ECUITY: Empowering Change Makers - Urban Biodiversity Initiative for Teachers and Youth

Place-Based Science Learning - Descriptive Transcript

***Describer**: This video contains audio descriptions for the blind and visually impaired.*

ECUITY, spelled E-C-U-I-T-Y, Empowering Changemakers: Urban Biodiversity Initiative for Teachers and Youth. A product of WestEd, the K-12 Alliance at WestEd, the UCLA Institute of the Environment and Sustainability, and LA Sanitation and Environment.

ECUITY Project: Place-Based Science Learning.

Travis Longcore, UCLA Institute of Environment and Sustainability. As he speaks, video plays showing the Los Angeles skyline, a bee in a California poppy, and a California mountain lion on a hillside.

Travis Longcore: California has a unique climate that's different from the surrounding area. We have a lot of species that are unique to us, and adaptations to our particular climate, and that is really the focus here.

***Describer**: Edith De Guzman, UC Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation. As she speaks, video shows teachers in classrooms, outdoor spaces, and working together at a conference.*

Edith De Guzman: We will provide teachers with practical tools that will engage students in really compelling and interactive ways where the students will feel supported in exploring the topics, but also more importantly for me, they'll feel empowered to actually provide some solutions and be part of the solutions to this increasingly scary problem of we're living on a hotter planet and we don't really know what's on the other side yet.

***Describer**: Sixth grade student Felix and seventh grade student Raelyn speak. As they speak, video plays showing printed materials and teachers working on computer-based ecology projects.*

Felix: We're in Woodland Hills Academy Humanities Magnet, which is in Los Angeles. So we worked on something called urban heat islands, and how urban heat islands like collected a lot of heat, compared to rural areas.

Raelyn: We were able to see where trees could go in order to help reduce our heat. And when living in an urban heat island, you wouldn't find as much biodiversity. You'd probably

just find like an oak tree every once in a while, maybe like a bush. I very much was able to think like a scientist. I was able to theorize. I was able to learn and observe.

Felix: I saw myself as a scientist. I can see myself becoming a scientist and helping people wanting to become a scientist also.

***Describer**: Eighth grade students, Rodrigo, Jazzlyn, April, and Aaron speak*.

Rodrigo: We studied on what we can do to get more biodiversity. So we made planters, and we ended up making food troughs and also nests so birds, native birds, could come.

Jazzlyn: We have studied and found that when there was more increased biodiversity, the mental health of people were healthier.

April: We were scientists because we were conducting research, developing a design to be implemented in the school's garden, and finalizing that.

Aaron: I definitely felt like a scientist 'cause I was able to actually like go to our other areas in the school and look at all the plans for biodiversity and study it, instead of just looking at a textbook.

***Describer**: Brian Learn, Los Angeles Unified School District, speaks from his classroom*.

Brian Learn: The ECUITY Project, the purpose of the project is to engage more students in environmental awareness and applying knowledge on biodiversity and environmental concepts into their communities.

***Describer**: Graham Montgomery, UCLA ecology and evolutionary biology, speaking outdoors*.

Graham Montgomery: Science is fun, it's fun to be a scientist. We get to go out and, as a biologist, I get to go out and look at plants and animals and figure out why they are in certain places but not others. It's just fun. Everybody has a story.

***Describer**: Sixth grade student Makai, speaking from a garden*.

Makai: It made me really see the school in a different way, like for the better. And I really saw myself liking ants more.

***Describer**: Eighth grade student Aaron. As he speaks, photos show a class of students on a nature walk*.

Aaron: For every other science class, it's always just been in the classroom. Where with this one, we've actually gone outside and like researched up close. I think it's helped people like realize how important biodiversity is.

***Describer**: Judy Kerber, Los Angeles Unified School District, speaking from in front of a school.*

Judy Kerber: Being outside and observing nature, there is this immediate connection that they can't deny, and that being outside makes just them feel better and they crave to be outside. And then taking a little bit of a more slow and deeper consideration of why that is, I think is really wonderful through this curriculum.

***Describer**: Karen De Leon, Los Angeles Unified School District, speaking outdoors.*

Karen De Leon: I definitely have learned more about how science can be taught. That accessibility piece is super important and the relevance, like you have to have both of those things kind of together for these kids to really take it and run with it and have that buy-in.

***Describer**: Brian Learn.*

Brian Learn: When they leave school, the learning never ends. They're inspired to investigate things happening in their home, or in their community, and bring that sense of curiosity and constant desire for discovery into their adult life.

***Describer**: Travis Longcore. As he speaks, photos shows students planting flowers and working together outdoors.*

Travis Longcore: All students have access to this approach lets them achieve to their potential and be able to have exposure to doing science, maybe perhaps seeing themselves as a scientist. And so it is the great leveler in that sense for people and communities who have been systematically disinvested in.

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A production of Empowering Changemakers: Urban Biodiversity Initiative for Teachers and Youth. Produced by Jill Grace, directed by Chris Olivas, coordination by Dianna Cazarez, features Travis Longcore, Edith De Guzman, Brian Learn, Graham Montgomery, Judy Kerber, Karen De Leon, and students Felix, Raelyn, Rodrigo, Jazzlyn, April, Aaron, and Makai.