



For addressing ocean challenges that our and past generations have created requires that children better understand human-ocean relationships and their capacity to act to enhance the sustainability of the ocean. Do children learn the basics to become responsible citizens caring about the ocean? What to share and how? Which role children can have in knowledge creation as means of raising awareness about the ocean? How to strengthen children' ocean literacy, and more widely their media literacy and capacity to critically look, weight and choose information and knowledge on the ocean?

CHALLENGES/ISSUES WHEN WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND EDUCATORS

Raising children's Ocean Literacy is documented in many websites and resources dedicated to teachers and educators at different scales¹. The challenge for educators is to 'find their way' in the existing ocean of knowledge (from formal and informal sources), identifying what is credible and selecting what suits them most.

Addressing the human-sea relationships requires a wide range of ecological, social and economic knowledge that are part of the human-ocean narrative. When partnerships between educators and scientists are developed to design Ocean Literacy initiatives targeting children, they do rarely involve professionals and scientists that bring socio-economic reality.

Becoming ocean literate requires being media literate, having the capacity to critical extract credible and relevant information from multiple sources, including TV programs, documentary films, cartoons, internet and social media.

BEST PRACTICES AND PRE-CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

Ocean literacy initiatives need to build on a wide diversity of knowledge necessary for capturing the state of the ocean and human-ocean interactions. Even though our children grow up in an 'technological era', traditional ways of knowledge sharing and debating (e.g. drawing, playing together, field trips, board games...) do play effective roles. They complement the virtual environment with human interaction reality.

Do let children do things by themselves (see the experience of 'Young reporters of science and art' developed by Oceanopolis in France), as it gives them the sense of responsibility and empowerment. For example, creativeness and art is one way to engage children to nudge their sense of wonder and appreciation and to get emotional connection. With the help of a narrative, visuals and arts can make children feel inspired and create excitement and admiration. And children like creative activities like drawing, meanwhile chatting about serious issues (see the example of the Zaza workshop developed under ResponSEable).

To get children and student use and interpret authentic ocean data and make them feel like scientists or professionals helps them feeling empowered, as illustrated in resources sharing existing initiatives (see e.g. the STEM program or signalsofspring.net/aces). In some cases, do mobilise networks and existing institutions. The experience of the network of Blue schools to encourage formal education to teach about the oceans has proven a successful way to integrate ocean issues into culture with support from relevant ministries in Portugal.

¹ E.g. the UNESCO portal on ocean literacy or the EDGE database of SeaChange and EMSEA/NMEA



FOOD FOR THOUGHT FOR FUTURE INITIATIVES

Tips that emerged from initiatives carried out within and outside ResponSEable:

- Social media—a valuable channel for educators, if capacity to critically use is acquired
- Do let children make discoveries on their own. Do ensure children feel empowered and want to find on their own, giving incentives for adults to do differently
- Ensure flexible school curriculum, and provide dedicated training to teachers
- Be mindful of the diversity of communities we are working with. Be creative and adapted to specific challenges, forget ready-made teaching solutions.
- Do work with non-governmental organisations, other teachers, scientists and professionals that are keen to share their experiences
- As educator, do go beyond teaching about problems to teach about solutions that each of us, including children, can do to fix problems



The challenges and opportunities of how to do ocean literacy with this group were at the heart of a focused ResponSEable webinar discussions and reflect the opinions of the following speakers:



Jenny Griffiths - MCS



Celia Gregory - The Marine Foundation



Eliane Bastos
SeaChange/EMSEA



Louise Ras - Oceanopolis



Meghan Marrero
Mercy College/NMEA

www.responseable.eu/news/the-responseable-webinars

