

## ABSTRACT

A Study of Students' Conceptions and Alternative  
Conceptions in Biology: Exploring Conceptual Change

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investigation.

This study describes and explains some of the alternative conceptions that students hold in ecology. It also explores changes in students' conceptions after a learning programme. Conceptual change is viewed not only as a reorganization of existing concepts; the replacement of some concepts; and the acquisition of new concepts, but as a process of learning, by which learners differentiate between concepts (progressive differentiation) and view the relationships between them (integrative reconciliation). The research tools used were the clinical interview and the concept mapping technique. The learning programme was in the constructivist tradition that stresses the importance of meanings as constructed by the learner.

The naturalistic qualitative approach to inquiry is presented within a case study design. The narrative is used as the framework for describing and interpreting the data.