



RESEARCH PRESENTATION

Can environmental education build personal leadership, empowerment, environmental citizenship, and resilience amongst youth?

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Abstract

Young people are often prime targets for environmental education (EE) programs as they are in the transition phase of becoming adults. But are EE programs effective in equipping them with the skills to become future ethical decision makers? More often than not, EE programs are focused on delivering what program developers think participants should know, rather than what participants can do, perpetuating a knowledge-action gap. To bridge this gap, the development of personal capabilities, including leadership, empowerment, environmental citizenship and resilience is needed within EE programs.

This study examined two programs, the knowledge-based Climate Change School Tours (CCST), and the project-based Kids Teaching Kids (KTK), to explore whether participating in either of these programs had an impact on participants' perception of the four personal capabilities. Using a mixed-methods approach, the quantitative results revealed no significant changes before and after participation for both programs. However, the qualitative data showed some indication that participants in KTK felt some development in their personal leadership, empowerment, and resilience, and was also inspired by their peers to change their own behaviours. Overall, project-based programs had more potential in developing participants' personal capabilities than knowledge-based programs. In light of these findings, developers should take into consideration the integration of certain components, such as project autonomy and mediation support, into their programs to enhance and nurture young people's personal capabilities in their journey to becoming future changemakers.

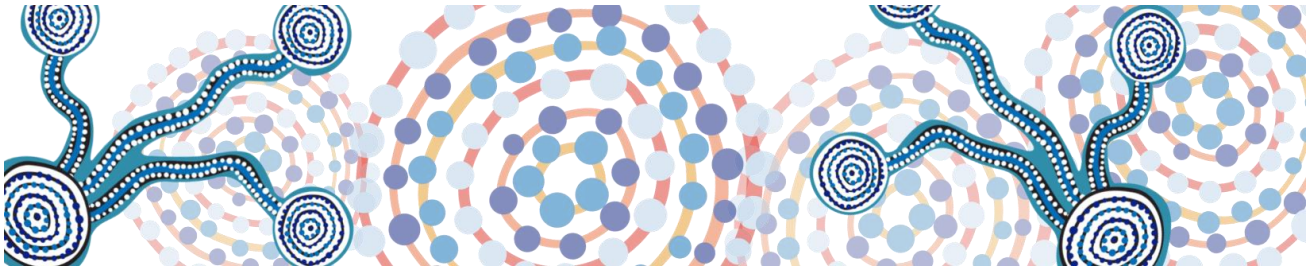
Acknowledgement

Pauna Truong acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet and pays respects to their Elders past and present.

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Speaker Profile

Pauna has always been interested in learning more about what can be done for young people to encourage positive behaviours. Her original background was in Marketing and Communications,



with her honours project focusing on whether children's food choices were influenced by pricing. After spending time abroad, Pauna came back to Australia with an interest in understanding more about pro-environmental behavioural changes. She is currently completing her PhD at Murdoch University and would like to work with and share knowledge with other environmental educators to help nurture young people in their journey to become future ethical leaders, now.

Website links

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