

# **BIOCULTURAL DIVERSITY ON SCHOOL GROUNDS: BENEFITS FOR NATURE AND HUMAN CONNECTEDNESS**

**Shari L. Wilson**

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and Project Central

[sharilea51@gmail.com](mailto:sharilea51@gmail.com)

We are navigating through difficult times with regard to wicked sustainability problems such as loss of nature due to war, industrial pollution, and development of habitats causing reduced biodiversity. With less connection to nature, a sense of place is not developed, and we experience higher levels of anxiety. A sense of place entails feelings of understanding and comfort with a specific place in the environment, usually developed over a period of time. As adults we often remember such a place from growing up: a place we used to play, visit, or go to when we needed to think or recover from challenges. Connectedness to place results in development of an ethic of care toward the environment (Christie and Higgins, 2012). If we don't care about the state of the environment and the loss of natural processes and ecosystem services, we are less likely to change our behavior to protect it.

Spending time in nature provides a means for discovering our cultural connection with nature and realizing its intrinsic value (Pretty et al., 2009). Traditional ecological knowledge places great emphasis on our co-existence with and respect for other species. For example, Native Americans have many stories that explain how the Earth was created through interaction with nature. In Ukraine, there are festivals and rituals from traditional society that celebrate nature, including the coming of spring and harvest time. We need to see ourselves as part of nature, not outside nature. We are one of many species sharing the planet's resources and need to take care of each other by providing reciprocal services in that nature provides ecosystem services such as food, filtration of water, cooling of the Earth through forests, and many others. Humans need to use these resources thoughtfully, keeping in mind the tenet of sustainability that says we take only what we need, leaving enough for future generations.

To accomplish this balance between modern society and the health of our planet, we need to develop a sense of empowerment and the development of skills necessary for civic engagement among our citizens. Our outlook should be that we are problem solvers, not victims (Smith, DuBois, and Krasny, 2016). This sustainability mindset goes beyond "stewardship" of the environment, where nature is at the mercy of humans not only as we may destroy it but also for management and protection (Taylor, 2017). In a post-humanist world, humans and nature are inseparable (Jackson, 2013).

To achieve this thinking of equality with, not superiority over, nature, some recalibration of our mindset is required. Change is difficult for even those most open to it, so perhaps the best place to start is with children and youth and the approach to environmental education in schools.

If activities tied to being more at one with nature take place on school grounds,

students can learn about science and to appreciate their own cultural values and those of others. School grounds are mini science field stations and provide opportunities to engage students in authentic, experiential, place-based learning. While culture and biodiversity are generally not taught together, biocultural diversity combines them in a “common world.” (Taylor and Giugni, 2012) Through a biocultural diversity mindset, students can rethink relationships with other species and how we need each other to co-exist.

How can we facilitate these relationships? A new curriculum developed by the author, Schoobio, combines science, technology, art, and communications tools and activities. Middle and high school students will exchange scientific data and cultural traditions with each other while envisioning and advocating for their own bioculturally diverse school ground that reflects the values toward nature of their school community. School grounds hold great potential for increasing biodiversity and connection to nature for students and communities. By including the study and exchange of cultural traditions with traditional curriculum topics, our students will have an enriched experience with nature and each other, benefiting the environment and the human spirit.

## **USE OF PRINT SOURCES IN PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT OF THE ELDERLY DURING QUARANTINE**

**Kovalenko Olena**

*Institute of Social Affairs and Public Health Pedagogical University of Krakow*  
[olenagk@ukr.net](mailto:olenagk@ukr.net)

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a serious test for all of humanity. Prolonged quarantine has significantly affected everyone's life and changed the information field for many people. Quarantine and self-isolation, as a consequence, have become a special test for the elderly. The negative information field in which they found themselves, causes a state of anxiety. These manifestations characterize the crisis of the elderly, and therefore they need help and support.

Providing psychological support means creating conditions and opportunities that will promote the development of a person capable of optimal existence in the current life circumstances. We consider psychological support as a process and as a result. As a process, it is the creation of conditions and opportunities that will promote the development of a person capable of accepting the situation in which he or she finds himself or herself and accepting himself or herself in this situation, as well as – to conscious and active work to overcome the problems that arise. A social situation of development, which corresponds to the age and individual person's characteristics and provides conditions for the tasks of his or her development is the result of psychological support [1].

An elderly person who receives psychological support is able, firstly, to analyze and evaluate life events and what happens to him or her; secondly, to organize one's own living space and time, to regulate one's emotions and experiences; thirdly, to establish and maintain the contacts he or she needs with other people.