

Reviewer Biography

Dr Lorne Butt is the Sustainability Coordinator at TAFE NSW Western Institute. Lorne trained as a biologist before joining the higher education sector. With a background in quality management, strategic planning and corporate governance, Lorne now specialises in sustainability practice, governance, education and research. Lorne is an Associate Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management, and a member of the British and Australia/New Zealand academies of management, the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and the Australian Association of Environmental Educators. Lorne is also a member of the Advisory Board for the Institute for Land, Water and Society at Charles Sturt University.

Sustainability Frontiers: Critical and Transformative Voices from the Borderlands of Sustainability

Edited by David Selby and Fumiyo Kagawa, Barbara Budlich Publishers, Opladen, 2015, ISBN: 9783866494763
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Reviewed by Susan Germein, Western Sydney University, Australia

Sustainability Frontiers sets out to provide an alternative view to environmental and sustainability pedagogies grounded in hegemonic assumptions of 'green' and 'business as usual' consumer capitalism, assumptions that emanate from the metaphorical global north. Selby and Kagawa instead frame a critical and transformative view that locates the cause of environmental, social, and economic injustices in the inherent globalising and exploitative nature of capitalism itself.

Accordingly, the book explores a variety of pedagogical insights, practices and case studies, proposed as an alternative to the weak sustainability ethos of growth or progress often mainstreamed in and through Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) discourse and practice. Those environmental and sustainability educators who wish to unsettle dominant paradigms of ideology and pedagogy will find much in these pages to inform and inspire renewed practice.

These alternative approaches arise from the margins or borderlands of mainstream ESD. David Selby and Fumiyo Kagawa offer an evocative definition of borderlands as:

... special spatial and ideological spaces. They are where people go to emancipate themselves from the trammels of ingrained assumptions, orthodoxies, habits and practices... They are shifting, mold-breaking spaces, catalyzing the production of hybridized knowledge, understanding and insight. As such they are spaces of resistance, reconfiguration and renewal. They are also

uncomfortable spaces marked by alienation and discomfort with dominant culture and trends ... (p. 13)

The 14 chapters are bookended by Selby's Chapter 1, which provides an underlying logic for the collection; and at the end, by Selby and Kagawa's summary, which offers a manifesto for a 'critical and transformative agenda for unlearning unsustainability' (p. 277). In Chapter 1, Selby critiques a continued emphasis on growth economies in the face of climate and other environmental emergencies. He questions the ability of ESD to make the transformative impact that was promised through UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development rhetoric. Further, he notes the reluctance of ESD agencies and proponents to challenge growth and globalisation agendas.

Selby contrasts this globalisation from above with the emergence of 'social and environmental justice activism and indigenous cultural resistance; what Torres (2009) describes as "globalisation from below" and what Paul Hawken (2007) describes as the swelling of "blessed unrest"' (p. 27). Selby advocates for a reinhabitation of place, with relocalisation of economies in tune with local social, cultural and environmental contexts. This is how a grounded eco-citizenship, as described by Lucie Sauvé in Chapter 5, can grow.

True to the borderlands brief, the chapters contribute to a critical and normative discourse about environmental and sustainability education. Working at the messy intersections of various 'adjectival educations', and only occasionally distracted by the ongoing terminology and territory disputes of ESD, Education for Sustainability (Efs) and Environmental Education (EE), these contributors all propose useful and enriching ideas to enhance the effectiveness of sustainability pedagogy.

A number of the authors and discourses are situated in ideological spaces rather than places, as signalled in Selby and Kagawa's 'borderlands' definition. Herein is a problem, because in failing to situate or account for ourselves in terms of locality, context or place, we run the risk of presenting universalist views — the 'view from nowhere'. Are consumer pedagogy and relational learning from wildlife, for example, emerging from or responding to excesses and alienations of the global North? How might they look in a southern context?

Given the strong critique of the global North in this book and the commitment to local, grassroots, community/place-based learning that is a rhizomatic thread throughout, as well as the neo-colonial risk of globalising discourses of which Selby speaks, I would see situatedness and place as being important to consider more explicitly.

In a cartography organised around coordinates of space and place, the chapters would be scattered between the two. The cluster of those who situate themselves and their discourse firmly in place, for this reader, provide the most viscerally grounded alternative pedagogies. These contributors access an embodied experience of being in place, with local-global relationalities emerging from that situatedness. They *account* for themselves in a postcolonial sense, in terms of philosophy, geopolitical, and cultural context. Most of these authors also happen to be writing from the global South.

Edgar González-Gaudiano and Evodia Silva-Rivera, for example, share two case studies from rural Mexico, located in grassroots community contexts. With the long-term Agua para Siempre (Water Forever) project, education was integrated as part of the strategy for locals to solve their own problems. The educational guidance given was in an *acompañamiento* style (meaning to keep company), in recognition that people need to be able to take ownership of problems and solutions using local and ancient knowledge. A model of community learning emerges that may have applicability more globally.

Michael G. Jackson describes a similar context of local community self-determination in the foothills of the Himalayas. The Uttarakhand Environmental Centre (UEEC) has worked for 30 years at the complex intersection of social and economic justice, environmental sustainability, and empowerment — particularly of women — in local communities. Jackson argues that we need to listen to voices from the past — ancient knowledge, worldviews, and technologies — as well as voices from the present, from “the majority of the global population marginalised and exploited by “development”, “modernisation”, and “globalisation”” (p. 59).

Eloisa Tréllez Solís situates herself in cultural space/place in Peru, advocating for recovery of indigenous knowledge and culture, and for grassroots democratic participation. She sees environment education as an intercultural process, characterised by mutual respect, dialogue, and participation. She describes the Children of the Woods project, involving nearly 500 teenagers along with teachers, parents, and communities from the Amazonian and Andean regions of Peru. This project activated intercultural collaboration and community building through shared experiences of culture and jungle.

Several chapters focus on deepening sustainability education through affective, imaginative, spiritual, and sensory engagement. Gillian Judson works with a ‘sense of wonder’ and ‘creative entanglement with the world’ (p. 19) around us. Steve Garlick advocates for learning *from* wildlife, rather than just *about* wildlife, referencing Derrida’s erasure of the human/non-human boundary. Kumi Kato thoughtfully describes the experience of walking as contemplative listening, both in Val Plumwood’s Australian forests and along traditional pilgrimage trails in Japan. Deep connectedness — with each other and with place — are for her foundational in learning towards ecological sustainability.

Sue McGregor proposes a transdisciplinary and complex systems approach to sustainability for consumer pedagogy and for sustainability education in general. She discusses seven sustainability-related pedagogies, such as social learning and eco-pedagogy, and how they can inform a transdisciplinary pedagogy. Stephen McCloskey argues for a radical enactment of Development Education, true to Freire’s key ideas of participative dialogue, critical analysis, reflection and action.

Discussing the disinformation industry promulgated by politicians, the fossil fuel industry and others, Leo Elshof proposes an education in critical analysis, to nurture a critical and creative citizenship among young people. Fumiyo Kagawa focuses on peacebuilding education as a personal, relational, structural, and cultural process, with a key role for children and youth. She references children’s programs such as multi-ethnic/multi-religious football teams in Nigeria, where assumptions and prejudices are resolved in the safe learning space of a team environment.

In an integrative chapter, Sue McGregor surveys innovative approaches to sustainability education, such as sustainable contraction and unlearning unsustainability. Consequently, she arrives at eight overarching messages for sustainability, including working with complexity/living systems modes, drawing on deep ecology, hybridising disciplinary knowledge, and attending to existential issues including denial, despair and hope. Learning that arises out of locality and place is a recurrent theme in this book, so I would add that to her list of messages.

Issues of space and place aside, this important book provides perspectives that challenge and disrupt sustainability education, perspectives that need to be taken on board by anyone engaged in pedagogy towards ecologically sustainable futures. Climate change and other environmental challenges provide a point of convergence for all variants of sustainability education, and the directions in this book give us conceptual tools to facilitate that convergence.

Reviewer Biography

Susan Germein is a PhD Candidate at Western Sydney University. She has a research interest in community/place-based learning towards ecological sustainability. Susan has a background in EfS, having worked as a sustainability educator in the vocational education and community sectors, developing, delivering and piloting EfS programs. She was part of a national team delivering the Sustainability Champions Program in Australia: the Vocational Graduate Certificate in Education and Training for Sustainability (Swinburne University) and other accredited professional development programs for vocational education practitioners.

Higher Education for Sustainable Development

Kerry Shepard, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2015, ISBN: 978137548405
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Reviewed by Ian Thomas, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

This is a brave book. Perhaps, in the words of Sir Humphrey Appleby,¹ it is courageous. Why? Because the book attempts to provide an overall theory of how Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) can become part of higher education (HE). There has been no shortage of discussion about the complexity and difficulty of achieving such an outcome, and likewise there is discussion about the possible implementation approaches. So, attempting to provide a path through all this shows bravery.

This 'guide' comes from all the years that Shepard spent in both teaching and researching in HE institutions, and as an advisor on teaching and learning approaches. His ideas have crystallised from a sabbatical period to interview and talk with people involved in ESD working in a small selection of HE in New Zealand, Australia, Scandinavian countries, and North America; and some were sceptical about sustainable development. Importantly, the conversations involved more than just the usual academics. Equally, his approach has been to look for the positives rather than focus on negatives. In other words, while it is important to identify the existence of barriers to ESD, there is no progress if we stop there. The progress and positive aspect of Shepard's thinking is to look for what actions can progress implementation of ESD, rather than dwelling on barriers.

A further brave aspect of Shepard's work has been to look for a comprehensive approach to ESD. Specifically thinking about the audiences for this book, he has identified that the probable readers would be those involved with HE and be: passionate sustainability change agents, academic advocates for sustainability, (possibly sceptical) disciplinary focused academics, academic and educational developers, university managers and administrators, dispassionate researchers, readers from 'outside our ivory towers', and students and graduates. As a consequence, some readers may find the book more difficult to follow to extract precise ideas for their situations, as there is a chance that some material could be perceived as not directly relevant. However, Shepard attempts to moderate these difficulties by providing some guides for which sections