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AGENCY ROMANIA  
DE ASIGURARE A  
CALITĂȚII ÎN  
ÎNVĂȚĂMÂNTUL SUPERIOR

# A must in a nowadays education: Environmental issue

**Mihaela Răileanu**

**Romanian Agency of Quality Assurance in Higher  
Education**

# History of a phrase which describes a changing climate

The term that describes climate in transition has its own history:

- *Climatic change/climate change*;
- *Global warming*;
- *Global change/global climate change*;
- James Lovelock: *global heating* (human implication).

# The planet is getting warmer (0,7 °C over the last century).

## Some effects of this fact:

- sea level rise;
- melting glaciers;
- increased risk of flood for coastal places;
- changes to plant and animal life;
- more frequent, persistent and intense El Niño events;
- more powerful hurricanes.

## HISTORY of Environmental Education (EE):

- **Jean Jacques Rousseau**: *Emile: or, On Education*;
- **Louis Aggasiz** encouraged students to study nature;
- **1911: Anna Botsford**: *Handbook for Nature Study* (Cornell University);
- 60's – 70's: modern Environmental Education;
- (**1969-James A. Swan**: the first article about this new movement);
- **22nd April 1970**: the first Earth Day;
- **1970** – Richard Nixon passed the National Environmental Education Act (to incorporate EE into schools);
- **1972** – UN Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm): EE gained recognition.

## UNESCO and UNEP created 3 major declarations:

1. **1972 - *Stockholm Declaration***: 26 principles to inspire and guide people of the world in the preservation and enhancement of the human environment.
2. **1975 - *Belgrade Charter***: International Workshop on Environmental Education.
3. **1978 - *The Tbilisi Declaration***: new goals, objectives, characteristics and guiding principles of Environmental Education.

## Definitions of Environmental Education:

- **UNEP/UNESCO (1992):** „a permanent process in which individuals gain awareness of their environment and acquire the knowledge, values, skills, experiences and determination which will enable them to act individually and collectively to solve present and future environmental problems...as well as to meet their need without compromising those of future generations”.
  - EE refers to efforts in teaching environmental issues and how individuals and businesses can manage or change their lifestyles and ecosystems to live sustainably.
  - EE refers to organized efforts to educate our global societies about how natural environments function and, particularly, how humans can manage their behaviour and ecosystems, in order to live sustainably.
  - EE refers to efforts to educate the public and other audiences (print materials, websites, media campaigns).

## According to Tbilisi Declaration:

**The goal of Environmental Education:** to promote formation of abilities and attitudes necessary for understanding the relations among persons, culture and environment, in order to develop conscious and responsible activity for a better quality of environment.

## Timeline of Environmental Education:

- **mid 1970's**: EE is recognized as a distinct field of study;
- **late 1980's**: EE focus on learner experience;
- **late 1990 – early 2000's**: focus shifted to how to teach Environmental Education;
- **1997**: UNESCO hosted a conference on adult education.

Environmental Education was one of the 33 workshops present in the program.



## Global dimension

- ✓ The guiding principle of most EE programmes:  
**„Thinking globally and acting locally”**
- ✓ A greater awareness of global environmental problems through networking, advocacy and lobbying at every level;
- ✓ Environmental Education for one region must include Environmental Education elsewhere;
- ✓ Educational tools must include specific cultural, political and environmental contexts;
- ✓ EE creates a link between the environment and social/economic/political and cultural aspects of people's lives.

- EE uses participatory methods, based on the understanding that learning is a far more complex, extensive and important process than a simple transmission of information.
- EE uses a variety of critical and creative practices, strategies and tools in the praxis of learning.

## Characteristics of Environmental Education:

- a social movement learning;
- a central component to antiglobalization actions around the world;
- it brings together students, the elderly, artists, educators, activists and union members, in order to discuss strategies, and explore troubling environmental issues;
- it links education and activism. It creates a symbiotic educational opportunity for both practitioners and learners.

## Environmental Education must focus on:

- ✓ awareness and sensitivity about the environment and environmental challenges;
- ✓ knowledge and understanding about the environment and environmental challenges:
- ✓ concern for the environment and help to maintain environmental quality;
- ✓ skills to mitigate the environmental problems.

## **Joy A. Palmer:** characteristics of a dominant quantitative paradigm in EE research:

- it presents results in numerical and in statistic form;
- it derives from the natural and physical sciences and reflects the tradition of scientific inquiry;
- it takes a logical positivist view;
- it takes the position that truth consists of observable and objective facts and not of internal conditions, such as personal dispositions or values;
- it seeks to establish patterns of relationships between causes of social phenomena;
- procedures were established for generating questions and designs before the study begins;
- researcher tends to rely upon instruments as an intermediary device for data collection purposes;
- the estimates are obtained using known analysis procedures.

## Characteristics of the environmental learning:

1. learning should be conceived as a process;
2. the process is continual, based on experience;
3. learning results from resolving conflicts between opposing modes of adapting to the world;
4. the learning process involves holistic adaptation to the world;
5. it must involve interactions between the learner and the environment;
6. Learning occurs when the student is creating knowledge.

- Environmental Education – became an increasingly mainstream educational practice, but in the same time it has become the subject of heightened analysis and tension.
- **Romanian educational system** – characterized by the lack of any organized preoccupation for environmental problems.
- Lack of Romanian books and articles concerning environmental problems.
- It's a problem of choosing between a healthy environment and a degraded environment because of human actions, between an educated and informed public and an ignorant public concerning environmental problems.

## Conclusions:

- During time, EE receives many meanings:
  - the nature study;
  - outdoor study;
  - nature preservation;
  - education for environment;
  - education about environment;
  - education in the environment.



## The benefits of introduction Environmental Education in schools:

- It's attractive for students , concerning actual, critical and relevant aspects;
- It permits an interdisciplinary approach (biology, chemistry, geography);
- It stimulates the team work;
- It contributes to the development of creativity and thinking.

## Participatory methods imply:

- A knowledge of environmental problems and their causes;
- The skills to engage in social activism to combat /prevent these problems;
- The attitude of respect and connection to the natural world;
- A desire to change current practices to protect the Earth.

- Environmental Education takes place in a nonformal education setting.
- Environmental problems are a reality and cannot be ignored (global warming, pollution, habitat devastation, overpopulation, diminishing resources).
- Humanity must think about alternative possibilities.
- Our world is changing, we must change too = the changing of our educational system.



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*Thank you for your attention!*

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