**Abstract:** My dissertation in curriculum and instruction explores educators’ experiences teaching with Healing Earth, a curriculum for integral ecology developed by the International Jesuit Ecology Project (IJEP) in connection with Loyola Chicago’s School of Sustainability. The conceptual framework of integral ecology is based on Pope Francis’s encyclical Laudato Si’: On Care For Our Common Home. The integral ecology framework provides an expansive view of ecology based on an understanding of interconnectedness, emphasizing humans’ relationship with our world. In this approach, ecology is inseparable from other scientific disciplines and from fields such as politics, philosophy, and religion, and is integral to the Jesuit pursuit of social justice. I have completed a pilot survey as my first phase of data collection. I will follow up with in-depth interviews with some of these educators for the next and final phase of data collection. This poster presents an overview of Healing Earth and the integral ecology framework, my research methods, and my initial findings.

**Introduction:**

Healing Earth is a free open-access curriculum for integral ecology accessible at [https://healingearth.iiep.net/](https://healingearth.iiep.net/).

As a “living text,” HE is continually updated to remain current. Each unit addresses a major aspect of our global ecological crisis:

1. Declining biodiversity
2. Natural resource depletion
3. Shift to renewable energy
4. Water quality and availability
5. Food quality and availability
6. Global climate change

**Healing Earth** presents science content in connection with human contexts and the perspectives of diverse faith traditions, ethical foundations and moral principles.

**Healing Earth’s Ethical Framework for Integral Ecology:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moral Principles</th>
<th>Moral Goals</th>
<th>Moral Virtues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- *Care for creation*
- *Human dignity and rights*
- *Common good*
- *Universal destination of goods*
- *Professionals*

**Intrinsic Value, Instrumental Value, Environmental Sustainability** (BEPP 2015. p. 105-106)

**Ethical Foundations:**

- God calls us to act
- All creation is sacred
- All is connected

“*The most basic issue of our time is human–Earth relations... To recover a situation where humans would be present to the Earth in a mutually enhancing manner, I believe we must return to a sense of intimacy with the Earth... The Great Work before us is to move modern industrial civilization from its present devastating influence on the Earth to a more benign mode of presence.*”

(Berry, 2011, p. 396-399)

**Research Methods:**

**Research Questions**

- In what ways do secondary- and tertiary-level educators use Healing Earth curriculum resources? How do these educators describe their experiences teaching with Healing Earth?
- How have these educators incorporated the principles of integral ecology in their teaching, including the understanding that all life and systems on Earth are interconnected; belief in the intrinsic value of nature; and integrating spirituality, ethics, humanities, politics, and social sciences, into ecological understandings?
- What opportunities and topics barriers have these educators encountered when teaching with an integral ecology framework?
- In these educators’ accounts, how do students respond to the Healing Earth curriculum? What questions do students raise? What actions are students most interested in pursuing?
- What lessons have these educators drawn about the possibilities of an integral ecology framework for education? What ideas and vision do they share for education moving forward?

**Participants**

I contacted all educators that I could identify who had taught with Healing Earth in any way. Of the 14 educators I contacted, 12 responded to the survey, and 10 expressed interest in participating in interviews. All participants teach in secondary- and tertiary-level Catholic educational institutions representing four countries.

**Research Design**

Qualitative Multiple–Case Study with Sequential Design

**Pilot Survey**

- Online (Qualtrics) questionnaire sent to all potential participants: 12 responses.
- Voluntary, anonymous (IRB approval)
- Questions about participants’ contexts, experience teaching with Healing Earth, and other ecology-related teaching experiences.
- Used surveys to recruit participants for upcoming interviews.

**Interviews**

- 10 potential participants based on survey responses.
- 45–60 minutes per interview, conducted via Zoom.
- In-depth (semi-structured) interviews: guiding questions prepared, but questions will vary with flow of each interview.
- Phenomenological (focus on experiences, interpretations)
- Optional open-ended follow-up survey will allow participants to correct, clarify, or add to anything they said during interviews.

**Findings:**

- Participants have used Healing Earth in a variety of ways ranging from “the main source of curriculum” to only “as a source of ideas or inspiration” and as an information source for student projects.
- The units that participants most frequently reported having used were the Introduction, Biodiversity, Natural Resources, and Global Climate Change. The most frequently used components were Case Studies, Science, Ethics, and Spirituality.
- Six participants (50%) reported that Healing Earth meets their needs “extremely well,” five participants (~42%) reported that Healing Earth meets their needs “moderately well,” and one participant (~8%) reported that Healing Earth meets their needs “slightly well.” No one answered “not well at all.”
- Comments included appreciation for Healing Earth’s connecting science to spirituality; students’ engagement with the content; opportunities to network with likeminded educators throughout the world; and the ethical framework.
- Participants expressed a wish for assessment materials to be included, and for more ongoing professional development opportunities. Participants also noted challenges in adapting Healing Earth’s content to various academic levels.
- Every participant reported incorporating most of these approaches associated with integral ecology in their teaching.

**Participants’ Reported Frequency of Attempts to Use Integral Ecology Approaches**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most frequent</th>
<th>Least frequent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helping students see themselves as part of nature (4.08)</td>
<td>Applying ethical analysis to ecology (3.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instilling the belief that nature has intrinsic value (3.92)</td>
<td>Connecting ecology with discussion of politics (3.75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting ecology with issues of social justice (3.83)</td>
<td>Connecting ecology with religion or spirituality (3.75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing opportunities for students to take action (3.82)</td>
<td>Connecting ecology with issues of social justice (3.83)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Implications:** The survey reveals how teachers use Healing Earth and provides valuable feedback. The survey has also informed my approach for the rest of my dissertation research. Many participants use Healing Earth as a supplement rather than as their primary curriculum source, but all participants report attempting to incorporate principles of integral ecology in their teaching. In interviews, I will ask participants to share freely of their teaching experiences related to the principles of integral ecology.

**References**


**Acknowledgements**

- I was not involved in the creation of Healing Earth. I am grateful for all the work that has gone into creating and continuing to develop this extraordinary curriculum project. Thanks especially to the co-directors Nancy Tuchman and Michael Schuck for their support of this research.
- I am grateful for the patience and support my dissertation committee, Charles Tocci, Seungho Moon, and David Ensminger. Thanks to Charlie in particular for being an inspiring dissertation chair, mentor, and friend.
- Finally, I want to express my appreciation for Pope Francis’s moral leadership, including Laudato Si’ and his part in bringing about the International Jesuit Ecology Project and Healing Earth.