

Abstract

The following study was carried out in order to determine the perception of the importance of the environment in younger generations. The study included interviewing students of different ages and genders at the Roy C. Buley Center in Muncie, Indiana. These students ranged in grades from Kindergarten to 5th and were interviewed in groups of no more than 4 with the same questions. Each response given by a student was ranked on a scale from 1 to 3. One meaning that the statement showed that the student did not believe that the environment was beneficial to us humans, two meaning that the statement showed knowledge of the environment being beneficial, but showed no indication the student knew why, and three meaning that the statement proved that the student knew why the environment was beneficial. It was hypothesized that the majority of the students would be able to recognize that the environment was important, but would not be able to determine why, meaning that the majority of the statements would rank 2 on the scale. This hypothesis was supported for fourth and fifth graders that were interviewed, as well as second and third grade boys, but did not produce significant enough results for the other three groups. From these results, it was determined that students at the Roy C. Buley Center grades 4-5 did know that the environment was important to protect but were not able to identify why. From this, we can conclude that the modern perception of these interviewed students does not include the knowledge of exactly how the environment benefits human beings. The lack of this knowledge may prevent these future generations from making positive impacts on the environment and is, therefore, something that should be addressed.

Honors College
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306