

Developing Primary School Students Towards Naturalism: A Comparative Study of Nature Education in Sweden, the United Kingdom and Japan

Chenyang Yin

University of Edinburgh

ABSTRACT

This article investigates the development of naturalist competencies among primary school students through a comparative study of nature education practices in Sweden, the United Kingdom, and Japan. Employing policy transfer theory, the research highlights how cultural, environmental, and educational contexts shape the effectiveness of nature education initiatives. In Sweden, a robust outdoor education framework fosters deep nature connections and environmental stewardship, integrating natural experiences into everyday learning. Conversely, the UK faces urbanization challenges that necessitate innovative strategies, including technology-enhanced learning and community engagement, to provide meaningful nature experiences for students in urban settings. Japan presents a unique blend of traditional ecological wisdom and contemporary educational practices, emphasizing experiential learning that cultivates a strong sense of place and respect for nature. The findings reveal that successful nature education across these countries shares critical elements such as contextual adaptation, stakeholder collaboration, and a focus on experiential learning. These components are essential for nurturing a profound connection to nature and instilling responsible environmental behaviors in students. This study emphasizes the importance of understanding local contexts in shaping effective nature education policies and illustrates the potential for cross-national policy learning to enhance educational practices. Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to the cultivation of environmentally conscious individuals capable of addressing the pressing ecological challenges of the future.

Keywords: Cultural context; Environmental stewardship; Experiential learning; Nature connection; Policy transfer