

# Introducing an Ecological Restoration course into Douglas College's curriculum

by: Maria Fernanda Romano

## THE PROBLEM

Douglas College's curriculum lacks interactive and hands-on learning opportunities that could give students the needed experience to put their acquired knowledge into action and to gain first-hand exposure to what will once be the field they will be working in.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the benefits that can come from experiential learning?
- In which way can we achieve the implementation of an interactive course at Douglas College?
- How can an environmental restoration course help our students and our community?

## FINDINGS

Through research, I found that:

- Benefits from experiential learning could be anything from a better grasp of concepts, more creative opportunities, improved attitude towards learning, and more instances to reflect and learn from mistakes.
- To implement experiential learning we can start by offering more field trips, ensuring activities are challenging but manageable, allowing students to come up with creative solutions, and tying field trips and lectures together in the course.
- Environmental restoration can help students connect with the community by doing a service to it while still learning experiences that will be helpful once they go into the workforce. Additionally, this creates a sense of responsibility.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

- In the book, Kolb really focuses on showing the benefits of having experimental instances in higher education institutions which, according to him, are vital for the development of young learning minds. (Kolb, D., 2015)
- During this chapter, Allison emphasizes the impact that ecological restoration can have on the environment, which can go further than just physical changes, but also a change in awareness. (Allison, S., 2012)

## CONNECTION TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



This proposal allows the College to provide students with more quality education by giving them options to learn things in different, innovative ways which can give priceless experiences and also be more welcoming for students with different preferred learning styles.



Through this proposal, the College and its students could contribute to the upkeep and conservation of important natural resources like the Fraser River's estuary, riparian zone, and even water quality. With this we can pioneer on working alongside the community to maintain our environment.



In this proposal, we can also tackle climate action since we will not only promote awareness of taking care of our environment but also would be putting the knowledge that we have gained from other courses into our immediate surroundings to try and make a change for the better.

## CONNECTIONS TO DOUGLAS COLLEGE SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Through this proposal, the College allows students to take leading positions in environmental and social initiatives that also give them the chance to learn outside of the classroom. Additionally, the implementation of a course like this will be very progressive in what colleges all around the country offer as part of their environmental sciences curriculums which can make a huge impact on what experience we can acquire as students. Finally, by putting into action this proposal and acknowledging the occupied land we are on, we can respect and honor it by taking care of it.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Hands-on learning is a great tool that educational institutions should use more often. This method can help students get a better grasp of the theories that are taught during lectures and can also provide with great experiences that will certainly be useful in their futures.

Through the use of our experienced professors, lab staff, and students we could make use of the equipment that we have already on campus to experiment and come up with ideas of what we can do to improve and restore the environment around us, which can be easily achieved with help from College and community.

Ecological restoration is the best way to raise awareness about the problems we are facing in the world due to climate change and also to start making the change we constantly preach about. It brings ideas into action and can unite us as a community for the well-being of our environment.

## REFERENCES

- Kolb, David A. "Experiential Learning in Higher Education." Essay. In *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, 1-7. Pearson, 2015.
- Allison, Stuart K. "Ecological Restoration and Why It Matters." Essay. In *Ecological Restoration and Environmental Change: Renewing Damaged Ecosystems*, 122-37. London: Routledge, 2012.