

The Water Around Us

Youth's Connectedness to Water Through a Manatee-focused Electronic Field Trip

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Introduction

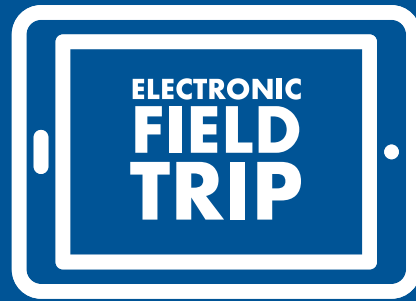
- Electronic Field Trips (EFTs) can expose youth to prevalent environmental issues through animal models and behavior toward the environment.
- This study established how participation in The Water Around Us EFT affected youth's level of connectedness to and understanding of water.

Methods

- Researchers selected an eighth-grade class with 19 students to participate in the Skype in the Classroom version of the EFT.
- Researchers used Connectedness to Water (CTW) instrument to examine student participants' feelings toward and their relationship with water after participating in the EFT.



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When animals are presented in EFTs, students reported **more connection to the animals that inhabit the water rather than the entire water ecosystem.**



Scan for more information.



Results

Quantitative Results

Students' top level of agreement with CTW Statements

"I appreciate the plants and animals that live in the water around me"

"I have a deep understanding of how my actions affect the water around me"

"I think of humans as part of the water cycle"

Qualitative Results

Provide the top three things students learned

Manatee poop provides food for other organisms (n = 16)

Manatees are threatened, in danger, or killed as a common result of human and environmental impact (n = 14)

Conclusions

- The CTW statements that the students reported the highest levels of agreement with indicated more of a connection to the animals that inhabit water, rather than to the entire water ecosystem.
- This contradicts previous literature that stated there is a larger, positive impact on students' attitudes toward environmental issues when animal models are presented.
- Future experimental research could help identify if exposure to charismatic versus non-charismatic marine megafauna via an EFT has an impact on students' level of CTW and understanding of the entire water ecosystem.