



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute

1996 Volume II: Environmental and Occupational Health: What We Know; How We Know; What We Can Do

The Earth and Me: Forever Friends (A Study On The Ecological System)

Guide for Curriculum Unit 96.02.02

by Kathleen Ware

In this unit we will study the ecosystem and how plants and animals have adapted to the conditions of their environment. We will see that the ecosystem is a complex community where trees, plants and animals are dependent upon each other for survival. By studying several types of environmental concerns affecting these ecosystems, the children will be led to understand the fragility of the ecosystem. Disturbances that change these habitats can have negative effects on both man and animals.

This study will include a look at several features of the ecosystem. This will include a study of 1) land forms, 2) soil, 3) the Hydrologic Cycle, 4) Vegetation and 5) Climate. Children will learn how all these features are dependent on each other for the survival of the ecosystem. The negative effects of land pollution by solid waste and chemicals, water pollution through the dumping of trash and hazardous materials, and the effects of acid rain, a combination of air pollutants and water vapor, will be explored. The children will learn some of the current solutions to these problems and will be asked to create some of their own solutions. By posing a series of “theoretical” questions, the children can be led to understand that the answers to environmental questions are not always so easy to settle.

Finally, the children will be led to see the small part which they can play in solving Earth’s environmental problems and how they can implement some changes in their lives to lessen the negative effect of pollution on planet Earth.

(Recommended for Life, Physical, Earth Science, grades K-3)

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