Located between two neighborhoods, Lake Pontchartrain, and Bayou St. John. 1300-acre public park including attractions such as an amusement park, botanical garden, restaurants, lagoons, and most importantly to this research, a 60-acre forest called Couturie Forest. In 2005, Hurricane Katrina damaged the park, but it has replanted trees and maintains its title as the world’s largest collection of mature live oak trees, with some trees as old as 600 years! This makes it an ideal place for an outdoor classroom for students of all ages to experience science in the natural world.

Environmental education and intrapersonal factors were main determinants of greener behavior in participants in one study (Varela-Candamio et al. 2017), which goes along with research determining that more education on the environment has a positive correlation with environmental attitudes (Ibáñez et al. 2020). Education held in an outdoor classroom reduces behavioral problems resulting in a need for teacher redirection, increases child attention and focus, as well as increases child happiness and well-being (Largo-Wight et al. 2018). One study narrowed down three necessary elements for teaching about the environment to be context, connections, and communication (Basile and White 2000). The ERIC Learning Model has shown success in students who used this experiential learning model in an environmental course improved in engagement and involvement of the material and a more positive attitude towards learning (Matriano 2020).

For City Park, these tours will continue to be offered to surrounding schools and as possible to the public. As a teaching model, it would be useful and completely possible to implement this style in parks across the country. Information would vary, but the formats of scavenger hunts, engaging activities, and informational tours can occur in any park.

Environmental Education in an Outdoor Classroom

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