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GSA Connects 2022 meeting in Denver, Colorado

Paper No. 232-7

Presentation Time: 9:35 AM

FROM ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS TO FOOD JUSTICE: THE ROLE OF PLACE-BASED, EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN LOCAL, SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

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Environmental studies is an interdisciplinary field that brings together natural, physical, and social sciences and humanities focusing on environment-society relationships to understand the root and proximate causes of contemporary environmental issues. Environmental studies encourages engagement in the personal and collective dimensions of social change to increase environmental citizenship, democratic decision making, and the ability to ask and answer questions of sustainability and equity. Place-based, experiential learning (PBEL) underpins hands-on learning with the specific geography, ecology, sociology, and politics of a location. PBEL seeks to connect location with self and community to help students develop stronger ties to their community, enhance their appreciation of the natural and social worlds, and create a heightened commitment to serve as active committed citizens. Agricultural systems are important sites of environmental studies research because they represent a significant convergence between natural systems and social systems; food systems transform nature into culture, and culture into nature. As such, agricultural systems provide an opportunity to implement PBEL within environmental studies curriculum.

This presentation will assess one such attempt to implement a PBEL module within the environmental studies curriculum of an introduction to environmental studies course at a private, liberal arts university. Students were introduced to questions of environmental ethics, equity, and environmental justice through critical readings, reflections, and group discussions and assignments. Furthermore, students explored the fundamental logical and organizational differences between the global, industrial food system and local, sustainable food systems through service learning activities and qualitative data collection at a campus farm and other urban agriculture sites. This presentation will review the organization and execution of the PBEL module, as well as the measured impacts on students' environmental and scientific literacy, attachment to place, and civic engagement. Some of the possibilities and limitations of this approach for disseminating geoethics, equity, and justice across the geosciences and the broader academic community will be discussed.

Session No. 232

T167. The Role of Geoethics, Equity, and Environmental/Ecological Justice Education in STEM: The Geosciences Story
Wednesday, 12 October 2022: 8:00 AM-12:00 PM

Mile High Ballroom 1D (Colorado Convention Center)

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