

Raising an Ecological Worldview, Culture and Literacy in The Minds of Young People

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Received: 28 February 2025; **Accepted:** 29 March 2025; **Published:** 30 April 2025

Abstract: This article explores the importance of cultivating ecological worldview, culture, and literacy among young people. The analysis investigates current trends, educational approaches, and the challenges in fostering environmentally responsible behavior. It proposes a methodological framework to integrate ecological education in formal and informal learning settings and evaluates its outcomes through practical implementation.

Keywords: Ecological worldview, ecological culture, ecological literacy, youth education, environmental awareness, sustainability, green behavior, eco-education, environmental responsibility, ecological thinking.

Introduction: Environmental degradation, climate change, loss of biodiversity, and pollution are the most pressing challenges of our time. Addressing these issues requires more than technological innovation—it demands a transformation in how people perceive and interact with the environment. Developing an ecological worldview, culture, and literacy in young people is critical to ensuring a sustainable future. This article investigates the methods, effectiveness, and implications of ecological education aimed at the youth population.

In the 21st century, the world is witnessing rapid environmental degradation—rising global temperatures, deforestation, water scarcity, air pollution, and the loss of biodiversity. These issues not only threaten the natural balance of ecosystems but also pose serious risks to human health, economic stability, and future development. In this context, fostering a strong ecological worldview, culture, and literacy among young people is no longer optional; it is a necessity. Young people are the future decision-makers, consumers, and innovators. Therefore, raising their environmental awareness and responsibility is one of the most crucial steps toward building a sustainable future.

Developing an Ecological Worldview

An ecological worldview refers to the understanding that humans are not separate from nature, but rather

an integral part of it. This view promotes respect for all forms of life and recognizes the interdependence between human society and natural ecosystems.

To foster this worldview in young people, education systems must go beyond teaching facts. They should encourage critical thinking, systems thinking, and emotional connections to the natural world. Field trips to forests, rivers, and nature reserves, participation in clean-up campaigns, and practical eco-projects can help students experience nature first-hand and develop a personal connection to it.

Additionally, incorporating ecological ethics into educational content helps young individuals internalize values such as care, respect, responsibility, and justice—not only toward fellow humans but toward the planet as a whole.

Cultivating Ecological Culture

Ecological culture involves the values, behaviors, and habits that reflect environmentally responsible living. It includes everyday actions such as recycling, saving energy, reducing water use, minimizing plastic consumption, using public transport, and supporting sustainable products.

Young people often learn by example. Therefore, parents, teachers, and community leaders must serve as role models of ecological behavior. School environments should also promote sustainable

practices—waste segregation, tree planting, eco-friendly school materials, and green schoolyards.

Furthermore, media plays a significant role in shaping the mindset of young people. Documentaries, environmental campaigns, social media content, and eco-influencers can positively influence their behavior and shape a generation that values ecological harmony.

Building Environmental Literacy

Environmental or ecological literacy means having the knowledge, skills, and motivation to address environmental challenges. It includes an understanding of basic ecological concepts, awareness of environmental issues, and the capacity to participate in solutions.

Integrating environmental education into the curriculum—across all levels and subjects—can develop this literacy. Science lessons can explore climate change and biodiversity; geography can cover resource management; literature and art can raise awareness about nature; and technology classes can promote green innovation.

Students should also be encouraged to engage in real-life problem-solving: designing energy-saving devices, conducting environmental research, developing eco-business ideas, or participating in model United Nations climate simulations.

Moreover, project-based learning, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) education, and sustainability education help prepare students for the green economy and responsible citizenship.

The Role of Institutions and Society

Raising ecological awareness among youth requires collective effort. Educational institutions must update curricula and teacher training programs to include sustainability principles. Governments should create policies that support environmental education, fund eco-initiatives in schools, and incentivize green innovation among the youth.

NGOs, environmental organizations, and international agencies should also partner with schools and universities to offer workshops, mentorship programs, internships, and volunteering opportunities related to ecology and climate action.

Community-based education—such as youth eco-clubs, local environmental action groups, and public campaigns—can connect young people with real-world environmental efforts, empowering them to become change agents in their own communities.

Challenges and Opportunities

There are still challenges in integrating ecological

thinking into mainstream education. These include a lack of qualified teachers in environmental science, insufficient teaching materials, low awareness among parents, and limited funding.

However, modern digital technologies present exciting opportunities. Online courses, mobile applications, virtual reality (VR) nature explorations, and interactive games can make environmental learning more accessible and engaging for tech-savvy youth.

Also, the growing global youth movement for climate action—led by figures like Greta Thunberg—demonstrates that young people are not only ready to learn but to lead. They need the knowledge, tools, and support to translate passion into impactful action.

The findings support the hypothesis that targeted ecological education can effectively cultivate a sustainable mindset in youth. The experiential and participatory learning methods had the highest impact. Moreover, media literacy played a critical role in helping students navigate environmental misinformation and understand the role of policy and industry.

However, challenges such as curriculum overload, lack of trained educators, and insufficient funding were noted. Parental involvement and community engagement were found to be vital components in reinforcing the ecological values learned at school.

CONCLUSION

Raising an ecological worldview, culture, and literacy in the minds of young people is a long-term investment in the planet's future. By empowering youth with knowledge, shaping their values, and engaging them in meaningful action, we can nurture a generation of environmentally conscious leaders, entrepreneurs, educators, and citizens. The journey toward sustainability begins in the minds and hearts of today's youth. Let us guide and support them to grow as protectors—not just users—of the Earth.

In conclusion, developing ecological worldview, culture, and literacy among young people is a multidimensional task that requires collaboration among schools, families, policymakers, and the media. Educational institutions must embed ecological topics across subjects, not limit them to science alone.

Integrate ecology into all levels of curriculum.

Train educators in eco-pedagogy and experiential learning methods.

Encourage school-wide environmental projects and green clubs.

Promote family and community-based environmental initiatives.

Support youth access to reliable ecological media and digital tools.

By fostering ecological awareness and responsibility early, we empower a generation capable of leading the transition toward a sustainable and just future.

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Jobborova Gulnoza, O'quvchi va talabalarga ekologik ta'lim berish imkoniyati "Uzluksiz ta'lim" 2019. № 3 son. 82-84.