

## References

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### Reviewer Biography

**Meredian Alam** is a leading Indonesian environmental sociologist who also works as a sustainability consultant. Currently, he has just submitted his Sociology and Anthropology PhD thesis at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, the University of Newcastle, Australia. He holds a MPhil in Culture, Environment, and Sustainability from the Centre for Development and the Environment (SUM), the University of Oslo, Norway; and from Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia, a BSocSc in Sociology and a MA in Development Sociology.

## Educating for Hope in Troubled Times: Climate Change and the Transition to a Post-Carbon Future

David Hicks London, IOE Press, 2014  
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Reviewed by Anna Jarrett, Long Beach, New South Wales, Australia

The title of this book serves as a promising invitation to all educators to address both the global environmental crisis we are all living in and as a reminder that hope is an essential tool for us to successfully move forward in making effective transitions into a post-carbon future. As an educator, storyteller and former Discovery Ranger, I am constantly searching for ways to present environmental messages within narratives where a sense of wonder and connection is balanced with a deep concern for our troubled environment and fragile future. This book is a well-researched and inspiring look into ways of thinking about our environment, the actions we take, the stories we tell, the experiences we have, and the knowledge we need. Hicks provides us with a well-organised text that defines the problem, asks key questions, provides sources of hope, and explains how education is the key to change.

My review of *Educating for Hope in Troubled Times* is framed by a challenging environmental education project that I recently completed. The 18-month book-writing project was about our endangered shorebirds, working with primary students in the Shoalhaven region on the south coast of New South Wales (NSW). It was funded by the Environmental Heritage Trust and coordinated by National Parks and Wildlife Service NSW, to help young people learn about the endangered shorebirds on our beaches, and to model ways that we can help to care for them. It was acclaimed as an excellent project-based learning experience, helping hundreds of students to connect directly and more deeply with the birds on their beaches, and to understand why they are endangered. Narrative and visual arts creative expression proved to be highly effective ways to engage young people in learning, but I ended up with a lot of unanswered questions

related to ecology, our uncertain future, and where to find sparks of hope in the deepening dilemmas of endangered species, habitat destruction, climate change, and human impact. *Educating for Hope in Troubled Times* came across my desk at the perfect time, helping me to navigate new pathways with a positive perspective.

One of the elements of Hicks' writing style that I particularly enjoyed is his refreshing, practical and well-grounded selection of information. He addresses his readers directly, sharing his concerns for the environment, and always remaining enthusiastic about our ability, responsibility and flexibility to be educators who are helping the next generation to be ecoliterate (p. 164) and agents of change. The balance of information, case studies, and learning maps has been carefully crafted to build an energy of possibility within the book, weaving discussions and reflections into each chapter.

As a reader, I enjoyed moving between chapters in a non-linear sequence and selecting the information that was relevant to me at this time. Hicks offers a range of topics that he organises within a wholistic learning framework, integrating a deep understanding of the key concepts in ecology, advocacy, sustainability, and active citizenship. Each chapter is part of a journey that echoes the mythical hero's journey (Campbell, 2014), mapping the critical thinking and emotional processes for environmental educators, especially ones who are working with difficult and critical issues.

Part One, 'Troubled Times', defines and explains the scope of the problems that we are facing with the state of our environment, as well as with the need to find new ways to educate and to inspire. Part Two, 'Facing the Challenge', explores consciousness-raising processes such as story circles, mapping and envisioning, to help people connect with each other and with the environment. It raises the key question of 'where do we see ourselves in this picture?' (p. 78), which invites educators to be progressive thinkers by asking interrelated questions about environment, wealth and poverty, peace and conflict, race and racism, gender and sexism, children's voices, political debates, globalisations, and the future. Part Three, 'Sources of Hope', outlines the powerful work of Joanna Macy on hope and despair, and the influential work of Paolo Freire on the pedagogy of hope (Macy & Johnstone, 2012). Part Four, 'Education for Transition', synthesises many of the ideas within the book, exploring post-carbon scenarios and suggesting tasks for educators.

The years of research and reflective practice that Hicks demonstrates in the writing of this book are inspiring and helpful for my own map as an environmental educator. I especially enjoyed the exploration of how we move from being anthropocentric to ecocentric (p. 180), and how we move from the old story to co-create new stories (p. 187) that help us all move into the future. Hicks uses a clarity of language to direct these forward-moving processes in an empowered (p. 145) and informed way, where we can envision our possible, probable and preferred futures (p. 81) and decide where we are standing in this unfolding story.

The only element missing from this book is a recognition of Indigenous perspectives and, in particular, the 8 Ways Pedagogy (8 Ways of Learning, 2017). This is a wholistic framework for learning through Indigenous perspectives, with a focus on relationships. The eight ways are: story sharing, community links, deconstruct and reconstruct, non-linear, land links, symbols and images, non-verbal, and learning maps. I recommend that educators include these perspectives in all their work and hope that the second edition of *Educating for Hope in Troubled Times* will include this key framework.

I recommend this book to all environmental educators as a 'My Bookshelf Top 10'. It provides many hours of thoughtful and inspiring reading, as well as maps and ideas for continuing to grow as an environmental educator who meets every challenge with a sense of hope.

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### Reviewer Biography

**Anna Jarrett** is a story consultant, professional storyteller, teacher and outdoor guide, living a bush and beach lifestyle on the south coast of NSW. With 30 years' experience as a storyteller and educator, Anna enjoys working locally on projects that care for our communities and our environment. Her storytelling work is recognised internationally, and she recently published her first children's book, *The Birds, the Sea and Me*, illustrated by Julie Sydenham and funded through the South Coast Shorebird Education Program, National Parks and Wildlife Service NSW.

## The Power of Narrative in Environmental Networks

Raul Lejano, Mrill Ingram and Helen Ingram Cambridge, MIT Press, 2013  
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*The Power of Narrative in Environmental Networks* successfully combines a rationale and framework for qualitative narrative analysis with case studies demonstrating this technique. Despite being primarily focused on environmental networks, there are pertinent lessons inside this book for environmental educators.

The introduction gives a background to the research field and also highlights the significance of this form of communication as a whole. I am sure that many environmental educators would be familiar with the engaging effect of a good story; by reading through this account, I found it both encouraging and informative for my practice. It also speaks to the potential for narrative to be put to greater use in the sciences, where an increasingly sceptical public can no longer be convinced by facts, figures, and evidence (p. 11). This is especially the case for emotionally charged issues such as climate change, or for environmental issues where there is conflict and opposing views.

The authors capture the capability of narrative to bind together an environmental network, and they introduce this point early on: 'Stories, or narratives, create the glue that binds people together in networks, providing them with a sense of history, common ground and future, thus enabling them to persist even in the context of resistance' (p. 2). We are encouraged to perceive the groups as 'narrative networks', with each actor offering their own perceptions and additions to the story. This is the 'many voices' or plurivocity of the network.

Lejano and the Ingram partners describe how a narrative analysis of a network can fill in the gaps of understanding left by a purely quantitative approach. The authors explain how typically, network analysis looks at the number, structure, and patterns