Place Based Education

Place Based Education is defined as an educational philosophy that immerses students in local heritage, cultures, landscapes, opportunities and experiences, and uses these as a base to study the core subjects of the school’s curriculum. PBE emphasizes learning through participation in service projects for the local school and/or community.¹

Place-based education represents a recent trend in the broad field of outdoor and environmental education. Place-based education is a relatively new term in the education literature. However the approach has developed from experiential education which has been promoted by progressive educators for more than 100 years. In the age of on-line learning and electronic media, the case for place-based education needs to be considered by policy makers, managers and educators for effective environment education.

The value of placed-based education has been recognized in the rural settings for its value in revitalizing rural communities and in its curriculum as it relates to outdoor/ environmental education in primary and secondary schools.
Placed Based Education is also acknowledged as an important educational method in areas where the ‘place’ is of ecological significance, for example the Royal National Park.

Place Based Education creates and strengthens ties between local social organizations and their involvement in the schools and community, which helps to improve quality of life and economic vitality of the school and community. Place Based Education uses community partners in a process of discovery and learning about their community and its resources. A great quote by Wallace Stegner fits the ideology and says “If you don’t know where you are, you don’t know who you are.”

Place Based education deals with essential issues such as support of the child’s environment, local accountability, relationship building, and learning that is rooted in local history. A student’s heritage is what helps define and give meaning to their lives.

Schools should work to provide services that meet the needs of the students, supporting the whole child includes meeting the needs of its students at school as well as the needs of the community. Some of these needs include

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education through experiments, hands on projects that solve real world problems, education on the local environment, tutoring, and counseling, access to medications, child care, dental care, medical care, transportation, and reading materials.  

Studies show that students involved in Place Based Education use higher levels thinking skills, use advanced critical thinking skills more often than students in the regular school setting, and are more responsible when dealing with environmental issues. Studies have also found that students in PBE schools tested higher in all core subjects.

A quote about the loss of value our children see in nature because of the society they are being raised in is from Richard Louv and the quote hits the nail on the head about the importance of keeping our kids in touch with the natural world.

“Part of our task, as a society, is to begin to think in terms of comparative risks, and the great benefits of a national nature-child reunion. Yes, there are risks outside our homes. But there are also risks in raising children under virtual house arrest: threats to their independent judgment and value of place, to their ability

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to feel awe and wonder, to their sense of stewardship for the Earth—and, most immediately, threats to their psychological and physical health.” – Richard Louv (2005)

Schools that implement Place Based Learning will see the following things happen. Participants in the Place Based Education will include organizations and individuals who represent the community.

As Place Based Education grows and develops community participation will spread, with individuals joining and new ideas emerging. Groups will come forward to mentor and teach the students as the program grows. Community partners will begin to reflect the diversity of the community.  

A major goal of place based learning is to help students strive towards becoming active learners, problem solvers and community leaders. Students will be asked to use their knowledge to develop skills that will improve the development of the school and community.

School administrators, teachers, community leaders, and parents are all important leaders that should collaborate effectively so that students are

mentored effectively which will lead to responsible students who actively try to create and implement programs that lead to higher standards of living.

Schools that are successful will encourage their teachers to remember each student is an individual with a unique heritage and ties to the local community. At successful schools everyone is on the same page and no one makes excuses. Collective efforts strive to improve children’s lives by including community involvement, boosting academic achievement, nurturing healthy lifestyles, cultivating pro-social skills and behavior, as well as promoting environmental stewardship.

There are critical strategies to have when implementing Placed Based Education; they include Learning that takes place on-site in the school yard, and in the local community and environment. Learning that focuses on local themes, systems, and content. Learning must be personally relevant to the learner. Learning experiences must contribute to the community’s vitality and environmental quality and supports the community’s role in fostering global environmental quality.

The learning is supported by strong and varied partnerships with local organizations, agencies, businesses, and government. Learning that is
interdisciplinary. The Learning experiences are tailored to the local audience and the learning is grounded in and supports the development of a love for one’s place. Local learning must serve as the foundation for understanding and participating appropriately in regional and global issues.

D.A. Grunewald describes Place Based Learning perfectly when he says “Place Based Learning attempts to use the most effective developments in teaching and learning to tackle critical issues of sustainability and community development in the actual context that young people are growing-up.

Place-based learning encourages teachers and students to use the school site, the local community, and special places nearby as resources, turning communities into classrooms.

It immerses students in local heritage, culture, landscapes, opportunities, and experiences as a foundation for the study of language, arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and other subjects.”
“Place-based pedagogies are needed so that the education of citizens might have some direct bearing on the well-being of the social and ecological places people actually inhabit.”

“A 'place-based' education approach draws its key messages from the local environment (cultural, physical and historical) and encourages knowledge sharing between learners and educators based on experience.”

Successful schools implementing Placed Based Education build relationships and cultivate the dreams of their students. They focus on the changes that need to be made, and then implement the changes.

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4 Placed Based Learning Philosophy  [http://www.placebasedlearning.co.uk/solution.asp](http://www.placebasedlearning.co.uk/solution.asp)
6 What is PBE Promise of Place  [http://www.promiseofplace.org/](http://www.promiseofplace.org/)
References

Placed Based Learning Philosophy

http://www.placebasedlearning.co.uk/solution.asp


What is PBE Promise of Place http://www.promiseofplace.org/

The foundations of Place Based Learning


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