Strengthening The Connection Between Environmental Education For Sustainability And Environmental Justice: The Potential For Transformation

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Abstract

Environmental Justice (EJ) and Environmental Education (E.Ed), two important subfields within the modern environmental movement in the context of the United States, are often treated under the assumption that they are very separate from each other. Each subfield has developed its own distinct body of literature, methods/theories, advocates, and critics. However, the current trajectories of both environmental justice and environmental education show that a linkage between the two fields is not only desirable, but has the potential to completely transform the two movements to be stronger than before. Thus, this paper will argue that as environmental education increasingly moves in the direction of environmental education for sustainability (EES), it should establish a stronger connection with the currently stagnant field of environmental justice. Despite potential criticisms, the results of this collaboration will have the power to overcome many individual weaknesses of both environmental subfields. This thesis will consult the preeminent literature on the subjects as well as case studies to illustrate the type of transformation that can occur in the classroom and the community. Finally, the paper will arrive at the conclusion that despite the necessity for a stronger link between the two fields, it is also imperative that environmental justice does not allow itself to be completely replaced by environmental education for sustainability as the linkage might cause that to happen. That replacement would not be able to solve certain problems that the EJ movement is still capable of solving. And the fact that the EJ movement should not be completely replaced by environmental education for sustainability shows that EJ is still valuable, which offers new hope for its future.