

1) If today is a typical day on planet earth, we will lose 300 square miles of rainforest. Human population will increase by 230,000 and we'll add 15 million tones of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Tonight the earth will be a little hotter, its waters more acidic and life more vulnerable.

2) This is not the work of ignorant people. They're well 'educated'. But their education deemphasized values, put answers over questions, and efficiency over consciousness. Some believe environmental problems will be solved by technology. But it is not a crisis of technology, it's a crisis within the minds of those who develop and use the technology.

3) This desire to find more efficient ways to 'manage the earth' is a drive for total human domination. What we should really learn is to manage ourselves; to reshape our desires to fit a finite planet instead of trying to reshape the planet to fit our infinite wants. Without this perspective, education can equip young people to be more effective vandals of the earth.

4) It's not about flooding young people's minds with information - they don't need to know how to memorize facts, they have almost anything at their fingertips. They need to know how to find it, understand it, and use it. But every year, there are less people with firsthand experience of the land. So where should they be learning those skills?

5) The current education system has broken the world into pieces: subjects and disciplines. After years of 'education' students don't have a broad, integrated sense of the unity of things. If economists really understood ecology, we'd have financial systems that include the costs of pollution and resource depletion in the price of products. Because of this incomplete education, we have fooled ourselves into thinking that we're richer than we are.

6) So we need to bring emotion back into learning. I say this because it's clear that personal motives matter, and different motives lead to different uses of information and therefore different end results. We are preparing our future leaders and they need to have a perspective of what implications their decisions will have.

7) Education can be reshaped without introducing a new curriculum. Environmental education reaches all types of learning. Students figure out that they're part of the natural world and have a responsibility to it. We will fail in our duties to them if they are not prepared to deal with the consequences of what's being left behind.

8) With knowledge carries the responsibility to see that it is well used. We can't say we really know something until we understand its effects on real people and communities. So what we need are educators who are role models of integrity and institutions that demonstrate these ideals in their operations. The way learning occurs is as important as the content of the lessons.

9) There's a danger for education to damage children's natural sense of wonder and experience. Our minds work best when we use them in a certain way, the way that children naturally ask a lot of questions and want get involved. By reducing learning to routines and memorization, abstracting information from real experiences, and restricting to books and tests, we're losing a lot of these curious minds.

10) It is possible to get through schooling learning very little and the strategies they use are limiting. Enjoyable experiences are the easiest to remember and learning works best when it is unforced. We can't protect what we don't love and we can't love what we don't understand.

11) Of course schools can't change this way of thinking alone. It's only part of a larger process but no other institution is better placed to reverse the decline. I'm not saying abolish formal education, I'm proposing that we transform it. This generation will have to do what we have been unable or unwilling to do. And not just for environmental issues, the social and economic crises are related.

12) The skills and attitudes that industrialized the earth are not the same as those needed to heal it: we need durable economies and balanced communities. But we're still putting higher value on being

like machines. In the 70's the top skills required by employers were reading, writing, and arithmetic. Now, there's demand for interpersonal skills, problem-solving, innovation, creativity, and independent thinking. We need schools that are developing these skills.

13) Knowledge isn't something delivered from teacher to student but it emerges from the students' own curiosity-fueled exploration. Teachers provide prompts, not answers, and then they step aside so students can teach themselves and one another. They are creating ways for children to discover.

14) A balanced education incorporates ecological principals and requires breaking free of discipline-centric curriculum and even the confinements of the classroom. What will people in the future need? Knowledge, skills and confidence to deal with situations and create solutions. How will they get that? Through practical applications of hands-on learning and being involved in critical thinking and group problem-solving.

15) Environmental Education is becoming well established around the world. There's a transition to wind and solar energy; Sustainable agriculture is gaining ground; Green building is flourishing. The most exciting career options that I know add the word environmental to fields: design, business, law. Small organizations focusing on developing these skills now work worldwide. And one has come to Bermuda.

16) It is being implemented here is through a UN supported programme through the Foundation for Environmental Education and is called Eco-Schools. It is effectively transforming education in 56 other countries, with 11 million students participating. Greenrock has been accepted to represent Bermuda on this global scale and is open to all from preschool to college.

17) The way it works is an overall comprehensive programme with a clearly laid out process. Students form an eco-club and meet regularly. They decide on one pathway at a time – waste, energy, school grounds, water etc – and conduct an audit or review to understand their baseline starting point. The audit will then inform an action plan that will then be monitored and evaluated to see if the actions are working.

18) These concepts are already in the local curriculum, and schools must document how they are reflected in various lessons and activities. Then the school will inform and involve the wider community through an event or a school fair. Eventually they create an eco-code (like a mission statement) to share their commitment. It can be in the form of a song or a mural. And then, they earn the international accreditation and recognition in the form of a Green Flag.

19) To empower our young to tackle the challenges ahead, a shift in their education is vital. The Eco-School model doesn't take away from any current strategies in schools, it enhances the content and teaching methods, while engaging the students in a positive transformation of their physical, social and mental learning environments. It also of course provides schools with financial savings and improved aesthetics.

20) Until now, Bermuda's schools did not have a recognized, integrated environmental education programme that promotes long-term, whole-school action for sustainability. This approach combines learning and action which embeds students in their immediate environment. The desire to take on responsibility for their community, economic future, and the environment is instilled in them, and they're provided with the tools to make the appropriate changes. They're involved in the challenges and successes. This will support young Bermudians to see more clearly into our larger living system and generate sustainable solutions to improve our quality of life. Ultimately, Eco-School participants will be equipped with the awareness and tools to be the leaders of a sustainable Bermuda.