

Cultivating Ecological Literacy in Early Childhood through Storyline Pedagogy: The "Our Forest" Project for Sustainable Development

Iliopoulou

University of the Aegean, Mytilene, Greece

Abstract

This study presents an innovative environmental education intervention entitled "I Learn About the Forest through the Storyline," designed for kindergarten children aged four point five to six point five years. Spanning a four-month duration, the program aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by fostering a deep understanding of the forest as a vital, living component of nature. The primary objectives include identifying flora species, recognizing the tree as a living entity, and comprehending the human factor as a decisive element in environmental equilibrium. Furthermore, the project introduces young learners to the dualities of "enemy and friend" in nature, the importance of recycling, and the urgency of forest conservation to inspire behavioral change.

The methodology is rooted in the Storyline approach, a pedagogical strategy for active learning and stakeholder awareness. Students collaboratively constructed a story involving forest ecosystems, animal habitats, and human characters. A central "crucial event" regarding forest threats served as a catalyst for collective problem-solving and public participation within the classroom setting. The process culminated in a community celebration and a comprehensive reflective evaluation of the learning outcomes.

Results indicate that the Storyline implementation significantly empowered participants, facilitating the clarification of complex ecological concepts and the acquisition of scientifically grounded knowledge. Findings suggest that age-appropriate, creative techniques are highly effective in shaping environmentally responsible citizens. The reflective process fostered critical thinking and enhanced sustainability awareness among students. In conclusion, the Storyline framework provides an effective guidance system for teachers to engage young children with sensitive environmental issues, proving that early childhood is a critical stage for developing lasting environmental stewardship.

Keywords

Environmental education, ecological literacy, youth engagement, Storyline methodology, forest conservation.