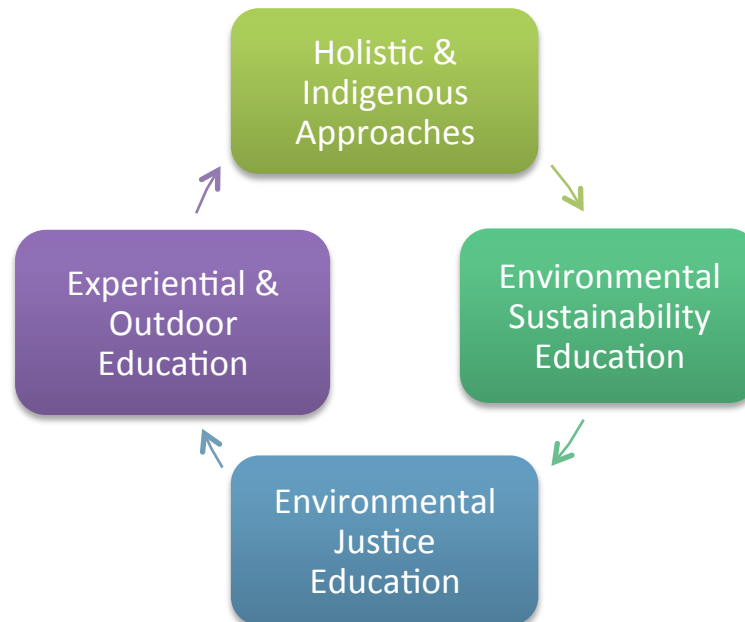


## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CAUCUS GREEN PAPER

The purpose of this Green Paper is to recommend that the UBC Faculty of Education undertake the “greening” of our educational programs, curricula, and pedagogies, combining theory with practice. We envision the shaping of Environmental Education to include the following four *interrelated, transdisciplinary* dimensions:



- **Holistic & Indigenous approaches** in environmental education facilitate an understanding of the complexities and diversities within the natural world, and incorporate the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of teaching and learning. Organic, regenerative, and nurturing approaches advance transdisciplinary ecological literacies and pedagogies, research, and community engagement, including Indigenous environmental thought and practices. Jeannette Armstrong (2011) suggests: “Rather than asking if it is sustainable, we should be asking if it is Indigenous.”
- **Experiential & outdoor education:** This is the most familiar, offered through wilderness programs and school and community garden projects. With the growing focus on virtual learning in schools, such physical activity and engagement with the outdoor environment provides more embodied learning, as well as opportunities to experience (re)connections between people and place (Louv, 2006; Sobel, 2005), and other lifeforms.
- **Environmental sustainability education:** We are in an era of escalating climate change, environmental degradation, catastrophic loss of species, toxification of ecosystems, and lack of industrial and governmental accountability for the products and by-products of industrialization and consumerism. Environmental sustainability education offers critical examination of the impacts of global market economies on the Earth and the lifeforms it supports, as well as the possibilities of “critical ecopedagogy and ecoliteracy” (Kahn, 2010).

- **Environmental justice education:** Often left out of the “sustainability” conversation is *environmental justice*, “a conversation for community understanding, advocacy, and mobilization; and as a political principle for which no self-identified group should bear a disproportionate burden of environmental injustice” (Agyeman, Cole, Haluza-Delay & O’Riley, p. 3). Environmental justice education examines the effects of global market forces and economic growth on equity and social justice issues including poverty, socioeconomics, health, and environmental racism, and considers alternatives that are more culturally, socially and ecologically sensitive and responsible.

Environmental sustainability in education has been made a priority at the global level by the United Nations (UNESCO, 2010; 2005) and at the provincial level by the Ministry of Education (2008, 2007). *The UBC Plan: Place and Promise* (2009-2010) includes the following two goals:

- Make UBC a living laboratory by combining its sustainability leadership in teaching, research, and operations.
- Foster social sustainability through teaching, research and community engagement that promote vibrant human interaction and community cohesion. (p. 87)

Several ‘sustainability’ related initiatives are already underway:

1. Development of a secondary undergraduate cohort in Environmental Education.
2. Elementary undergraduate cohort in social responsibility and Environmental Education.
3. Cross-faculty teaching and research through the *Think and Eat Green* SSHRC/CURA project (Land & Food Systems, Faculty of Education, Vancouver School Board).
4. Development of a core Environmental Education course for UBC Sustainability Minor.
5. Development of a post-baccalaureate *Certificate in Ecological and Social Responsibility: Education for Sustainable Living*.
6. Development of a proposed post-baccalaureate *Certificate Program in Outdoor Education*.
7. Development of a proposed *Joint Masters Program in Environmental Education (EDCP/EDST)* and *PhD Concentration in Environmental Education (EDCP)*.

Environmental Education can also provide students with the scholarship to further their education and find employment in the fast-growing greening economy. In 2008, 166,000 direct and indirect full-time green economy jobs were created in BC in 2008, contributing \$15.3 billion (10.2%) to the provincial GDP for that year (Globe Foundation, 2010).

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