

Use of the Quadrants to understand the challenges encountered while adapting to living within ecological limits at the Permaforest Trust.

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The Permaforest Trust operates a not-for-profit sustainability education centre located 200 km south of Brisbane on the sub-tropical east coast of Australia. The centre is located on a 100 acre property of regenerating rainforest, organic gardens, eco-forestry and permaculture systems in a bioregion defined by the lush volcanic landscapes of the Mount Warning shield volcano and the accompanying vibrant communities of cultural creatives. Students attend a 40 week residential training program in Accredited Permaculture Training and related sustainability and ecology disciplines. We use integral theory through the application of the AQAL framework as both our underpinning philosophy and as the basis of our entire operational practice. Students, management and supporting members of the Trust all undertake core training in the AQAL framework at the beginning of each semester. The program is an intensive community and learning environment where we seek to model strategies for shrinking our environmental footprint and lowering our resource use while we are learning about ways of doing the same. Our focus is on learning to live within natural limits with high levels of personal, communal and ecological well being.

In joining the program, students voluntarily enter a world where electricity, fuel, water, personal space, transport and many other material resources as well as personal freedom are all limited by natural resource flows and community commitments. This poses distinct challenges to people accustomed to living in a society with unprecedented amounts of ever growing resource of all kinds. Using the AQAL framework has allowed us to analyze the nature of these challenges and to develop strategies to deal with them effectively. From our perspective one of the most important contributions of an integral approach is the recognition that ecology and sustainability have important personal (UL) and community dimensions (LL). By shifting some of the focus to these domains we have been able to limit community conflict and enhance group dynamics, and we have been able to introduce a critical awareness of self care: both of these initiatives have freed up energy to increase ecological outcomes in land restoration practices (LR). Developmental Stages and Lines have helped us understand patterns in the challenges faced by our students and to create solutions; quadrants have helped us to develop a whole new language of 'I Space', 'We Space' and 'Eco Space' which has helped raise awareness of the scope our work; and masculine and feminine typologies have allowed us to monitor and balance energies and approaches to community life over time. Integral theory has translated into effective ecological practice in numerous and often surprising ways. At the Permaforest Trust it has proven over and over again to help us create solutions, innovations and strategies for challenges that were intractable using other approaches.

Understanding the multiple dimensions of living within ecological limits

INTERIOR: Individual (I) Individual attitudes to stigmas and statuses associated with levels of resource use. Personal emotional challenges associated with decreases in personal space and privacy. Psychological adaptations and challenges related to natural resource flows and limitations. Knowledge and skills that relate to adaptations to lower resource use. Spiritual dimensions of living with decreased resource availability.	EXTERIOR: Individual (IT) Changes to bodily comfort in environments with limited heating and cooling. Bodily changes related to a locally grown, seasonally produced food. Individual behavior related to limitations on food supply. Behavior suited to adaptations in environments of intensely shared resources.
INTERIOR: Collective (WE) Worldviews associated with the high resource using culture. Expected cultural norms of resource use. Values associated with voluntary limitations in resource use. Values associated with creating cultures of resource reduction through community living.	EXTERIOR: Collective (ITS) Communal systems that facilitate efficient and effective use of resources. Rules and guidelines for community systems. Tools, equipment and production systems for low input agricultural enterprises. Management systems for low resource availability environments.