

# Permaculture Education Report

November 2021



<b>Purpose of this report</b>	<b>1</b>
Why should I read this report?	1
Summary of Education Developments	2
<b>The Context for Evolving Our Education Work</b>	<b>2</b>
Socio-ecological Transition & Deep Adaptation	3
Transformative Education	3
JEDI (Justice: Equity; Diversity; Inclusion)	4
Permaculture & Design Solutions	4
People Care	4
Accessibility	5
Fair Shares fund	5
Competencies of an educator	5
Online & Blended Learning	6
Andragogy and Heutagogy	6
Certified Teacher Register & Curriculum work	7
Learning Pathways	7

## Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to give its readers an overview of the recent and planned developments in permaculture education activity involving or influenced by the Permaculture Association (Britain) - and to celebrate them. Then, to consider how the Permaculture Association and the permaculture education movement can continue to progress and improve on these developments.

The report has been written by Jemma Findley - Education Lead for the Permaculture Association Britain (PAB) by curating many resources across permaculture networks, with support from the Education Working Group (EWG) and Educator members. To contact us about anything written in this report, please email [education@permaculture.org.uk](mailto:education@permaculture.org.uk).

Why should I read this report?

This report aims to help you better understand your role and contribution to the continuing evolution of the permaculture education movement in the UK and beyond, and its systems, innovations, opportunities and challenges.

## Summary of Education Developments

Some of these important areas of activity and development in permaculture education include:

- The launch and development of Online learning;
- Review of the PAB Certified PDC Curriculum - specifically in relation to online PDCs and Equity & Diversity issues;
- Creating of the option for Certified Introduction to Permaculture courses;
- The development of Certified ToT Curriculum;
- Work with the Diploma Working Group to develop a 2 design post-PDC Certificate in Applied Permaculture Design;
- Involvement in collaborative EU funded adult education projects: BLAST (on optimising blended transformative learning), Community Climate Coaches and iACT (led by PAB - focused on LAND Centres and other types of regenerative sustainability learning and demonstration centres);
- Catalysing an organisational review of equity and diversity issues across PAB and its education activities;
- Work to consider the potential for a Community Project Award, as an alternative entry point to permaculture that is not focused on 'taught' courses.

## The Context for Evolving Our Education Work

Over this past year and particularly in recent months there has been a push towards nature-based learning and thinking, with permaculture regularly mentioned in mainstream media. With COP26 approaching and the damning IPCC report 6, published in part in August 2020, alongside the UN's Feb 2021 report on the ecological emergency, now is a very important time for permaculture practitioners, climate action and socio-ecological transition.

There is a rising urgency on impacts of and responses to the climate and ecological emergencies, which will intensify significantly during 2021-2022 and beyond, and part of this document will point to new projects and resources which can support educators with their

work, building shared understanding using shared language. This report can act as an introduction to many of the topics discussed at our educators' membership professional development meetings (MOG's) across 2020-2021, through BLAST competencies work and the Educators Gathering in April 2021. There are further links and resources at the bottom of this document.

2020-2021 has been a very complicated year, and a lot has changed: almost all teachers have begun teaching online: we have a new perspective on power and inclusion, gender (#metoo) and equity (#BLM); and we are experiencing the world in new ways. The very perception of the meanings of People Care and Fair Shares have changed significantly. At a time when climate education, regenerative agriculture and agroecology are essential to our collective future, this report intends to give a clear picture of where permaculture education is now and where it is heading, to build understanding across our networks.

The following sections will each begin with a heading highlighting and explaining key terms that have become dominant in permaculture education in the past 2 years.

### Socio-ecological Transition & Deep Adaptation

Socio-ecological transition is the process through which society as a whole, therefore its communities, structures and individuals, move from the current unsustainable state to a socially and ecologically sustainable state.

"Socio-ecological transition embodies key characteristics of sustainability such as more equitable systems, social justice and inclusion, circular net zero carbon and waste economic systems. Socio-ecological transition is fundamentally a process of transformative learning, at an individual and collective level, that is focused on learning how to individually and collectively transform ourselves to generate a regeneratively sustainable culture from the household and local level to the level of society as a whole." Taken from the BLAST Competency document February 2021.

In contrast, Deep Adaption is a growing movement that, in the context of the up-to-date scientific perspectives on the climate and ecological emergencies, sees the potential for 'system breakdown' as being high - and therefore generally sees the idea of a relatively stable 'Transition' as unrealistic. It sees the engagement with the emotional aspects of change as fundamental to being able to generate meaningful individual and collective responses to these challenges. Further information: [www.deepadaptation.info/about](http://www.deepadaptation.info/about)

### Transformative Education

Permaculture education is transformative education, when delivered by a competent teacher it results in a shift in the learners worldview - they are transformed.

*“Transformative learning involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions... Such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves...; our relationships with other humans and with the natural world; our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structures of class, race and gender; our body awarenenses; our visions of alternative approaches to living; and our sense of possibilities for social justice and peace and personal joy.”*  
O’Sullivan, Morrell & O’Connor, 2002, p. Xvii. Taken from the BLAST Competency document February 2021.

[Training of Teachers \(TOT\)](#) A new PAB certified teacher training curriculum was developed in 2019-2020 to support transformative education and many of the competencies in this document.

[Cultural Emergence training](#) from Looby Macnama would also complement teaching development, supporting teachers and facilitators to create a unique culture for each course or event.

JEDI (Justice; Equity; Diversity; Inclusion)

This acronym is a framework for an emerging but vital area of concern for environmental and educational practitioners. We are developing JEDI training with the CoLab. If you are interested contact [paula@permaculture.org.uk](mailto:paula@permaculture.org.uk)

- **Justice:** Dismantling barriers to resources and opportunities in society so that all individuals and communities can live a full and meaningful life.
- **Equity:** Allocating resources to ensure everyone has access to the same opportunities. Equity recognises that advantages and barriers exist (ie we are not all equal), it is different to equality (where the aim is for everyone to be equal).
- **Diversity:** All the differences between us, on which we experience advantages or encounter barriers to opportunities.
- **Inclusion:** Fostering a sense of belonging by centering, valuing and amplifying the voices, perspectives and styles of those who experience more barriers on their identities. Removing these barriers for equal participation related to factors such as age, economic situation, disability, education level, gender, geographic location or language.

Permaculture & Design Solutions

Permaculture offers design solutions that can tackle societal and structural inequalities. There are many communities with inequitable access to shaping and benefitting from the development of systems and resources. This is particularly relevant considering how climate change and the related 2020-2021 pandemic is disproportionately affecting certain groups. Inequality of access, overconsumption and a variety of cultural, social and political biases and injustices exist. This is essential knowledge for permaculture educators, who are supporting

learners to understand their place in society and design ways of improving it. You can watch a session from the Educators Gathering 2021 on this topic [here](#).

## People Care

Permaculture is based on a set of ethics, one of which is People Care. People care is about more than just basic needs. We need to regularly examine and challenge barriers - this includes recognising that some people are prevented from accessing education due to structural bias. We completed a review of our PDC core curriculum to check for such biases, and have created a new edition to the curriculum with support of our EWG and network. You can peer [review the recent draft here](#).

For further reading on JEDI practise for educators and facilitators, [read this resource from BLAST](#)

For further reading on EDI (equity, diversity and inclusion) and competencies and reflections from the BLAST project, [read this resource from BLAST](#).

Read our [updated Equal Opportunities Policy](#) here.

## Accessibility

Inclusion refers to the removal of barriers to participation. However, the term accessibility specifically focuses on ensuring equal participation for people with disabilities, neurodivergence and chronic ill health. Carefully consider your teaching practice and location, marketing and course materials.

You can read these three excellent blog posts from fellow educator Katie Shepherd to learn more and to better plan for accessible spaces:

[Accessing Permaculture for people with chronic illness / and or disabilities.](#)

[Top Tips for improving access](#)

[Course event marketing and information](#)

Or [watch this recording from the educators gathering](#) with Sarah Spencer and Samantha Woods on Designing for Accessibility.

For support with policy formation and guidelines read our policy on safer spaces and inclusivity : [2019 Safer Spaces and Diversity & Inclusivity Policy](#) or for ideas for web based / online learning accessibility you can read our [Accessibility for Web - Best Practices Doc](#). For more information contact: [membership@permaculture.org.uk](mailto:membership@permaculture.org.uk).

## Fair Shares fund

We have created a Fair Shares fund for permaculture education. We put money in this fund from our profits every time we run a teacher led version of our [Design For Resilience course](#).

The Fair Shares fund is open to all [Educator members at the Permaculture Association](#). These members are part of what we hope will become a Commons. These Commoners can manage this fund transparently, putting in proposals to spend this money. There is currently over £1000 in the fund. The proposal must meet our [charity's strategic aims](#), with a particular focus on equity and inclusion as described above, for education. [Read more or apply here](#).

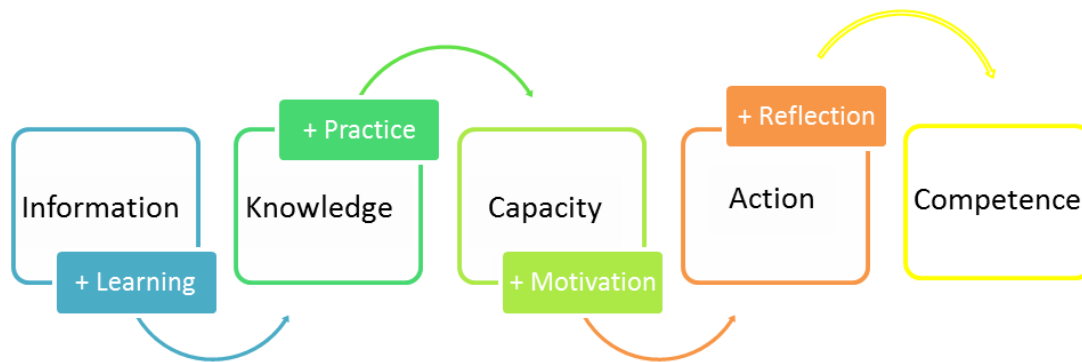
## Competencies of an educator

Competency thinking emerged from the recognition that every job requires a specific set of competencies to do it well. Specific behavioral indicators as well as self-knowledge, motivation, and desire and willingness to demonstrate effective performance in a role can all be understood as types of competencies.

*Competency-based learning focuses on what people can learn (rather than what they can do) and outcomes for learners' in terms of their real-world performance, whether that is within a work context for a specific job, or in a role as a trainer or facilitator of community-based activity or learning. This approach is therefore seen as potentially being of significant value for considering what people need to learn to enhance their capacity to positively live and impact socio-ecological transition impacts, whether they are active as individuals, as part of a work team, or as trainers or community catalysts. (Adapted from BLAST project text).*

For more information on competencies see these links [for educators](#) and [for LAND centres and hosting organisations](#).

For more information on this, you can see the outputs by following links from the [Ecolise BLAST project webpage](#), and be informed on future training for teachers by emailing [steve@sc2.org.uk](mailto:steve@sc2.org.uk)



Stage	Characteristics	Needs	Knowledge Structure	Relevancy Recognition	Context Assessment	Decision-making
Novice	Rigid adherence to taught rules, steps, or plans. Little situational perception. No discretionary judgment.	Step by step instructions. Supervision. First Successes.	No Context	None	Analytical	Rational
Advanced Beginner	Guidelines for actions based on limited aspects. Situational perception still limited. All aspects treated separately and with equal importance.	Simple projects. A safe environment for failure. Lots of repetition.	Contextual			
Competent	Sees actions partially in terms of long-term goals. Conscious deliberate planning and execution. Creates routines and procedures.	Complex but controlled projects. Real world exposure.	Contextual	Present		
Proficient	Sees situations holistically rather than in separate aspects. Prioritizes importance of elements. Deviates from normal patterns purposefully. Uses maxims for guidance.	Unhindered practice and exposure. Explore the possibilities.	Contextual	Present	Holistic	
Expert	No longer relies on rules, routines or maxims. Intuitive grasp of situation based on deep tacit understanding. Analytic approaches used only in novel situations. Full vision of what is possible with medium.	Expand knowledge and experience. Push boundaries of field or medium.	Contextual	Present	Holistic	

© Social Architect Curriculum - Center for Human Emergence, D.A.CH/ Dreyfus & Dreyfus - Skill acquisition model : *BLAST Competency document February 2021*. adapted from Schneckenberg and Wildt, 2006

## Online & Blended Learning

Many educators have moved to online teaching since the start of the 2020 pandemic. For recommendations for how to adapt the Permaculture Design Course curriculum to online teaching, see the updated PDC curriculum and recommendations for [teaching on this page](#).

Blended learning is typically defined as any form of learning that combines both in-person/on-site and online elements. Blended learning is seen as a way to help improve accessibility, flexibility and affordability, and when skillfully used can help to enhance transformative learning outcomes for both individual and collective learning. Refer to the BLAST project links above for further information.

## Andragogy and Heutagogy

The assumption in transformative learning for the socio-ecological transition is that the underlying character of individual and collective learning experience will be primarily self-directed (Andragogy) and / or self-determined (Heutagogy) - for example, the Diploma journey is largely a mix of self-directed and self-determined learning activity, although it follows a structured pathway.

Teacher-led learning (Pedagogy) will have its place, particularly at foundation levels and potentially in more technical fields. However the general direction of travel will be that individuals and groups, communities, collectives, networks and movements are defining and creating the regeneratively sustainable and equitable futures that are relevant to their particular context and range of needs. Therefore **transformative action-learning journeys for transition are primarily self-directed and self-determined**, both for individual and collective participants in learning, and for the 'trainers', who in this context are much more accurately described as facilitators of, and catalysts, for learning. Adapted from BLAST Competency document February 2021.

## Certified Teacher Register & Curriculum work

The voluntary Education Working Group (EWG) designed the PAB certified curriculum for the UK. All new curriculum is peer reviewed by the entire permaculture association educators network, made up of UK and international teachers (with majority UK / European educators).

Whilst we (Permaculture Association, and our EWG) are not a regulatory body, there are issues in all systems relating to power, including equity, inclusion and diversity and a big part of our work on continuous professional development (CPD) focuses here. Even with permaculture's inherent focus on **people care and fair shares**, more work can always be done in this area, so we take a role in ensuring that with our teaching network.

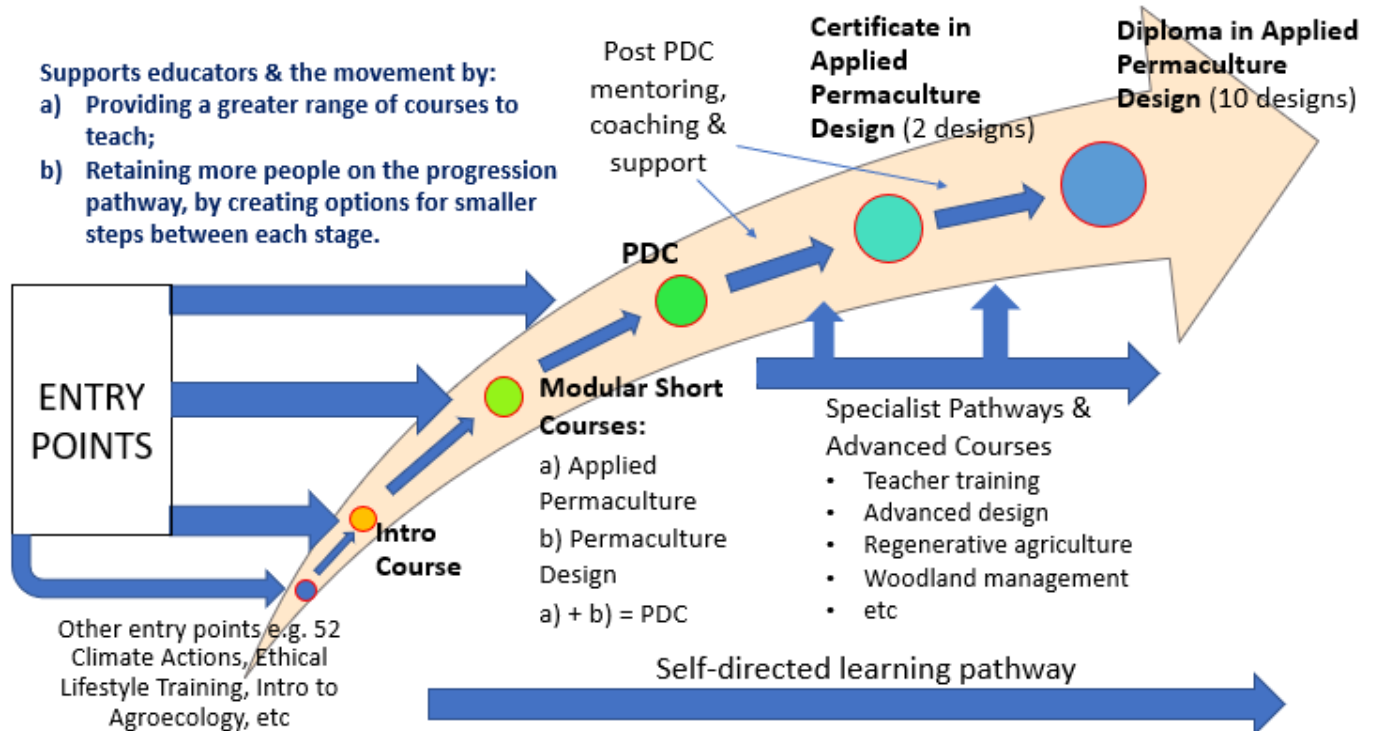
There have been updates and new curriculum created 2020-2021, a new [Introduction curriculum](#), [Train the teacher curriculum](#), an [Accredited Level 3 Course in Regenerative Land Based Systems - Agriculture and Woodland](#), various [BLAST project](#) outputs on optimum approaches to blended learning (available from November 2021) and a work towards piloting a community led project award as an entry point for experiential learning of permaculture, as a contrast to teaching permaculture.

## Learning Pathways

The diagram below indicates an evolved permaculture learning pathway, with different branches of the pathway for the learner to choose and pursue. A characteristic of the pathway is that progression a) builds the level of action and implemented practice that is linked to the learning, and b) involves a shift from an emphasis on taught courses toward largely self-directed learning and peer-to-peer support as the pathway progresses.



# Permaculture Learning Pathway



There are various types of learning events and learning pathways permaculture is catering for, and the intention is to more consciously create and work with a mixture of structured and 'messy learning' (unstructured, emergent) events & pathways :

- **Structured learning events & pathways** - defined courses, pedagogical and andragogical approach, clear learning objectives for learner and educator, etc.
- **Messy learning events & pathways** - happens **when we play unguided, forced to draw conclusions on our own**. It also requires support from the teacher/educator. Structure, templates, guiding questions, scaffolded skills, and the like—but it is in the honouring of the critical thinking process of which educators and facilitators of learning (including LAND centres) need to be aware.