

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research
The Swiss Institute for Dryland Environmental and Energy Research
Department of Man in the Desert



BTMID WEEKLY SEMINAR

The influence of Place Based Education in the Outdoor Environment of Hebron Stream on the Development of Sense of Place and Nature Attachment among Elementary School Pupils in the Negev's Bedouin Community

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Abstract:

The polluted Hebron Stream has become an environmental hazard to the local population. A restoration program was established for the area, which included the rehabilitation of Hebron stream, the establishment of waste treatment systems in the nearby Bedouin community, and an environmental education program for the local population. Within this context, the study presented here examines the influence of place-based education on the sense of place and the nature attachment of Bedouin elementary school students in the Hebron Stream area. The study population is made up of Bedouin students in grades 5-6, who are familiar with the area of Hebron Stream because it is near the settlements in which they live. The study was conducted from within the qualitative research paradigm, employing personal interviews, observations, open-ended questionnaires, and drawings. This data collection approach helped to obtain a more comprehensive and in-depth picture of a variety of student perceptions following their learning process. The intervention program employed both indoor and outdoor learning. The latter occurred both at Hebron Stream and at other streams, in order to expose participants to a healthy ecological system and enhance their connectedness to nature as a critical component within their sense of place.

We found that exposure to an unsafe and polluted environment negatively impacted the way these children related to their natural surroundings, preventing them from fully expressing an attachment to nature in their proximal environment. However, our study showed that after the intervention, the Hebron Stream became a more meaningful component of the students' sense of place. The students' discourse demonstrated an increase in their awareness of the stream's importance as a natural resource, of the need for cleanliness in their village, and of the presence of trash bins in their environment. Our results also support the idea that sense of place is influenced, at least in part, by the economic and political factors that affect a place's physical condition.

Date & Location:

Tuesday, January 2, 2018, 13:00-14:00
Department of Man in the Desert Seminar Room

