

Environmental Sustainability Reflective Essay

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Growing up in the Yukon, at the time I never understood the significance of how beautiful and natural it was where I lived. At a young age my mom installed the values of “reuse, re-use, recycle”. Not always having money while my mom went to school and raised me, this seemed a pretty normal and practical application of life, don’t use excess of that you don’t need to and reuse what you can. As she continued with school for her teaching degree, I spent a lot of time with both my grandma growing up she they helped my mom out. My grandma gave me a good understanding planting, farming, and general horticulture throughout the years. For the short and minimal season, we have in the north. I always loved going over and picking the fresh raspberries. I’d like to think this is where I began my appreciation for environmental sustainability. Being a little me, it was always amazing that we were still able to grow potatoes and raspberries in our climate, with the good years where we would get some snap peas and lettuce. As I grew up and started to attend university in Kamloops, I realized how hard it was for our climate was back home for growing “fresh local produce”.

As I become old enough to attend university my grandma also moved down here to the Village of Chase. Here I got to go over and take home more fruits and vegetables than I could count. Some of them included: strawberries, apples, corn, cabbage, zucchini, tomatoes, squash. As a university student on a budget this saved me a decent amount of money for the year, and then the months as they progressed while I continued to live down here for school. This really made me appreciate the different climate and how it could work to help us.

While here in Kamloops I was also able to learn to appreciate having a weekly garbage and recycling bin, as well as a compost bin for my last year of school. As simple as it is, this made a huge impact for our garbage and waste throughout the week. It began with the garbage going out multiple times a week, to just once a week because of the recycling and compost options. This made me look into this new program and realize the benefits it gave not for just our household, but also the community of Kamloops in regards to diverting waste from the landfill. This helped to amplify some of the course work I've learned where mitigating the compost waste to garbage dumps can help us with climate change by releasing less methane into the atmosphere

While at school for a Bachelor's Degree of Science in Chemical Biology, I was able to take some electives that included *Natural Resources Sciences* (NRSC), as well as a class in *Aqueous Environmental Chemistry*. Throughout my degree I was able to gain an understanding of the natural environment and how our actions towards it impact what we gain from it. But it wasn't till my *Aqueous Environmental Chemistry* class that I was able to really appreciate my degree and learn about policies that effect the world we live in. Taking this class with Dr. Blackstock gave me an insight into sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the emphasis on water management and clean drinking water both locally and globally. This class really helped me to think about world issues and the policies that we have for an environmentally sustainable Earth, especially in regards to our finite resources such as clean water.

Because of these experiences throughout my time at Thompson Rivers University, I look forward to going home and applying the concepts I've learned here, both in my home and community, but more importantly as for a future career in the environmental sector. I would like to pursue a career in water management while at the same time look at a continuous education related to environmental sustainability and how I can help to create/maintain current and new management policies. Realizing the importance of the environment from growing up in the Yukon, I hope to be able to provide a future of a clean Earth and community for both my future kids, and family.