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International perspectives on the theory and practice of environmental education: A reader

Edited by Giuliano Reis and Jeff Scott, Stringer, 2018

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Education should be about cultivating worthwhile values that a society needs for its citizens to move forward. Environmental Education (EE) is about instilling those values that global citizens require in order to develop and maintain a deep respect for and understanding of our life-giving planet. During these times when the effects of environmental disrespect are ravaging every corner of the globe, we need more and more educators to ambitiously research how effective EE should be practised. *International Perspectives on the Theory and Practice of Environmental Education: A Reader* is a must-read for anyone who cares about EE and research. Unlike many other EE books that are written about specific places or for a particular readership, this edited collection is a text written by environmental educators for environmental educators from all walks of life.

International Perspectives on the Theory and Practice of Environmental Education is effectively divided into four sections that inform the different ways of practising EE in different regions of the world. The first part, entitled 'Environmental Education and Teacher Education', explores the varied ways that EE is practised. There is a range of exciting as well as challenging ways of teaching and learning about the environment that are presented in this section. Preservice teachers integrating reconciliation and EE display the dynamics of teachers as learners in Indigenous communities where they learn a lot about themselves as well as their places. We also encounter teachers of art using their creativity in not only teaching about the environment, but also practising sustainability in recycling their teaching materials. This practice challenges educators to constantly think of ways of not only talking about healing our planet, but also walking the talk. In this same section, teachers critique the use of language in perpetuating an environmental disconnect in their cultures; for example, the teachers help learners identify sets of words that project the male as the dominant trait of 'man-as-mind-as-reason' over the female as the subordinate trait of 'nature-as-woman-as-emotions' (p. 51). We also encounter the practice of EE in new innovative pedagogical practices, such as online teaching. In this section, the authors demonstrate new and innovative ways of practising EE that can be relevant to different parts of the world.

The next section, 'Environmental Education Outside Walls', explores EE beyond the classroom. There are multiple ways of developing students' understanding, empathy and connection with nature explored in this section. The learning experiences span from youth learning about civic duty to raising environmental consciousness in outdoor educational settings, coupled with experiencing EE from the perspectives of island cultures and places. With such a vast array of EE experiences, this section strongly demonstrates the immense commitment to eco-justice and respect for biodiversity within these pages. The third section, entitled 'Environmental Education in the Context of Schools', covers a considerable ground on the practice of EE, thereby amplifying the call to every educator to equip their learners with the right tools and ambition that would translate into healing of our planet. In this section, we explore EE policies in challenged places like Greece and China. In addition, we are shown the value of bringing early childhood learners on board as active participants in the race to environmental literacy to preserve our planet. Unique and rich ways of perceiving of EE are also shared in this chapter, such as the use of realistic environmental cases in EE in Brazil. The collection in this section emphasises the message of respect for life and for the planet but also reveals to us the immense challenges that have faced EE policies and practices in different countries over the years. Through these rich educational experiences, we get to appreciate the educators' determination to cause the desired change in the choices in life in a bid to live in harmony with nature. Through research and education, we can review our choices and how we live for the good of both the human and nonhuman inhabitants of this planet.

The fourth and last section, entitled 'Environmental Education Research and Poetry', shows scholarly collaboration beyond borders, and in this we are reminded that educators from around the world need to work together for a common goal. We also experience artistic representation of EE in the form of poetry and narrative writing. We visualise an educators' experience of place, and through their powerful narrative techniques, we get a sense of place and culture from a different cultural view. In order to learn from these places, the author admits to first unlearning certain elements of our own cultural orientations. For anyone who loves the art of letters, you will be highly impressed with this powerful advocacy for place education in a beautiful language.

The end of every chapter has been illuminated with discussion questions. For example, following a description of the nature of students' understanding of and connection to their environment at the end of the Chapter 1, the first discussion question asks, 'In your opinion, what does it mean to be disconnected from nature?' (p. 13). The reflective nature of these questions would specifically enhance student-centred learning, as well as raise an intrinsic awareness much needed in EE in this critical era. This is a feature that makes this book significant for educators and students of EE. Following the informative chapters, instructors and students as well as researchers can deliberate on the different perspectives of the issues raised by the authors. The reflexivity that is inspired by the end-of-chapter discussion questions is especially helpful for one to develop a deeper understanding of the issues and then connect them with the readers' unique situations. This is especially necessary for the international readership.

International Perspectives on the Theory and Practice of Environmental Education: A Reader is a book that can help people recognise EE as a comprehensive education necessary for dealing with the environmental issues affecting the different places of the globe. Throughout this book, dedicated educators uncover how EE can be practised as a global curriculum. I would unreservedly recommend this book to environmental educators and students, as well as postgraduate research students in the area of EE. When you make it part of your collection, you will constantly be drawn to the pages to reflect on the unique ways of theorising and practising EE.

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Placemaking with children and youth: participatory practices for planning sustainable communities

Victoria Derr, Louise Chawla, and Mara Mintzer. New York: New Village Press, 2018

Reviewed by MaryEllen Wolfinger, The George Washington University in Washington, DC, United States

Children's participation in all levels of planning, from neighbourhood projects to international initiatives, is important because children, who are both the present and future residents of these places, often feel unheard and isolated in their communities. Through experiences with youth participation in place creation in the United States, Mexico, Canada, South Africa, the United Kingdom, the Philippines and other places around the world, Derr, Chawla, and Mintzer have created a manual for researchers, educators, government officials and urban planners to include the voices of children in urban planning in order to guide the work of those seeking to create child-friendly and sustainable cities. *Placemaking with Children and Youth: Participatory Practices for Planning Sustainable Communities* is largely based on the work of the Growing Up Boulder project in Boulder, Colorado, in the United States and the Growing Up In Cities UNESCO effort that was revived after the Conventions on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the United Nations in 1989.

Chapter 1 makes a case for child participation in placemaking, while Chapter 2 provides steps for establishing programs and principles for sustaining them. Because people are mostly concerned with and are able to offer experiences from their local places, effective participatory planning focuses on these local concerns, which may then be scaled to regional, state, or larger issues. The authors suggest that when creating a program or partnership to start by identifying an existing community leader such as a university faculty or student, or city planner, then other community partners such as schools, art and culture organisations, and municipal departments. The program can then create a structure, including goals and a mission statement, leader, funding, and formal agreements. When the program is ready to implement a project, identify children who can serve as reliable partners, garner resources and financial support, build capacity, begin working with children, and communicate ideas. Principles for sustaining these programs are laid out and highlighted in an example from Quebec, Canada, in addition to the Growing Up Boulder examples. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child guide the ethics of these programs, which are laid out in Chapter 3, in areas such as preserving the voice of the child with minimal influence from adults and inclusion of traditionally marginalised populations. Chapter 4 emphasises the importance of conducting background research about the community, such as the demographics, historical information, interviews and observations, before beginning a participatory program with children.

The next three chapters provide examples of how to elicit child participation. Chapter 5 outlines the materials needed for a variety of art-based activities, the ages for which each activity is appropriate, and prompts that can be used to engage children. The participatory methods in Chapter 6 include surveys, interviews and focus groups. The authors also include several tips for