ABSTRACT

TITLE:	Eco-Education: Nature as a Window Into the World for K- 12
AUTHOR(S):	Young, Emily
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ABSTRACT: This research explores the causes and effects of a generation of children who are not able to and do not want to experience the wonders of nature. I propose that the roots of this problem are in 1) the education system (specifically the origins of the education model, the approach to education, and the competitive character school instills), 2) the cultural view of the outside world as impartial and disenchanted, and 3) the loss of direct interaction with one another and nature. To understand strategies of introducing an eco-pedagogy, I worked for four months at Durango Nature Studies, a non-profit with a focus on hands-on learning, nature and environmental education. I investigated Environmental-based programs, the advantages of outdoor education, the benefits of unstructured time and play, and school models that build on communal efforts rather than a competitive environment. Based on my findings, I designed a curriculum based on a theoretical environmental-experiential education program. The curriculum encourages students to marvel over mystery, accept that not everything has a quantifiable answer, find beauty in the smallest of places and have time to do what is missing from so many of their lives, play.