Reviews

Klas Sandell, Johan Ohman, & Leif Ostman. (2005). *Education for Sustainable Development: Nature, School and Democracy.* Trans. Roger Billingham. Lund, Sweden: Studentlitteratur. 244 pp.

Education for Sustainable Development: Nature, School, and Democracy helps contextualize Education for Sustainable Development, a term that has fuelled a debate within the education community over the politics, pedagogy, ethics, and values of sustainable development. The aim of this book is to contribute to the improvement of Education for Sustainable Development teaching competency and seems to be intended for educators in the formal education system. All three authors are lecturers or professors in universities in Sweden, which may explain the theoretical rather than practice-based approach that the authors have taken to improving Education for Sustainable Development teaching competency. While the book was first printed in 2003, it is still relevant today because it provides an overview of environmental education philosophies and traditions as well as guidance, which broadly defined Education for Sustainable Development policy documents do not offer, on how to select appropriate methods and approaches for teaching about sustainability.

According to the authors, Education for Sustainable Development teaching competency is dependent on integrating three components: knowledge of environmental problems and sustainable development; theoretical knowledge of teaching and learning; and practical knowledge and teaching skills (teaching experience). The text focuses on providing the theoretical background to the first two components and provides some guidance (although limited) on how to select appropriate methods and teaching approaches for Education for Sustainable Development instruction. To this end, the book is divided into three sections:

> Part I: A Background: Environmental History and Human Ecology–presents a general historical background to humanity's approach to, and relationship and interaction with, the natural world.
>
> Part II: Perspectives on Current Environmental Problems–outlines four current points of view of environmental or development issues: an ecological perspective, environmentally ethical perspective, political perspective, and economic perspective.
>
> Part III: Teaching and Learning Perspectives on Education for Sustainable Development–discusses the link between the way that humans, as individuals and societies, relate to the natural world and the way we are educated. The intention of this section is to explain how this learning process can be understood and to present applications and models that can be used in Education for Sustainable Development teaching.

The authors argue that Education for Sustainable Development is a departure from previous environmental education traditions because of the implicit pluralistic view of environmental issues on which Education for Sustainable Development is based. They continue that this view provides students the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills and better conditions for the fulfillment of the democratic aims of schools. Therefore the authors' frame their approach to Education for Sustainable Development by two central views: environmental education should be characterized by pluralism, which implies that each student will have his or her own opinion on an environmental issue and should, therefore, have the opportunity to learn about issues from more than one perspective; and when learning occurs in democratic classrooms where debate is encouraged, students will adopt critical perspectives to environmental and developmental issues.

Part II gives an in-depth overview of four different views on environmental issues (ecological, ethical, political, and economic) and Part III proposes three Education for Sustainable Development models that integrate and put into practice pluralistic and democratic approaches to an environmental issue. While the models offered are comprehensive, each one requires between 30 and 50 teaching hours and, from my assessment, would not be easily integrated alongside current provincial curriculums. Although it would be wonderful to allot 30 hours of teaching to a subject like conscious consumerism, it is not feasible based upon the models offered.

The authors' notion of the role democracy plays in Education for Sustainable Development, I believe, is adopted from John Huckle's assertion that a key function of Education for Sustainable Development "is to help people reflect and act on these [contested] meanings and so realize alternative futures in more informed and democratic ways" (p.3). While Huckle is discussing Education for Sustainable Development on a macro level of political and economic production, Sandell *et al.* are focused on democratic practices within schools to foster critically-reflexive learners who will be future decision-makers. In Part III the authors emphasize the importance of paying particular attention to how the teaching process should embody democratic principles: "Education for Sustainable Development is an education in democracy rather than an education about democracy" (p. 201). They also suggest that in order to give students the opportunity to take active roles within the classroom, the delegation of authority needs to be discussed so that individual students understand their capacity as citizens. It would be beneficial if the authors had included a short activity or set of questions which model how this type of discussion would be facilitated.

This text is useful for anyone who has questions or concerns about the philosophy, pedagogy, or practice of Education for Sustainable Development. It is effective in situating Education for Sustainable Development within environmental education traditions and providing some theoretical grounding of Education for Sustainable Development, but its usability for practicing

educators is limited due the amount of teaching time each model requires and the lack of shorter models with ready-to-go lesson plans. The emphasis on theoretical background, however, and extensive survey of various environmental perspectives make it a good resource for academic educators.

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David Sobel. (2008). *Childhood and Nature: Design Principles for Educators.* Markham: Pembroke Publishers. 168 pp.

I approached reading this book with great anticipation. I have known of David Sobel for some time, mainly as the individual who coined the evocative term *ecophobia* to describe a child's disempowering fear of the natural environment as a result of being subjected to doom-and-gloom scenarios concerning the future. As an outdoor and environmental educator, I am an advocate of providing children with positive and powerful hands-on experiences in nature as an essential first step towards developing the ecologically informed citizenry that could change our destructive patterns on this planet. In Sobel, I find an articulate and passionate kindred spirit. He quotes the nineteenth century American naturalist John Burroughs in order to make clear his position: "Knowledge without love will not stick. But if love comes first, knowledge is sure to follow" (p. 12).

Sobel is a well-known environmental educator in the Department of Education at Antioch University in New Hampshire. His new book provides me with a discerning and useful lens through which I can reflect upon my own teaching practices. From his accounts of being in nature with his own children as well as with a wide range of students, I understood how much he knows of what he speaks, and how much he walks his talk.

I found the strongest part of the book to be the first three chapters where Sobel carefully sets the stage for and then describes his design principles. His lines of thought establish an undeniable link between environmental education and outdoor hands-on experiences, be they informal play or more structured learning. In either case, these experiences begin with the child's interests; they reflect the child's psychological as well as cognitive stage of development. There is an implicit caution here for those environmental educators who focus too much on indoor learning. In Sobel's focus on the value of place-based education, defined as growth in a child's awareness from the schoolyard into the local community, I find a gentle rebuke for those of us in outdoor education who tend to see our craft as being practiced exclusively in bus-dependent and remote settings.

In Chapter 3, Sobel carefully describes seven "play motifs" (p. 19) that fascinate children and feed natural impulses they have long possessed but now

seldom use. This is the real highlight of the book. Adventure, Fantasy & Imagination, Animal Allies, Maps & Paths, Special Places, Small Worlds, and Hunting & Gathering: these themes, both singly and in various combinations become powerful design principles for childhood outdoor experiences and their creation of powerful bonds with the earth as well as for significant and lasting learning.

Chapters 4 through 11 constitute a series of essays written over the past ten years that have previously appeared in a variety of publications. Sobel perceives these pieces as natural extensions of his advocacy for outdoor learning experiences and for the structuring of these experiences according to one or more of his design principles. His attempt to create further coherence through the addition of introductory remarks for each of these pieces is not, in my opinion, entirely successful. However, the reader's persistence will be rewarded by these insights into what constitutes powerful outdoor learning. And, so, we have exhortations about how one must always start with "the subjective, inner lives of children" (p. 79) and then combine this with the realities of curriculum, the passion of the teacher, and the unique assets that each local community has to offer in terms of connections to nature. To this, Sobel adds the ability of the teacher to recognize and take advantage of those very occasional moments of serendipity when everything comes together in a seemingly accidental but truly memorable way. He also details many specific examples of how one or more of his design principles are already providing the kinds of outdoor learning experiences that simultaneously honour "developing a child's love of the earth and developing a child's academic and social competence" (p. 3).

In the last chapter, "Global Climate Change Meets Ecophobia," Sobel reasserts his position of "no environmental tragedies before fourth grade" (p. 141) and he speaks of how important it is to approach environmental education "from a perspective that maximizes hope" (p. 141). He then proposes an intriguing "ladder of environmental responsibility" that presents a developmentally appropriate progression of activities that students can undertake within their school setting in order to have first-hand experiences with local communities and environments.

My one quibble with Sobel lies in his diplomatic sympathy for the parent who is quoted as advocating for full coverage, both good and bad, of environmental issues in the elementary classroom. I think this parent represents too many adults who say, in their actions if not their words, "Hey, we've totally screwed up. There's nothing we can do about it. So, it's now up to you kids to save the planet." This is the last thing we need to say to children. It's a horrid and shameful version of "Do as we say, not as we do" and we simply can't afford to delay action any longer. One of the most empowering messages we can give to our children is that we, as adults truly care and are acting significantly, comprehensively, and now. This, to me, is the first responsibility of all adults (including environmental educators), and I think Sobel would agree.

Childhood and Nature is a most engaging and worthwhile read for any experienced and reflective teacher-practitioner with an interest in environmental education in the outdoors. I would also highly recommend it to those developing environmental education curricula as well as to teacher candidates who will soon become our front lines in terms providing this sort of vital learning.

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Finn Mogensen & Michela Mayer. (Eds.). (2005). *Eco-Schools: Trends and Divergences: A Comparative Study on Eco-School Development Processes in 13 Countries.* Vienna, Austria: Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. 360 pp.

Soren Breiting, Michala Mayer & Finn Mogensen. (2005). *Quality Criteria for ESD-Schools: Guidelines to Enhance the Quality of Education for Sustainable Development*. Vienna, Austria: Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. 48 pp.

The impetus behind this extremely well-developed and researched publication comes from the SEED (School Development through Environmental Education) program. SEED is part of a larger project sponsored by ENSI/UNESCO and the United Nations Decade for Sustainable Development (DESD) to develop strategies for environmental education by identifying visions for eco-school programmes, and by establishing quality criteria for schools working towards sustainability. The study compares the work of thirteen countries in Europe involved in the SEED initiative. The principle aim of the authors, Finn Mogensen and Michela Mayer, is to establish a set of guidelines, or quality criteria, through an analysis of the national reports submitted by the thirteen SEED participants.

The book is divided into two main sections. The first section presents a comparative study of environmental education trends and the development of quality criteria. The authors divide the quality criteria into three broad categories: teaching and learning processes; school policy and organization; and, school external relations. The second section is comprised of the national reports concerning eco-schools initiatives and the progress made by each of the thirteen countries participating in the study. In addition, the authors collaborated with Soren Breiting to provide a small supplement to the book entitled *Quality Criteria for ESD-Schools,* which consists of a collection of planning ideas to be used by teachers and administrators as a starting point for dis-

cussion and classroom-based activities. This set of guidelines is a very helpful synopsis as it breaks down the findings of the original study and can be used immediately to begin the process of creating a sustainable school community through quality environmental education.

As a whole, the authors have put together a very extensive study of the state of environmental education in Europe and the direction it must take to ensure viability and validity in today's ever-increasing demand for accountability within public education. Environmental education must meet some accepted standards and the authors demonstrate very effectively the need to develop programme evaluation methods based on "quality" criteria (i.e. teaching and learning processes, school policy, organization and external relations). The emphasis is on the need to move beyond evaluations as "measurement," where complex variables within society and education are reduced to numbers, and move towards building new knowledge, attitudes and behaviours. Moreover, the authors stress the need to use a socio-critical paradigm with respect to the evaluation of environmental education programmes. A socio-critical paradigm combines quantitative and qualitative approaches in evaluation, while facilitating the negotiation of the criteria for education for change amongst the stakeholders and participants.

The most fundamental point the authors make is that students must develop their skills in the area of critical thinking. Students must be comfortable with, and have the ability to, express their ideas surrounding an issue. The authors speak of the capacity of students to identify the diversity of values, recognize accessible solutions and make qualified choices. Environmental issues are complex societal issues. In many ways, quality environmental education is the development of a citizenship willing to become involved in the betterment of society as part of a democracy. The authors speak of the need to develop "action competence," or the desire to become involved in environmental issues, as opposed to "behaviour modification," where direction is given to the student beforehand. As an environmental educator, I see the value of their focus on the development of "action competence," as it may help to eliminate cognitive dissonance or that feeling often experienced by students of being overwhelmed into helplessness and hopelessness by complex issues. Correspondingly, the authors' discussion and development of the "language of possibility" versus the "language of critique" is particularly constructive and empowering. A further strength of this book is that the authors demonstrate that environmental issues are also issues of social justice, with all the complexity that one might find within issues of health, poverty, and economic decline.

Overall, readers will find this comparative study and overview of environmental education to be comprehensive and to have sound pedagogy as its basis, making it a useful reference. It is not an easy read due to the rigorous level of research, background information and theoretical approaches used to determine the most recent advancements in the development of envi-

ronmental education and of eco-schools. For this reason, however, it is an extremely valuable resource for educators and school administrators who are looking for ideas and in-depth analyses of trends within the field.

Bill Parish is presently a school administrator with the Toronto District School Board. Bill has worked with students and educators to highlight the importance of environmental education since graduating with a degree in Environmental Studies from the University of Waterloo over 20 years ago.

Lisa Benton-Short & John Rennie Short. (2008). *Cities and Nature.* New York: Routledge. 304 pp.

Benton-Short and Short's *Cities and Nature* critically examines the relationship that exists between nature and cities, specifically in terms of how the natural environment is reflected in the built urban form and how social influences play a significant role in this process. In this work, nature is analyzed as both a key component of urban development and a social phenomenon.

Taking up the role of nature in urban development first, Benton-Short and Short examine the importance of bringing nature into the city through new types of design, such as the urban public parks movement. According to the authors, the urban public parks movement "is a reaction to the problems of the industrial city as planning 'visionaries' offer designs for a reconstructed relationship to nature through urban space" (p. 58). They cite Central Park in New York City as a prime example of the ways in which nature is incorporated into the urban realm. Similarly, Benton-Short and Short lean on Ebenezer Howard's "garden city" as another way in which urban life and green space are brought together. A garden city works to combine features of urban life (i.e. social opportunity, places of amusement) with the country (i.e. open space, fresh air). Through these examples of the urban public parks movement and the garden city, Benton-Short and Short clearly demonstrate the interconnectedness that exists between nature and the built urban environment in city planning and design. Other examples, such as the re-development of waterfront and brownfield sites in cities across the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Japan, showcase attempts made by private developers to incorporate nature into notions of urban progress and expansion. The authors point to the city of Toronto to illustrate how construction at the edge of the city, through waterfront development, can significantly transform the landscape to represent a new type of urban realm.

While it could easily be taken for granted, Benton-Short and Short are careful not to simplify the notion of "nature" in their discussion by also demonstrating the ways in which nature is socially constructed in urban design. For instance, they emphasize how, during the process of urban

development, issues of power are brought to the forefront in deciding how city spaces are supposed to look and, subsequently, how nature is to be introduced into these constructed environments. As their examples show, typically the emergence of an "orderly" nature becomes central to city spaces and reinforces the human intervention that is manifested in the development process.

The political dimensions of urban design are further exemplified through the issues of environmental justice. The authors cite cases in which development decisions are made that situate neighbourhoods corresponding with low socioeconomic status and minority communities on or near toxic areas and dump sites. In these instances, residents are adversely affected by the presence of a nature that is mediated through human intervention and thus these citizens view the relationship between nature and the city as negative. This provides a striking contrast to how nature, constructed as parks and green spaces, is seen more positively by communities with higher socioeconomic status; spaces represented in design strategies such as the garden city and urban parks movement. Through these examples, the authors highlight the social, political and economic factors involved in processes of urban development. They drive home their overall message that, whether positively or negatively, nature plays a significant role in terms of how neighbourhoods and communities are built and develop over time.

Environmental educators will find that *Cities and Nature* is a great resource for teaching about the fundamental interconnections between nature and built urban environments. Benton-Short and Short's work effectively exposes readers to the idea that nature, as defined in its relation to the city, is complex and multi-dimensional. On one hand, the natural environment is very closely connected to the built urban form. On the other hand, it is arguable that there is a disconnection that exists between nature and the city, which is evident through natural disasters and an increasing trend toward manufactured landscapes. In either case, the authors make it clear that understanding the natural environment is crucial for the kinds of urban development that are aimed at greening cities in various ways. As a result, they emphasize the importance of environmental education for urban planners, architects and developers, as well as citizens in general. Urban dwellers play a significant role in processes of urban development and can contribute to the outcome of how a landscape is shaped over time. This book is thus also for anyone interested in understanding how cities change over time, how they influence and are influenced by natural environments, and how people relate to nature and cities in diverse ways.

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Jordi Diez & O.P. Dwivedi (Eds.). *Global Environmental Challenges: Perspectives from the South.* Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press. 322 pp.

The interpenetrative and far-reaching processes of economic and cultural globalization have restructured societies and economies worldwide, to the benefit of few nations and groups in relation to the immense costs incurred by most nations and social groups within both the developed and developing worlds. There have also been immense environmental costs, particularly within the Global South, where most of the world's renewable and non-renewable natural resources have been extracted, to fulfill global economic production and consumption demands. With this as a starting point, *Global Environmental Challenges* will enable readers to glean a fine-grained understanding of how the processes of globalization and global environmentalism are deployed politically, socially, culturally and legally in different southern contexts through examining three key impacts: the new environmental challenges brought by globalization to countries in the Global South; the effect of the international environmental agenda on the politics and policy of such countries; and the extent to which international civil society actors can influence environmental management. In this post-Earth Summit period, editors Díez and Dwivedi, and the contributing authors of *Global Environmental Challenges,* provide a timely and significant analysis of the complex relationships between development, environmental management and globalization.

Díez and Dwivedi, renowned scholars in political science, have assembled an impressive collection of scholars in a book that is well-organized and easy to navigate. The introduction and first chapter are dedicated to framing the broader theoretical issues and debates regarding the main globalization discourses and challenges for environmental development in the Global South. Also discussed is the impetus for, and genesis of, the international environmental movement, particularly the emergence, role and influence of environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOs) and an international environmental agenda focused on achieving environmental sustainability within an increasingly globalized economic order. Recognizing that globalization is much more complex than economic integration, the authors do not restrict their analysis to one globalization discourse but take a more integrated and multi-dimensional analysis of the processes and impacts of globalization. However, the discourse on growing transnational social networks, which go beyond economic integration and create a "respatialization" of socio-cultural relationships facilitated by information and communication technologies (pp. 13-14), seems to feature most prominently.

The main body of the book consists of specific case studies. Chapters 2 to 5 present cases from an Asian perspective, including cases from China, Thailand, Indonesia and India. Chapter 6 describes a Middle Eastern experience with a case study on Lebanon. Chapters 7 to 9 present an African perspective with cases from Uganda, Nigeria and South Africa. The final chap-

ters, 10 to 12, provide a Latin American perspective and include studies on Mexico, Chile and Brazil. Overall, the case studies are excellent in their systematic and nuanced contextualizations of the complex processes and formations that comprise globalization, and the social and political forces driving economic integration and its implications for global environments. Bringing the countries back together as a whole, the concluding section effectively distils the significant contentions and lessons regarding the diverse terrain of environmental challenges and economic reforms throughout the Global South, and the transformative impacts of global environmentalism on local human-ecological relationships, as well as civil society-state relations in the region.

The authors compellingly demonstrate the paradox that globalization poses for the environments in developing countries in terms of the simultaneous emergence of environmental challenges and social injustices inherent to global economic integration and restructuring, as well as the formation of political spaces and environmental management tools for civil society groups to collectively tackle those challenges. They also highlight opportunities for empowering collective environmental action at local and national organizational levels within the diverse social, bio-geographical and political settings of the eleven case studies in the Global South. This is a constructive and refreshing departure from the majority of analyses on globalization and environmental issues that become enmeshed in constructing a dualism between globalization and environmental development.

This book is a useful educational tool at a post-secondary level for understanding the political, economic and environmental dimensions of globalization. The authors present their arguments and perspectives in a focused, cogent and accessible manner that would appeal to readers from a wide range of disciplines who are interested in examining the intersection between globalization forces, complex environmental challenges, and environmental movements. Although many of the points discussed in the book will not be new to people who have been studying the topic, the analysis and case studies provided will definitely strengthen and amplify the reader's understanding of the significant debates in this area. While the editors and authors foreground the positive environmental mobilizations and even transformations made by ENGOs, other grassroots and civil society groups and civil society-state coalitions, they are careful to problematize such political developments and reveal the complexities, conflicts and weaknesses that are rife in any collective movement for substantive change. Moreover, although fairly critical and written from numerous perspectives of the Global South, which tend to be marginalized in more mainstream studies, the book's discourse is very much written in an international development policy language. Lastly, it should also be noted that the authors' analyses do not explicitly challenge the structural power inequities inherent within international development regimes and international multilateral institutions and frameworks.

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Scott Atran & Douglas Medin. (2008). *The Native Mind and the Cultural Construction of Nature.* Cambridge: MIT Press. 333 pp.

Scott Atran and Douglas Medin raise three serious concerns as their motivation for the research reported in their new book, *The Native Mind.* They are: an "increasing sense of diminished human contact with nature" (p. 1); a perceived dwindling of commonsense knowledge (what the authors call "devolution") about the natural world; and the associated loss of ability, individually and collectively, to make the right decisions about the environment. They assert that "a person who cannot distinguish one kind of bird or tree from another cannot respond appropriately to changes in the ecological balance among these living kinds" (p. 36). Consequently, Atran and Medin raise their guiding question early in the book: Can human beings "make the transition from locally sustainable adaptation to global economies without irreparably damaging our environment or destroying local cultures" (p. 13)?

To tackle this question, the authors synthesise the results to date of an ongoing research program begun in 1991. They integrate studies about the structure of biological cognition (peoples' understanding of biology) with analyses of how this understanding is linked to action in diverse ecological and cultural contexts. The book thus brings psychology and anthropology together in understanding how humans come to know nature and how differences in understandings contribute to intergroup conflicts or contributions. The backbone of this research is an enormous amount of interview data amassed through various projects conducted in urban and rural areas of the United States, as well as in Guatemala.

The book alternates between theoretical contributions and case studies. Chapters 1 and 2 set the stage by examining the concepts of devolution and folkbiology, with a special emphasis on folkbiological classifications of species. Chapter 2 then presents a research project tracing evidence of devolution in the Anglophone world by counting, at different time periods, a declining number of quotations referring to trees in the Oxford English Dictionary. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 zoom in on folkbiology by showing how people coming from different social contexts classify species. For example, the authors present a report of a study undertaken in Wisconsin with Menominee Native Americans and non-Natives, which documents the phenomenon of devolution occurring within the non-Native population. Consequently, they

suggest that this is evidence that biological models are constructed differently at a very early age across cultures. Atran and Medin look to examples such as this to "determine which aspects of the development of biological cognition are robust over culture and experience" (p.121) and ultimately find that some biases seem to be universal.

In the concluding section of the book, the authors review different approaches to the study of culture, preparing the reader for their presentations of the North American and Guatemalan case studies in detail. These final chapters examine how folk biological systems combine with local environmental conditions and cultural history to produce peoples' action on the environment. Importantly, they also focus on the role of expert networks in disseminating ecological knowledge, as well as on how differences in understandings contribute to intergroup conflict or cooperation.

The book is well written and with ample detail, but as it draws heavily on previously published work, it sometimes lacks uniformity in language and the flow of ideas is at times disturbed. The authors' discussion of the development of biological cognition across cultural contexts is the most compelling aspect of *The Native Mind*. Unfortunately, while the thesis of devolution warrants a prominent place in the book, the demonstration of its existence is insufficient. The interviews conducted in American schools lack the historical dimension needed to support the idea of devolution, whilst the Oxford English Dictionary research lacks depth. The promising question asked early in the book, as to whether humans can "make the transition from locally sustainable adaptation to global economies without irreparably damaging [the] environment" (p. 13), disappointingly remains unanswered when the reader closes the book.

To be fair, even if the authors do not quite make the leap towards the implications of devolution for environmental management, they nevertheless shed light on some important conclusions which will be of particular interest to readers who are sensitive to cross-cultural education contexts. Atran and Medin conclude that while there exist "universal patterns of categorization (e.g. of species) and reasoning," some principles depend on "having more than modest contact with nature" (p. 3), and others are dependent on the particulars of cultural models. As the authors show in the Wisconsin study (involving non-Native and Menominee children), children do not enter school free of knowledge and beliefs about nature and these early conceptual frameworks can facilitate or interfere with classroom learning. Moreover, the authors point out that anthropocentrism is an acquired cultural model that becomes increasingly widespread in the way children think about nature after they start school. For Menominee children, who tend at an early age to be less anthropocentric than non-Native children, a formal educational system "infused with practices that represent cultural barriers" (p. 273) is a challenge they can tackle only if educators take steps at valuing diversity. This book, therefore, offers a good starting point for addressing diversity issues in edu-

cation and for preparing people to build on diverse understandings of nature in order to make informed and just decisions about the environment.

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Ronald Moore. (2007). *Natural Beauty: A Theory of Aesthetics Beyond the Arts.* Peterborough: Broadview Press. 272 pp.

For environmental educators, the art of appreciating natural beauty is a fundamental component of facilitating meaningful engagement with the environment. Dating back to Kant's "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment," the study of aesthetics is riddled with conceptions of nature which have the potential to transform approaches to the way people engage and experience the environment. Ronald Moore's *Natural Beauty: A Theory of Aesthetics Beyond the Arts* is an eloquent and carefully researched text that invites the reader into the philosophical realm of natural beauty. Through historical and contemporary analyses of aesthetics, Moore lays the groundwork for a renewed account of natural beauty which he presents as his "syncretic theory."

Moore distinguishes two major camps on the issues regarding aesthetic theory: conceptualism and non-conceptualism. The former argues for cognitive and categorical conceptual experiences of natural beauty, while the latter deems aesthetic encounters with nature as resulting from reflective imaginations. After pointing out the merits and weaknesses of both arguments, Moore then introduces the syncretic theory as a third way to draw from the intersection of the aesthetic appreciation of nature and of art. His attempt at bridging the theoretical divide between opposing philosophies is commendable, if ill-considered. In allowing too many philosophers to participate in his discussion of natural beauty, Moore ultimately fails to address their arguments in depth, disposing of them quickly after summarizing them briefly in a single chapter. His argumentative approach results in unanswered questions and a lack of clarity in presenting the syncretic theory, as forerunning issues of aesthetics plague his lines of reasoning.

Although Moore's arguments may remain unconvincing for philosophers of aesthetics, environmental educators can expect to benefit from relevant aspects of the syncretic theory. Moore's theory acknowledges the need to consider how representations of nature in culture potentially influence one's ability to experience nature and that preconceived notions of natural beauty produce potentially contradictory considerations of nature. Moore warns readers against accepting the arguments of contemporary aestheticians, who, he asserts debilitate one's ability to recognize aesthetic experiences by arguing towards dissociative rather than enriched engagements with nature through

sensible judgments. He does this by acknowledging that aesthetic judgments require a refinement of conceptual and sense experiences with nature. For instance, in the section titled "Growing up Aesthetically," Moore believes that such perceptual experiences with nature will result in a sophistication of aesthetic knowledge achieved over time for the individual, as well as in society at large. Here educators can adopt Moore's provision for enfranchising a limited, yet inclusive, aesthetic framework whereby aesthetic evolution is cultivated as one garners knowledge and experience of nature through environmental education and active participation in the natural world.

How can educators apply theory to practice after considering Moore's syncretic theory? For one thing, these ideas can be adopted in exercises that encourage pupils to reflect on the ways that feelings of beauty are produced through representations of nature in cultural media, in comparison to how they may perceive natural beauty in the physical environment. These considerations, when coupled with exploring how one's imagination may be drawn on to creatively engage with natural beauty, can inspire insight into the development of novel aesthetic judgments. A word of caution, however: Moore's arguments are primarily directed at aesthetic philosophers rather than environmental educators, giving only brief references to educational considerations. His writing can be challenging to laypersons and his arguments are confusing at times, particularly due to Moore's use of terminology aimed at those with a background in philosophy. Environmental and art educators seeking to broaden their theoretical conceptions of nature appreciation and employ this text in curriculum may find it most suitable for use at a senior university level.

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Herbert W. Broda. (2008). *Schoolyard-Enhanced Learning: Using the Outdoors as an Instructional Tool, K-8.* Markham: Pembroke Publishers. 182 pp.

As populations become progressively more concentrated in urban areas and children's opportunities to interact with nature diminish, educational professionals are increasingly advocating for the importance of the relationship between the natural environment and children's' learning. In his book, *School Yard Enhanced Learning*, Herbert Broda, Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at Ashland University in Ohio, adds to this body of work. Part theory, part project manual and part activity book, *Schoolyard-Enhanced Learning* gives a balanced and informative introduction to the use of school grounds for teaching. *Schoolyard-Enhanced Learning* joins academic theory with inspirational project ideas and practical advice for edu-

cators, all convincing the reader that venturing out into the schoolyard benefits students' learning on many levels.

Broda's first chapter grounds the book firmly in contemporary academic discourse about the influence that the learning environment has on the learner. Beginning with Frederich Froebel and drawing on work by David Sobel, Stephen Kaplan, Robert Marzano, Gerald Leiberman and Linda Hoody as well as many others, Broda builds his own theory of "change of pace and place." Broda argues that the simple change of environment provided by going down the hall and out into the schoolyard can dramatically increase students' engagement with a given subject. Rather than dismiss or diminish the importance of classroom instruction, Broda claims that taking students outside can enhance skills and concepts introduced in the traditional classroom setting, without the added expense and planning processes that are needed for field trips off school grounds. Broda's reasoning goes beyond the argument that outdoor education can teach students about nature, emphasizing the idea that any instruction outside on school grounds is a practical way for educators to help students realize their maximum learning potential in many subject areas.

In subsequent chapters, Broda offers practical advice on schoolyard use, the logistics of school greening projects and suggestions for successful classroom management in an outdoor setting. Broda then provides his reader with a series of teacher-developed activities, breaking them down into two categories: activities that develop process skills (such as ordering, comparison, analysis) and activities that enhance content areas of curriculum (such as math and physical science). The book concludes with a chapter titled "Beyond the School Yard" with ideas to "prime the pump" and encourage educators to branch out from the schoolyard and use resources in the community to deepen students' connections with nature.

Schoolyard-Enhanced Learning is an excellent starting point for educators seeking information about teaching outdoors. The simplicity of Broda's idea, that nature, from majestic forests to simple grass fields, can provide a change of pace and place for learners, is also a timely reminder that education outdoors does not need to be complicated. Broda's tone is optimistic and easy to read, his advice is practical, and his theory is credibly grounded in both environmental and educational academic theory. While many of his project ideas will be familiar to experienced outdoor educators, and more substantial work exists offering outdoor activity suggestions, Broda's blend of logical instructions and educational theory make this an appealing book for educators and school administrators from all backgrounds.

Carolyn Bailey is a graduate of McGill University and has worked in the fields of organic farming and environmental education in Canada and the US. Carolyn is currently coordinating school and community gardening projects at EcoSource in Mississauga, Ontario.

Laird Christensen & Hal Crimmel. (2008). *Teaching About Place: Learning from the Land.* Reno: University of Nevada Press. 247 pp.

Completing this book was similar to emerging from a backcountry camping trip with fifteen of the most dedicated environmental educators from across the Untied States. Editors Laird Christensen and Hal Crimmel bring the reader on a journey from the Hudson to the Los Angeles river basins and from the Nebraska prairie to Dinosaur National Monument. *Teaching About Place* is a collection of educators' stories from schools and universities across the United States. This collection is an enjoyable read for people interested in outdoor education while also proving to be a pedagogical resource for teachers across academic disciplines. Some of my favourite contributions are the stories written by poets and botanists who act as guides to help students explore the natural world with words.

This collection of stories is invaluable for those who teach writing and literature by revealing broad lessons as the authors share experiences and ideas concerning place-based education. The chapters are often anecdotal as the contributors' narratives of place-based class experiences springboard into pedagogical ponderings, social analysis and professional introspection. For example, Susan Zwinger writes that "discomfort, disgust, cold feet, inclement weather, and sheer terror are teaching tools we share" (p. 29), while John Elder reflects that "the work of the word and the adventure of the trail became complementary dimensions of a personal and collective quest" (p. 56). The great benefit of this book is the unique capacity of each author to communicate their experiences of working with students to explore human and non-human life.

The submissions are personal and collective stories, with universal appeal, told from geographical spaces throughout America. Rather than prescriptive, the chapters are suggestive in nature and each article includes a brief reading list from the course or program taught by the author. This combination of class narrative and reading list is a valuable resource for the both a reader new to environmental literature and those well-versed in place based education.

The book begins alongside Laird Christensen's class from Green Mountain College in Vermont. These students have spent a block of time studying a single place, the Hudson River, through overlapping disciplines. Through story and reflection Christensen reminisces about the experience of the course as they travelled with the rivers current towards New York City. Christensen juxtaposes environmental realities within the social context of the then recent 9/11 attacks. The class of college students met with numerous experts, including historians, naturalists, and company spokespeople, as they travelled downstream. By becoming familiar with the river historically, culturally and scientifically, the students return to their college and hosted an evening event to present their findings. After studying together they shared

diverse opinions with the larger community, thereby creating a rich discourse concerning the river they had come to know in new ways. "Try making that point in a traditional classroom" exclaims Laird (p.4).

Methods of personal and academic reflection and pedagogical examples are woven throughout this collection of writing as each educator recounts experiences working across academic disciplines. In a unanimous voice, the fifteen contributors have said that it is important that both students and teachers learn within their geography. For those who appreciate place-based education, are looking for ideas and resources or would like to read stories of success and struggle, this is an excellent resource.

Ben Laurie is a grower of vegetables, peddler of bikes and a curious poet, who calls Cortez Island home.

Jeffrey Mathes McCarthy. (Ed.). (2008). *Contact: Mountain Climbing and Environmental Thinking*. Reno: University of Nevada Press. 242 pp.

As a mountaineer of decades, I was intrigued by this book and its premises. It is often assumed that if people engage in adventure outdoors then they automatically are endowed with environmental stewardship. For instance, in sports like downhill skiing we can anecdotally observe that natural settings merely enhance the enjoyment of the activity without necessarily ensuring skiers become stewards of the environment. Is it the same for mountain climbers – is it just the mountain for sport or is there something else?

This book has two very different aspects to it. The first is that it is an immensely entertaining and readable anthology of short stories about mountain climbing. Even to the non-climber the stories imbibe a sense of excitement and the mindset that drive people to scale the heights and endure hardships in the name of adventure. This leads to the second aspect – why do we do it? George Mallory when asked why he wanted to scale Everest, replied simply, "Because it is there." This book is much more than simply a collection of well-written stories. McCathy brings us into this sports arena and shows us in a clear way what it is that makes mountaineers, even at the risk of life, tackle the mountains and more importantly for this review, McCathy helps reveal the mountaineer's mindset to the natural world.

A lengthy introduction sets the stage for the book's story choices. These are delineated into three clear sections. The first is named "Conquest." Mallory's quote about Everest is indicative of this classic human-versus-nature perspective. The subjective nature of these stories is characterized by the human triumph over epic events and weather conditions. While this is certainly true of stories in the later sections of the book, the epic itself is the central theme. Adversity makes the situation memorable.

The second section is aptly named "Caretaking," and involves ideas of conservation and appreciation of the natural world. Observations of the effects of global warming on mountain ice are numerous and there exists a sense of something being lost in the world. This characterises the change of mindset when North Americans first tried to tame nature and then realized it had value beyond its mineral and utilitarian benefits. What makes the mountain environment unique for these ideas is that while mountains are often conserved in wild parks set aside for human appreciation, the high mountains seem to proclaim themselves as preservation sites where humans are only transient visitors.

The last section "Connection," is that aspect of mountaineering where the spiritual meets the subjective. Conquest has long been associated with the human desire to achieve and explore, yet the "flow" of a climber on a mountain can lead to a transcendental experience in which the climber's senses find a connection with the mountain beyond the material nature of rock and ice. It is this connection of the mountaineer to the intangible aspects of the mountain that opens up discussion of the broader question concerning human involvement with nature.

This book is a positive and notable addition to the field of environmental education where any class or discussion group can invite the reader to review the utilitarian versus the spiritual nature of modern sports and our human connection to nature. McCathy has chosen stories that emphasize three major motivations for being in natural settings that could translate into other areas of environmental thinking. Indeed, it would be interesting to apply the ideas and concepts gleaned from these mountaineering stories and compare them to experiences and mindsets of other nature-based sports. While being in nature certainly does promote greater appreciation for natural settings, and without doubt in a few instils a genuine love for places wild and the pristine, does involvement in natural setting recreation always mean a connection to nature? What is the motive for being in a wild setting?

For the non-mountaineer, a quick trip to Google Images to view mountaineers in action would enlighten them in the use of crampons, ice-tools, and climbing equipment to enhance the more technical descriptions often found in climbing stories. These stories are fascinating in themselves, but the varied perspectives of nature coupled within the narratives lead the reader to understand how mountaineering is somewhat unique among modern outdoor sports in elucidating the difference from simply recreating in nature to being a part of nature. For climbers this will serve to enhance memories of their own experiences, and for armchair climbers, the stories are entertaining. For either, they are thought-provoking, easy to understand and philosophically-rich narratives of human connections to nature.

Richard Jurin is an Associate Professor of Biological Education and Environmental Studies (ENST) Coordinator at the University of Northern Colorado, teaching varied ENST courses and Environmental History.

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Thank you to Jason Zou, Val Gibbons, Blair Niblett, and Jan Oakley at Lakehead University for their work on the website: <http://cjee.lakeheadu.ca>.

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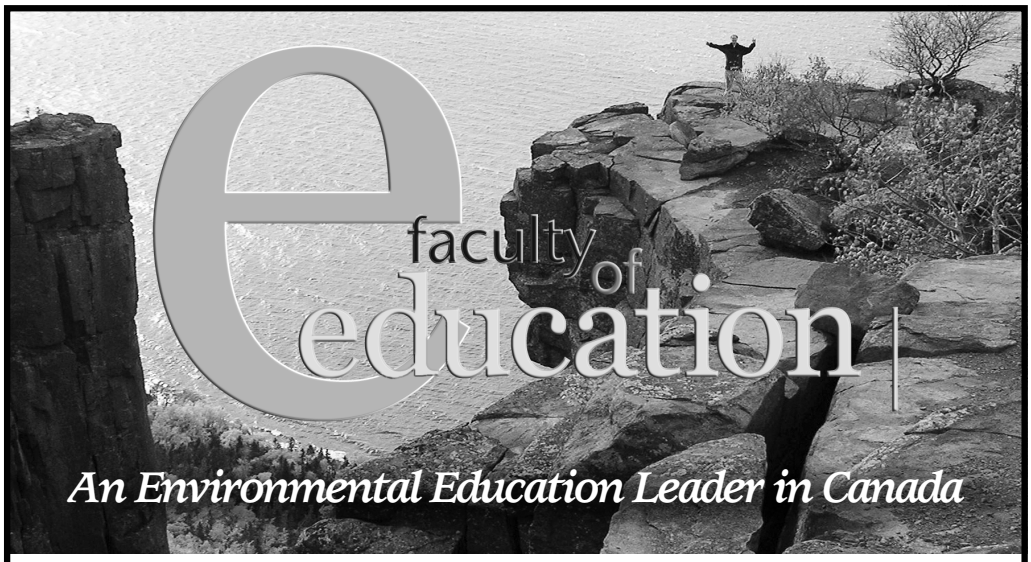

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