

Collaboratively Developing and Assessing Garden-based Environmental Education in Seattle's International District

Rob Efird

Building upon a lengthy history of collaboration with a key community partner (InterIm Community Development Association), my proposed research project advances environmental justice and sustainability in our local community while addressing core concerns in environmental education and the study of urban gardening. I intend to work closely with InterIm CDA's Danny Woo Community Garden staff in order to assess and enhance their garden-based environmental education for local youth in one of Seattle's most ecologically impoverished communities. This involves gathering data that will improve our understanding of best practices in urban environmental education and community agriculture while building the capacity of my community partner to deliver that education.

In sum, this research project has three goals:

1. develop a means of consistently and systematically evaluating InterIm's garden-based environmental education programs,
2. explore and assess the use of technology as a means of environmental learning in the garden, and
3. establish a plan for intergenerational environmental learning that links local youth with the wisdom and experience of the elderly, low-income immigrant gardeners who tend plots at the Danny Woo Garden.

The desired outcomes are both social and scholarly: in the process of enhancing InterIm's environmental education programming, we will gather data for a peer-reviewed journal article that introduces our methods and findings.