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Title: Ecological literacy through critical/place-based pedagogy in the Environmental Studies/Science programs at a small liberal arts college

Few studies have critically examined pedagogical practices for ecological literacy at the tertiary level (Adomssent, Godemann, Michelsen, 2007). The purpose of this study is to critically examine how students and faculty in the Environmental Studies/Science programs at Trueblood College pursue ecological literacy through place-based pedagogy. Two overarching questions, with pertinent sub-questions, guided this study: 1) How is ecological literacy pursued in the Environmental Studies/Science programs at Trueblood College? 1a) What is the nature of faculty and students' "sense of place?" 1b) To what extent do students and faculty attend to the intersection of their own socioeconomic, racial, and colonial privilege and social and environmental justice? 2) In which specific pedagogical practices do faculty and students engage? 2a) What is the nature and prominence of critical pedagogy of place? 2b) In what ways do the pedagogical practices employed attend to both social and ecological aspects of environmental issues?

This critical educational ethnography drew on field notes, interviews, photographs, and document analysis to examine these questions (Carspecken, 1996). Pursuit of ecological literacy at Trueblood centered on three major activities: weaving places into the classroom, working with and through identities, and practice of common pedagogies. Tensions surfaced between local and global places, raising questions about the role of global places in place-based pedagogy. Students struggled to see the intersection between their own privilege and its impacts on the environment, suggesting a need for educators to encourage a critical examination of both individual and institutional environmental values and identity. These data suggest that place as a concept could be emphasized more explicitly, to address multiple dimensions of "sense of place" and critical pedagogy of place. The potential of fusing direct experiences in the field with powerful frames of analysis holds promise for critically engaging students with environmental, place-based issues.