

## Video 13

### Student Research

Hello. I would like to talk with you today about the research that you will need to do as a major part of your education. The old way of instruction in the classroom was to listen to a lecture, read chapters in a text book, then take an exam. We will still listen to lectures, and we will still read books, but we are going to greatly expand the scope of your education by encouraging you *to do your own research*.

For years, the oil companies have been lying to us. For years, the politicians have been lying to us. Clearly, we need to do our own research, so that we can determine for ourselves what is happening in our battered and ravaged world.

One of the most interesting forms of research is to talk with experts in various fields, so that you can learn from someone's professional knowledge, as well as their personal experience. Consider, after a summer of heat and drought in your region, inviting a group of local farmers to spend a day with you at school, talking with you about their livestock, their various crops, and the financial problems which they face.

What changes in the weather have they seen over the past few decades?

Do they still have dependable water, or are their streams and wells drying up?

Is the government helping them?

What do they think are the causes of the changes in the local climate?

How do they view the future?

Prepare a special lunch for your guests to make them feel both welcome and honored. When you ask your questions, address them by their names. A few days after your Conference on Agriculture, send each farmer a thank you letter, signed by all of the students.

And then, next year, do it again as an annual tradition.

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Consider inviting a local meteorologist—the weather forecaster on the radio or television—to visit your school, so that she can explain both the changes in weather patterns, and the causes for those changes. She can show you weather charts for your

region, as well as photographs of various kinds of weather phenomena: storms, tornadoes, floods and drought.

Ask her to explain how the jet streams work, and why they are important for your local area.

What changes in the weather patterns has she seen over the past few decades?

What are the causes of these changes?

Where does her weather information come from? Is she part of an international network?

What does she predict for the future?

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In the same way, invite the mayor of your town, or the governor of your region, to visit your school. Invite as well the director of your local hospital or medical clinic. Invite the director of a local bank, and the manager of a local factory. Invite an imam or rabbi or minister or priest from your local religious groups. Invite people who are responsible for the welfare and prosperity of your community.

What preparations is the governor making for the powerful storms caused by climate change? What preparations are the medical authorities making for summers of record-breaking heat, burns and smoke inhalation from wildfires, the appearance of new diseases such as malaria, or the mental problems caused by anxiety and despair?

What may be the possible economic consequences of the collapse of agriculture, the collapse of the world market, or the arrival of a thousand climate refugees?

How do your religious leaders view our situation in the world today?

*This* is real education. *This* is the kind of research we need to do. We need to listen to the experts, and we need to ask them the hard questions.

We need a good long discussion.

We need to send everyone a thank you letter.

And we need to do it again next year.

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Of course, we need a day when indigenous peoples from your region are invited to your school to share their centuries of experience and wisdom. Open your minds, open your hearts, and look at our world from an entirely different point of view.

Clearly, the Oil Boys had no long range plan, other than to make as much money as possible. And clearly, they had no respect for the natural world which enables us to be alive. Let us listen, then, to the native people whose values are based on living in harmony with nature over a long stretch of time. Listen to the people who never once tried to steal your future from you.

Yes, listen to the people who know what it is to struggle to survive. Because your turn may be coming soon.

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Young People of the World, once you begin to do your own research—once you begin to ask the Big Questions, once you begin to put together the pieces of the Big Picture—you will discover that the research never ends. You will grow; whereas you began as members of your local community, you eventually will become Citizens of the World.

As a Global Generation, you will never again be fooled by powerful corporations. You will immediately spot the lies which politicians tell you. You will know—when the life-giving rains gradually vanish, when the lovely warm days of summer become oppressively hot, when glaciers are melting and riverbeds become troughs of mud—that something is terribly wrong.

And you will know that the time to fix what is wrong . . . is *now*.

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John Slade

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