making Connections in a Novel Environment

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Enhancing Education

*If you tell me, I will listen.*
*If you show me, I will see.*
*If you let me experience, I will learn.*

*Lao Tzu – (6th Century BC)*

Experiences can enhance learning
Experiential Education

Tools - observations, actions, and hands-on activities

Encourages learners to become active participants in the world around them
Guiding Principles

Immersion

Connection to place; refine observation skills; deepens interest

Involvement

Interacting with ‘place’; application of knowledge; increased awareness

(Danylchuk et al. 2006)
Guiding Principles

Ownership

Sense pride; responsibility; rigor; self-reflection

Legacy

Time series; add to knowledge base; contribute to big picture; transference

(Danylchuk et al. 2006)
Novel Environments

Edge of the Comfort Zone

New environments foster an excited nervousness that results in heightened awareness (‘fun house effect’)

Encourages learners to ask questions about their surroundings
Natural Environment

Coral reefs

Mangroves

Terrestrial
Cultural Environment
Built Environment

Old versus new
Tourism-based economy
Sustainable Design
Integrated Coastal Zone Management

Framework for addressing the connection between the land, sea, and community
Involvement in Scientific Research

Authentic experiences that contribute to the conservation of environment and culture

Fosters a sense of responsibility and deepens the connection to the experience

Applicable for a wide demographic of learners
Undergraduate
Summary

Incorporating key principles of immersion, involvement, ownership, and legacy in course design can increase learning potential.

Experiential education in novel environments can further enhance learning.

Increases environmental awareness, promotes a conservation ethic.