

Resilience and Learning: A Conspectus for Environmental Education

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Environmental Education, Learning, and Social-ecological System Resilience

There has been an increasing interest in how environmental education contributes to sustainability dating from the 1977 UNESCO conference in Tbilisi to the current Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, which in 2009, reached mid term. There is also a growing interest and concern in the complexity, uncertainty and changing nature of social-ecological systems and how sustainability is understood. Learning and resilience figure dominantly in both these trends. This contribution provides a conceptual overview of environmental learning, resilience in ecology and resilience in human development. The manners in which these conceptual areas are beginning to coalesce are discussed and their intersection in environmental education is illustrated in the context of formal schooling, organisations and society. Key research questions for environmental education emerge about its critical role in enhancing adaptive capacity and contributing to the resilience of social-ecological systems.