

# Welcome

Welcome to *Healing Earth*, a free, online environmental science textbook for upper level secondary school students, beginning college students, and adult learners. We invite teachers around the world to use this resource in their classrooms and share their experience with us. *Healing Earth* is an ongoing project, so we hope that everyone – teachers, young students, adult learners – will join us in continually improving this textbook.

*Healing Earth* presents a unique approach to six major ecological challenges of our time:

- declining biodiversity
- natural resource depletion
- shift to renewable energy
- water quality and availability
- food quality and availability
- global climate change

Unlike any other environmental science textbook, *Healing Earth* presents an **integral**, **global**, and **living** approach to the ecological challenges we face on our extraordinary planet.

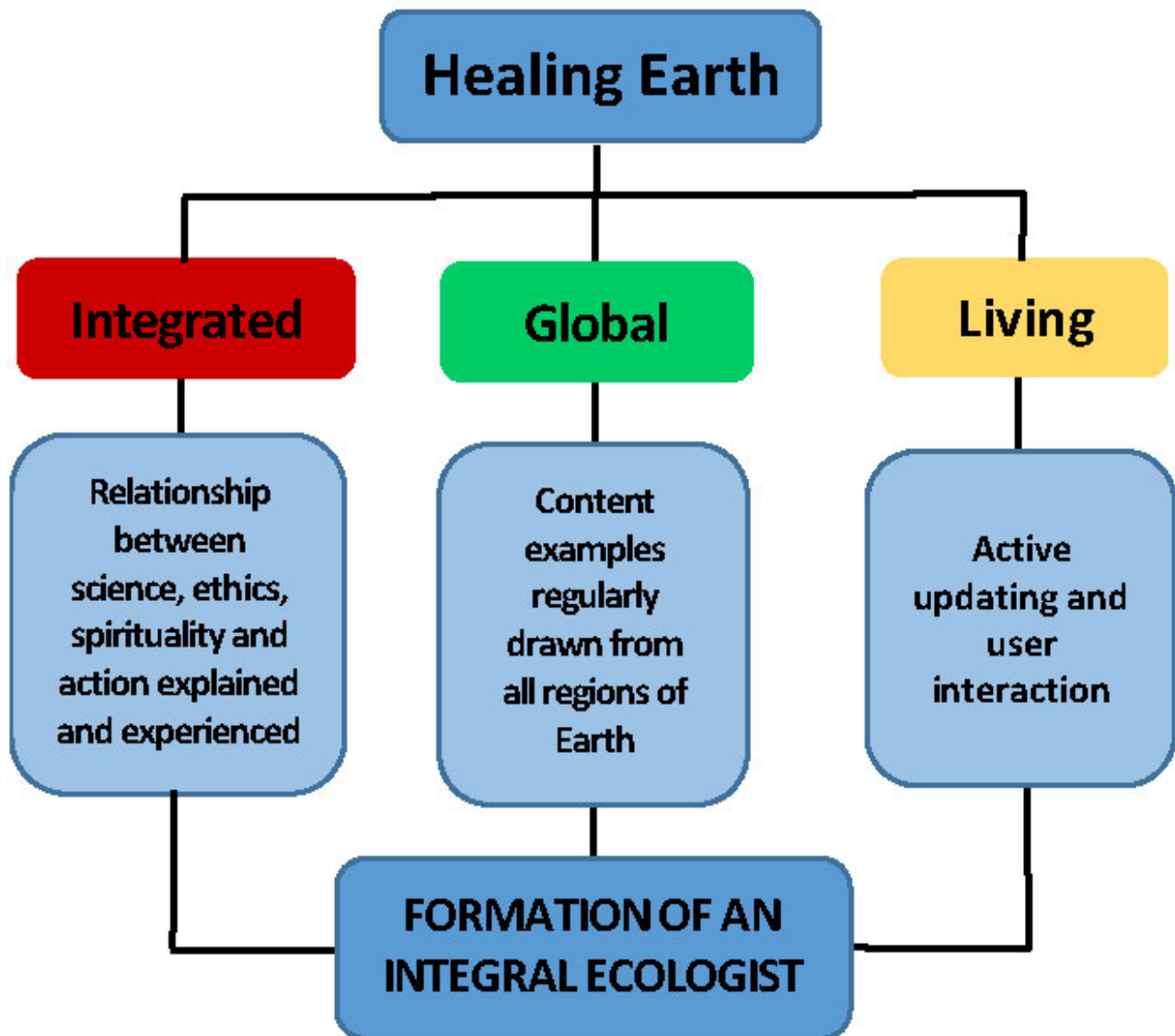
By **integral**, we mean that the scientific knowledge presented in *Healing Earth* is joined by ethical analysis, spiritual reflection, and a call to action. The authors of *Healing Earth* consider an ‘integral’ approach critically important. An ‘integral ecology’ likewise emphasizes the link between environmental and social problems. As Pope Francis wrote in his encyclical *Laudato Sí*,

We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrate approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.

By **global**, we not only mean that *Healing Earth*’s content, examples, and lessons are drawn from different cultures and regions around the world, but also that the users of *Healing Earth* are members of these diverse communities. More than at any other time in the past, the range of today’s ecological challenges is planetary; thus, a global approach toward environmental science is beneficial.

By **living**, we mean that *Healing Earth* is continually adjusted in light of data updates and user feedback. New knowledge about the Earth and its natural systems increases daily, so creating an international network of teachers and students willing to join the *Healing Earth* team keeps the textbook current and alive.

The overall goal of *Healing Earth* is to help all of us grow into integral ecologists, people from every walk of life and region of the world who dare to imagine a healed Earth and are willing to put their hands, hearts, and minds to the task.



We sincerely hope that teachers will use this resource in their classrooms, that it will draw young students closer to nature, and that it will encourage fruitful discussions among adult learners worldwide. We invite all of you to link your imagination with ours and become members of the *Healing Earth* community.

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