



INNOVATIVE LEARNING TOOLKIT

PROJECT TITLE: The Institute for Earth Education

Tags; school, drama, education

Overview:

The Institute for Earth Education run hands-on learning experiences for children aged 10-14. An Earth Education programme is a carefully crafted series of participatory learning experiences that focus on developing a more harmonious and joyous relationship with the earth. The programmes immerse participants in natural settings in their environment, and use fantasy, role playing and a variety of theatrical techniques and props to engage and create intrigue.

The institute aims to support people in understanding the major ecological systems and communities of the planet, developing deep and long lasting emotional attachments to the earth and its life, and reducing their impact on the earth.

Key elements of the programmes include:

Carried out in a natural setting

Very hands on and creative, use of participatory theatre, games, imagination-based activities for example (see below)

Supports UK school curriculum

Use of props and other dramatic devices

Some of the programmes include:

Earthkeepers - has multiple stages focussing on things such as food chains, water cycles, species interrelationships etc. Participants get rewarded with keys as they complete each stage of the programme. These keys open real locks on wooden boxes containing the secret meanings of 'E.M'. E.M. is "a mysterious character who is never seen, and is the keeper of the keys. E.M. is everyone's dream of the wizard of the woods who loves to share the marvels and mysteries of the natural world with others in special ways."

Sunship Earth - a 5-day programme of structured activities around a number of ecological concepts such as energy flow, life cycles, diversity and food chains etc. It involves student passports and log books, disguise-removing techniques, "magic spots", "welcome aboard" and "journey home" ceremonies.

Sunship III - aimed at 13-14 year olds the programme uses all kinds of dramatic devices to hold participants' attention. "The youngsters visit the reconstructed ruins of a people who lived long ago and hear a story of their search for interrelationships that tie all life together. The following morning they decipher hieroglyphics to find out more about these connections and recreate the interactions that keep life going. Some old crates are found and opened by the participants. Once unpacked, they discover a number of items from a long forgotten



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museum exhibit. They then reconstruct the exhibit, adding a present day section, to learn about the incredible changes one place can go through over time."

Why is it relevant to PTS?

Is focussed on changing people's behaviour in relation to the environment
Activities are carried out in natural settings, while immersed in the environment
Use of drama, theatre, imagination-based games
Has a strong educational focus

The Institute for Earth Education also produces model programmes run by centres throughout the world as a franchise. They provide copies of the necessary books and all the learning materials and activities.

Ideas and tips for PTS:

Work with appropriate partners (current and potential) on using the PTS streams and environs for similar educational experiences
Develop activities and exercises based on imagination-based creatures, treasures and stories
Consider using the Institute for Earth Education model programmes

Contact:

[The Institute for Earth Education](#)