Local Authority Historic Parks in the UK
ILAM SERVICES LTD & STEWART HARDING, 2000
Cultural Trends 38, 10, 2000 Policy Studies Institute
£41.00, 62 pp.
ISBN 0 85374 778 7 (pb)

This useful research study brings into focus some of the dilemmas facing environmental education in relation to the availability of open spaces in Britain for recreational and educational use. Responses were received from 201 local authorities accounting for 830 historic parks and 12,175 open spaces.

Definitions relating to open spaces, recreation grounds and parks proved problematic as did the funding levels associated with such places with many amounting to little more than grounds maintenance carried out by outside contractors. This highlighted an increasing problem regarding lack of local knowledge held by operational staff, due to the dismantling of parks departments and their associated long experience of parks management. Contractual staff are also less likely to assist in research projects. Together with a regime driven by maintenance which commits to standard tasks without any room for developmental work, many in the parks profession consider such a state of affairs to be a serious weakness in the overall management structure.

All is not lost, though, as Harding recounts the example of the London Borough of Newham whose more strategic approach regards good parks as encouraging commercial investment in the area thereby increasing the value of neighbouring property. The free park amenities are promoted by the council as part of its social inclusion policy. Such an approach is also taken by Glasgow City Council although there was some evidence to suggest that the authority’s own park strategy was weakened by the lack of a national park strategy to which it could be related.

An interesting section describes the reasons why many Victorian parks were built on such a grand scale in robust materials to discourage vandalism and the case is argued for having to sometimes ‘win back’ parks through a concerted but limited campaign through the use of CCTV cameras and dedicated staff.

A striking result from the questionnaires showed the need for training in community involvement and management as part of the requirement of Best Value and here the role of schools and interested teachers in trying to break out of classroom-based practice alone could make a useful contribution. As Tim Smit concludes in a final commentary of the report: ‘how ironic that just as the National Curriculum, through the excellent work of the Panel for Sustainability, has adopted environmental education as a key area, there should be any debate about the value of parks’.

This short report offers some hope, however, and serves as a timely snapshot of the state of open spaces in Britain which presumably will be fed into the work of the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce. Previous initiatives should ring a note of caution though, especially in relation to polarisation of best practice. In its conclusions, the report states that the clearest picture to emerge from the data is the continuing polarisation of the standard of parks, with ‘the good getting better and the poor often getting worse.’

This somewhat mirrors a conclusion from David Tyldesley’s 1986 ‘Analysis of the role and performance of local authorities in nature conservation’ when he states: ‘One of the most
significant features [of the 1986 report] is the discrepancy between the achievements of the progressive authorities and the apathy of the reluctant ones ... there is a real need for a new central government initiative to give new motivation and guidance to local authorities’ nature conservation work.’

Fourteen years is surely long enough to establish a way forward and Harding’s report should provide the Taskforce with some timely reminders to get a move on.

John Parry
Institute of Education, University of Sussex

REFERENCE

Tyldesley, D. (1986) Gaining Momentum (Oxford, Pisces Publications/BANC).

Solutions for an Environment in Peril
Anthony B. Wolbarst, 2001
Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore
£15.50
ISBN 0 8018 6594 8 (pb)

This book is the second volume of a compilation of essays based on an ongoing series of seminars hosted by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The contributors have all given seminars at the EPA on what they consider to be the most pressing environmental problems with possible solutions. Within the EPA, they are thought to be some of the most influential men and women representing the environmental movement within the US. The mission of the EPA is to ‘protect human health and to safeguard the natural environment — air, water, and land — upon which life depends. For 30 years, EPA has been working for a cleaner, healthier environment for the American people.’ The mission of the EPA represents the efforts of this book.

The book provides a series of thought-provoking essays on various methods of addressing commonly held views of environmental problems and possible solutions. It succeeds in adequately addressing the EPA’s perceptions of the most pressing environmental problems and providing some food for thought in tackling these issues through a variety of essay topics. The book also portrays many different historical environmental conflicts within the US and implications for future policy-making.

The topics of the essays are somewhat wide-ranging and divided into seven parts. Part One. The Introduction by Kathryn Fuller (president of the World Wildlife Fund) sets the tone of the book and provides a description of the major environmental problems: global warming, toxic pollution of the air, water and soil, loss of wildlife habitats and reduction of biodiversity. Ms. Fuller discusses the success of WWF’s conservation work and the importance of recognising local needs and abilities of diverse people and cultures. That said however, she doesn’t tie this in with her over-arching message portraying WWF’s mission of protecting biological diversity, sustainable use of resources and preventing pollution, as she relates developing nations’ environmental failings with poverty and ignorance and doesn’t address underlying development priorities and influences on the choices and actions in developing nations.

Part Two: Drivers of change: population, resources and sustainability, features the voices of Gaylord Nelson (founder of Earth Day), Garrett Hardin (author of The Tragedy of the Commons) and Ben Wattenberg (political commentator and host of public television’s Think Tank). All three contributors address the issue of population as being the main underlying environmental issue. I found Garrett Hardin’s essay particularly valuable as it provides a provocative and challenging explanation of his view of the three kinds of education: literacy, numeracy and eloacy and human’s ‘take’ relationship with natural resources. Both Gaylord Nelson and Ben Wattenburg focus on population. While Gaylord Nelson puts forth the importance of adopting a mainstream environmental ethic and thoroughly relates it population control he falls short in more thoroughly addressing the parallel issues of consumption choices and habits. Ben Wattenburg provides a demographic and statistical illustration of population trends worldwide.
Part Three: Agents of change: government, features the voices of William Ruckelshaus (the EPA’s first administrator) and David Brower (founder of Friends of the Earth and the Earth Island Institute). Both men write about the role of the EPA — its past, present and challenges for the future. William Ruckelshaus reflects upon the growth of the EPA and its successes in gaining popularity, creating needed environmental policies and regulations. What I found indispensable in his essay was the emphasis he put on education, that the EPA takes on the primary role of creating more awareness amongst policy-makers, the business and corporate world and citizens in general. David Brower illustrates a modified EPA — the US Environmental, Conservation, Preservation and Restoration Agency that intervenes in blind growth and recognises the values of indigenous knowledges.

Part Four: Agents of change: the private sector, features the voices of Jon Roush (former president of the Wilderness Society), William Meadows (current president of the Wilderness Society) and Ted Turner (vice-chairman AOL Time Warner). This section provides past examples of conservation and preservation efforts and conflicts at the local and national levels and proposals for future efforts. Ted Turner’s essay lays out a list of promises that he feels might begin to create a more sustainable mindset amongst Americans. Jon Roush’s essay is particularly valuable as he attempts to provide a framework necessary for the success of community-based environmental problem-solving (through spirit of community, local awareness of need for rule or agreement, adequate technological support, access to information, institutional framework for action, joining micro and macro institutions, access to funding, local leadership) following a description of two very different approaches to two well-known historical conservation conflicts within the US (Hetch Hetchy and the Louisiana Black Bear).

Part Five: Incentives for change: engaging the business community, features the voices of Thomas Lovejoy (Smithsonian scientist serving as chief biodiversity adviser to the World Bank), Amory Lovins (cofounder and co-CEO of Rocky Mountain Institute), Fred Smith, Jr. (founder and president of the conservative Competition Enterprise Institute). In this section, I found Fred Smith’s essay interesting as he set out a logical argument for a higher priority on the role of private ownership and individual responsibility in environmental problem-solving in the EPA.

Part Six: Tools for managing change: mathematical models, risk analysis and communication, features the voices of Jerry Mahlman (director of NOAA’s Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory and professor of atmospheric science at Princeton University), Max Baucus (member of the US Senate Environment and Public Works Committee) and Vincent Covello and Peter Sandman (both professors). Each essay is valuable in that it provides clear explanations of scientific challenges within environmental problem-solving and decision-making by addressing climate change, modelling and policy action (Mahlman), risk analysis and subsequent priority setting (Baucus) and the obstacles and evolution of risk communication (Covello and Sandman).

Part Seven: Hope, features the voice of Jane Goodall. I found this essay very valuable and refreshing to the book as it provides a female reflective voice that implies lessons learned from the non-human world in a non-American context. Jane Goodall writes openly and honestly and conveys her hopes and dismay through her years of professional work in Africa and travelling internationally for public-speaking purposes.

Criticisms of the book are general criticisms toward the EPA and the environmental movement within the US. I found the conceptual framework of these major environmental problems and solutions as predominantly dualistic, insular, narrow and marginalising. ‘Environment’ is primarily viewed as non-human nature that needs to be ‘saved’ and America is placed outside of the global context with its prosperous ‘needs’ and subsequent implications on the rest of the world remaining basically unchallenged. The voices of women (with the exception of two essays), different cultures and contexts (with the exception Jane Goodall’s essay), income-backgrounds and youth are virtually silent through the book with the representation of ‘influential men and women’ contributors being white, western-educated, predominantly male, upper-middle class and middle-aged.

On a personal note, I am reminded of my narrower views of environmental problems and solutions prior to my experiences of living and working in the UK and Pakistan (being raised and educated in America). My more recent experiences, here in the UK, have greatly challenged my previous perceptions of key terms and notions such as ‘environment’, ‘development’, ‘sustainability’, ‘global environmental problems’, ‘education’ and ‘overpopulation’. I
now view these terms within a much wider context, taking into account the importance of different cultural worldviews and epistemologies, local contexts, legitimacy of knowledges outside modern scientific ideologies, life-long learning, consumption habits, inequality and wealth distribution, politics and power relations between and within nations and the development agenda imposed by OECD countries. Perhaps the EPA should consider taking steps to also better include America as part of the larger global picture, including the recognition of ‘influential’ voices from outside the white, affluent middle-aged male contributions that dominate this book.

KELLY TEAMY

Department of Education and Professional Studies, King’s College London

Sustainable Education: re-visioning learning and change
STEPHEN STERLING, 2001
Schumacher Briefing No. 6, Green Books, Dartington
£5.00, 88 pp.
ISBN 1 87009 899 4 (pb)

(The reviewer wishes to acknowledge the helpful contribution that the debate about this book on the World Wildlife Fund for Nature-UK website has played in writing this review, www.wwflearning.co.uk).

This book is a valuable contribution to the literature on education and sustainability. Its greatest strength is its constructive, positive, proactive approach. The book’s clear prose style and the limited use of esoteric terminology brings a lightness of touch which generally makes for lucid argument, though some have challenged this interpretation. Another strength of the book is that it is one of the few texts in the field which acknowledges the tactical and practical importance of addressing change.

The book is an excellent synopsis of a process-focused, inclusive, participatory, holistic vision of education which addresses sustainability from a systems perspective. Sterling conceives of this view as an ecological paradigm of education, which he calls ‘sustainable education’. It is an excellent introduction to some of the main debates in the field for those who wish to grasp what a transformatory education might look like and, more importantly, why transformation of our view of education is necessary if sustainable societies are to be realised. The book’s limitations lie in its status as a Briefing, not only in the brevity that this term implies, which inevitably leaves unanswered questions, but also because it was written to an externally determined brief.

It has been suggested that the recent debate about education for the environment in this journal represents a sign of maturity in the field of environmental education writing. This may be true when judged from the norms of modernist academic debate. Sterling’s book, however, focuses on inclusion and the tolerance of difference. He does not deny that there are tensions and contested views of what sustainable education is about, but in proposing his ecological paradigm he focuses on agreement rather than difference. Such an approach is crucial in an applied interdisciplinary endeavour, such as sustainable education, which charges both educators and educated with the responsibility to act. Sterling is in good company when he observes that there isn’t time for academic combat about sustainability and sustainable education, E.O. Wilson (2002) makes the same point very forcibly in The Future Of Life.

Sterling is unequivocal in arguing that sustainability requires changes in the actions of individuals and societies; changes in knowledge and understanding and/or values and attitudes alone are insufficient. But he is equally clear that such changes in actions need to be rooted in praxis, in the integration of practice with sound theoretical foundations. This is not the view of philosopher as academic critic, but the Thoreauvian view of the philosopher as practitioner and theoretician which implies coherence between the policies that educationalists espouse and the actions that they and their institutions perform.

The general approbation with which this briefing has been received by educators with differing environmental philosophies indicates its success in presenting a unifying rather than divisive view of sustainable education. Sterling’s secret lies in deploying his argument at what Naess refers to as level two, the platform of a set of principles. Avoiding Naess’s first level of
ultimate values (there is little discussion of different environmental philosophies such as social ecology and deep ecology in this text) is a wise strategy for it is at this level that much of the negativity that characterises academic debates about education and sustainability originates. Equally, not locating his argument at the levels of decisions or concrete actions is philosophically consistent with his assertion that sustainable actions are spatially and temporally context sensitive and pragmatically wise, for it avoids the prescription with which modernist education has stifled the creativity and local decision making that is essential if education is to become sustainable.

For Sterling, the key to sustainable education is process, how people can be empowered to make decisions about sustainable actions. As he appreciates, such an education is more difficult, time consuming and unpredictable, but it offers the best prospect of sustainable lifestyles because the process is owned by its participants. Thus change is seen as a coevolutionary dialectic in which our view of the world shapes the world which in turn shapes us. This is not to say that Sterling’s ecological paradigm is not concerned with outcomes, (process itself is an outcome), but to affirm that sustainable actions cannot be centrally prescribed because we do not fully know what sustainable societies will look like in the future and sustainability as an applied concept is also both culturally and contextually dependent.

In addressing change Sterling usefully distinguishes between, vision (why), image (what) and design (how). The first two are frequently conflated in writings about education and sustainability and the last all too often ignored. He argues that four types of response are possible; no change, accommodatory, reformatory and transformatory change and it is with the last of these and the design phase of change that his chapters on change are primarily concerned. But the most significant aspect of his writing on change is the recognition of the need to balance the visionary and the practicable.

Sustainability requires societal transformation. While some may find Sterling’s ecological paradigm visionary and readily achievable, he recognises that others will find this vision blinding and that a more pragmatic and progressive approach to change will be necessary if such people are to be included in the sustainable education project. This is not an argument that ignore deschooling and homeschooling and privilege the status quo and evolutionary change over radical and revolutionary change, as some have suggested, it is the argument that without a Gramscian strategy of subversive complicity the societal changes that sustainability entails are unlikely to be achieved. We have to work with and within existing institutions in order to transform and/or replace them with radical alternatives. Dinosaurs did not become birds overnight. Educators have to perceive the inconsistencies between current schooling and the transformation that sustainable education requires before schools will change or disappear. But educators also need to know how to design change; awareness of the dualities that Sterling outlines between modernist and sustainable education is insufficient.

The book’s brevity has led to the criticism that too much text is presented as synoptic tables, but this is an acceptable consequence of its role as a briefing. However this strategy does lead to a tendency to present argument as a series of dualisms, particularly that between modernist education and Sterling’s ecological paradigm. For example, the book distinguishes transmisisonal and transformational teaching and learning without acknowledging the transactional teaching and learning that can occur within modernist and sustainable education. The text has also been criticised for its academic language, criticisms which appears to employ academic as a euphemism for impenetrable and irrelevant. There is a moral here for those steeped in the critical discourse of academia for this text is infinitely more penetrable than much academic writing. Indeed, Sterling’s text could be a lesson for those who seek to get their argument across to teachers and other educators. Should those seeking to persuade educational practitioners peruse their own language and syntax?

However, given the book’s enforced brevity it is a pity that Sterling gets drawn into the superficialities of the debate about language. Despite his lucid conceptualisation of an ecological paradigm of education in Chapter One, like much writing about education, sustainability and language he gets drawn into a debate which is more about labelling than conceptualisation and more about problematising than deconstruction. For example, the term education for sustainability is critiqued for its unrealistic focus on product, yet such criticisms evaporates if this label is attached to an education for process. He uses the term education for sustainability himself, in the text, as a synonym for sustainable education to describe visions of education which share characteristics of his ecological paradigm. Does it really matter if Sterling wishes
to call his ecological paradigm sustainable education and others wish to call it environmental education or education for sustainability as long as there is a shared vision similar to Sterling’s ecological paradigm? By focusing on labels we may miss conceptual agreement. Problematising terms such as environmental education and education for sustainability may disguise equifinality, that terms may be used to describe the same concept. By focusing on terms and the language of problems we may miss the overlaps and spaces which promote synergy.

This book represents a starting point in the quest for sustainable education rather than a definitive text and I am sure that Sterling would agree with this proposition. The debate this book has initiated needs to be continued in the positive and constructive vein that Sterling employs. It is a refreshing change from the adversarial. A special edition of this journal which was devoted to constructive papers which develop the argument for sustainable education further would be a welcome development if others are prepared to join Sterling in sticking their heads over the parapet.

There is an aspect of language surrounding the sustainable education debate which does warrant further attention in such an edition. Like many texts in the field Sterling’s book is cast in liberal emancipatory political language. Do we not need to recognise as Bowers (1997) suggests that there may be tensions between such language and the root metaphor of conservation implicit in many holistic cosmologies? Is there also a tension between seeing change as organic, complex and chaotic and taking a systems perspective which implies that there may be a system that we can know? Or is the term system being used here as a metaphor for holism?

There are a number of unanswered questions that such an edition might also address which largely relate to power and change. What conception of power is sustainable education built on? Is power over people compatible with sustainability’s emphasis on power to people? How was change achieved in some of the case studies provided in the book? The chapter on case studies would have been more useful if there had been fewer of them and there had been more analysis of how the changes outlined had been achieved. The examination of change in the book is largely generic so the question about how we achieve the change to sustainable lifestyles through education still remains largely unanswered. What we need are models or theories of change that describe ways out of the mechanistic educational quagmire; that acknowledge that change can come from outwith as well as within modernist educational systems. This would be a view of change which saw all change as a combination of the visionary and the practicable. For some the emphasis would be more on the visionary for others the approach would be rooted more in the practicable. Sterling’s book has gone a long way in helping educators to develop the visionary, for which he deserves both thanks and congratulation. The emphasis now needs to be on the constructive development of the practicalities of this ecological paradigm, the sustaining of sustainable education.

TONY SHALLCROSS
Institute of Education, Manchester Metropolitan University

REFERENCES

BOWERS, C.A. (1997) The Culture of Denial, Why the Environmental Movement Needs a Strategy for Reforming Universities and Public Schools (Albany, NY, State University of New York Press).
WILSON, E.O. (2002) The Future of Life (London, Little Brown).

Educating for sustainability/Umweltbildung und Agenda 21/Former à la Durabilité
GERHARD DE HAAN, JULIA MANN & ANNA MARIE REID (Hrsg./eds.), 2000
Lang, Frankfurt am Main; Berlin; Bern; Bruxelles; New York; Oxford; Wien
ISBN 3 631 36 752 X
£17.00, 546 pp.
www.service-umweltbildung.de/eee/

“Countless European projects have taken on the challenge of Agenda 21 since its adoption … These projects endeavour to put the changes advocated by Agenda 21 into practice, particularly
within environmental education, but also within development education, and to realise "education for sustainable development". However, our own individual perspective is often extremely narrow: We may know or be aware of many of these projects, however, we are only really familiar with the projects that are being carried out in our own countries and perhaps one or two projects from other countries. So what has been missing up until now? The answer to this question is: the attempt to offer an insight into the contents and methodical orientation of these innovative practices. An insight which goes beyond borders and adopts a European perspective.”

[Editors’ preface, p.9]

The publication of this volume of case studies presents the reader with two ways of accessing a range of “innovative projects on education for sustainability” from 20 European countries. Available on paper and the Internet, both formats present the “working methods and experiences” of 47 European educational projects on sustainable development from the mid to late 1990s, with the Internet version containing an additional 39 examples that did not find their way into the paper-based edition.

The case studies are written in German, English or French. Brief overviews of the projects are available in all three languages and are grouped thematically under three main headings in both versions (Table 1). Two of the headings represent traditional sectoral distinctions in educational institutions; the third, aspects of the wider arena for educational activities (Table 2).

Table 1 indicates the distribution of examples by country, a way of grouping the projects that is also available to users of the website. The 39 additional examples are mainly from Germany (on the environmental management of educational institutions, training, and new fields of learning), Austria (on the Environmental Education in Teacher Education (Training) (“Umweltbildung in der LehrerInnenbildung” (UMILE) research project) and Spain (environmental management). Overall, the sources and relative distribution strongly reflect the location, expertise and predilections of both the editors and those of the sponsors of the exercise: the Department of Environmental Education at the Freie University Berlin, the German Association for Environmental Education, and the German Federal Environmental Foundation.

What might be made of this volume? First, the editors are to be congratulated on collecting together concrete examples of environmental educational practices that are considered successful as education for sustainable development. While the level of detail varies (along with the consistency of presentation, geographical distribution of examples by theme, and the standard of written English), the sheer wealth of exemplification of educating for sustainability is striking and a positive indicator of change and innovation during the 1990s, within and outside local, national and regional policy recommendations in Europe. That the examples are made available in both paper format and on the Internet is particularly welcome, as is the space given to the discussion of the aims, activities, successes and difficulties associated with each project.

Second, the editors make clear their own understanding of the meaning of education for sustainable development ["Bildung für eine nachhaltige Entwicklung"], and its relation to environmental education ["Umweltbildung"]. These distinctions can be absent in publications of this kind, as well as in the documentation of conferences, policy statements and examples of good practice that address both areas (for example, compare with www.nc.uk.net/esd, the UK government’s guidance on promoting education for sustainable development). We note that the practices associated with ‘repurposing’ electronic data and alternative ‘renderings’ for different audiences, purposes and users are becoming increasingly familiar to an internet-savvy generation, and in this case, are made use of in the ‘meta data’ for the examples published online. Moreover, educators and researchers in environmental education and education for sustainable development have often been one and the same, changing their ‘hats’ and the ‘spin’ given to their case studies to fit with new (or not so new) audiences. With this in mind, we found it particularly helpful that the editors spell out their active involvement in environmental education and Agenda 21, neither pretending that environmental education and education for sustainable development are identical, even when their contributors attempt to conflate them or remain silent on their relations. For example:

“...In accordance with the ideas of Agenda 21, environmental education has transformed itself, just as development education has, into a new specialist discipline: Education for sustainable development which, under the premise of global inter and intra generation justice, resolves to address a mixture of ecological, economical and social aspects, as well as safeguarding limited resources and protecting the environ-
| Country          | Book examples | Additional Internet examples (+) | Ecology and Sustainability | School Eco-Auditing | Economy and Consumption | Energy | Campaigns | Teacher Training | New Courses of Study and Training Programmes | Greening of Third Level Educational Institutions | Local and Global | Indicators | New Media and New Methods | Exhibitions |
|------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|--------|-----------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Austria          | 3             | +4                               | 1                         |                   |                        |        |           | 1 + 3           | +1                                            | 1                                                             | 1               |            |                           |             |
| Bulgaria         | 1             |                                  |                           |                   |                        |        |           | 1               |                                               |                                                               |                 |            |                           |             |
| Denmark          | 1             |                                  | 1                         |                   |                        |        |           | 1               |                                               |                                                               |                 |            |                           |             |
| Estonia          | 2             |                                  | 1                         |                   |                        |        |           | 1               |                                               |                                                               |                 |            |                           |             |
| France           | 1             |                                  | 1                         |                   |                        |        | 1         | 1               |                                               |                                                               |                 |            |                           |             |
| Germany          | 16            |                                  | 1                         |                   |                        | 1 + 3  | 2         | 1               | 2 + 1                                         | 1 + 3                                         | 1 + 3           | 1          |                           | 2 + 3        |
| Great Britain    | 3             |                                  | 2                         |                   |                        | 1 + 3  | 2         | 1               | 1 + 3                                         | 1 + 3                                         | 1 + 3           | 1          |                           |             |
| Greece           | 2             |                                  | 1                         |                   |                        | 1 + 3  | 2         | 1               |                                               |                                                               |                 |            |                           |             |
| Ireland          | 2             |                                  | 1                         |                   |                        | 1 + 3  | 2         | 1               |                                               |                                                               |                 |            |                           |             |
| Italy            | 1             |                                  | 1                         |                   |                        |        |           | 1               |                                               |                                                               |                 |            |                           |             |
| Lithuania        | 1             |                                  |                           |                   |                        |        |           | 1               |                                               |                                                               |                 |            |                           |             |
| Malta            | 1             |                                  |                           |                   |                        |        |           | 1               |                                               |                                                               |                 |            |                           |             |
| The Netherlands  | 1             |                                  | 1                         |                   |                        |        |           | +1              |                                               |                                                               |                 |            |                           |             |
| Norway           | 1             |                                  |                           |                   |                        |        |           | 1               |                                               |                                                               |                 |            |                           |             |
| Portugal         | 1             |                                  | 1                         |                   |                        |        |           | 1               |                                               |                                                               |                 |            |                           |             |
| Romania          | 2             |                                  |                           |                   |                        |        |           | 1               |                                               |                                                               |                 |            |                           |             |
| Slovakia         | 1             |                                  |                           |                   |                        |        |           | 1               |                                               |                                                               |                 |            |                           |             |
| Spain            | 5             |                                  | 1                         |                   |                        |        |           | 1               | +1                                            | +1                                            | 1               | +1         |                           | 2            |
| Sweden           | 1             |                                  |                           |                   |                        |        |           | 1               |                                               |                                                               |                 |            |                           |             |
| Switzerland      | 1             |                                  |                           |                   |                        |        |           | 1               |                                               |                                                               |                 |            |                           |             |
TABLE 2. Grouping the projects, by level and focus

Level and Focus

**Primary and Secondary Level Education**

*Ecological or Sustainable Profiling*

Providing educational institutions with an ecological or sustainable profile is a common strategy when it comes to practising education for sustainable development. Such a strategy is far-reaching, it goes beyond individual projects, as its central aim is to base all aspects of (daily) school life on the principles of sustainable development.

*School Eco-Audit*

Implementing an environmental management system (EMS) – which is adapted to meet school requirements – is a specific and technically oriented way of ‘greening’ a school. In accordance with the EU eco-audit regulations, an EMS aims to effectively reduce energy consumption.

*Economy and Consumption*

Sustainability demands new ways of consumption and economic management. These issues are addressed by projects, such as those which implement ecological management; analyse product lines; or set out to bridge the gap between school life, professional working life and/or the economy.

*Energy Projects*

Energy projects are classical elements in environmental education, at both primary and secondary school level, and also within education for sustainable development. However, today’s projects are noticeably more ambitious, with their emphasis on ‘state-of-the-art’ forms of technology and economic efficiency.

*Campaigns*

The aims and orientation of regional, national and international campaigns vary considerably. However, the projects in this category share the following key aims: sensitising the (mainly school) population/public to the natural environment and to cultural environments; shaping and creating good ways of living, quality of life and a sustainable future: And last but not least, supporting or launching environmental projects.

**Third Level and Vocational Education**

*Teacher Training*

Efforts are often made to implement education for sustainable development by reforming teacher training, with the guiding principles being: interdisciplinary elements, active participation, a combination of theory and practice and project oriented work.

*New Courses of Study and Training Programs*

New courses of study and vocational training programs – which often introduce environmental
Table 2. Grouping the projects, by level and focus—continued

Technology and management know-how into courses that have (until now) been less concerned with environmental questions – are being designed to educate the future experts in sustainable development. These courses/programs are taking a more general, wide-reaching approach to specialisation, as opposed to previous, out-dated ‘one-sided’ or over specific, i.e. limited, specialisation.

The Greening of Third Level Educational Institutions

The greening of universities and vocational training institutions is a vital strategy in the integration of environmental and sustainable issues within the every day life of students and teachers. The implementation of environmental management systems is a part of this strategy, as is the introduction of new learning and teaching methods.

New Fields of Learning

Local and Global

Equity as a major element of sustainable development is the background issue of the[se] ... projects: Local Agenda 21 initiatives lay emphasis on including all groups of the population in the debate on local development towards sustainability. International projects are taking up global justice in promoting new partnerships, transferring environmental technology and skills for local development aid or supporting democratization processes.

Indicators for Sustainable Development

It is an important issue of the debate on Agenda 21 which indicators are suitable to measure sustainable development. Their significance is not reduced [to] their political control function but includes pedagogical relevance as well: good indicators are within the grasp of the public they target, they help to define goals and actions, and are a valuable instrument for the planning, realization and evaluation of local Agenda processes as well as other educational projects.

New Media and New Methods

Discussion about education on sustainable development is often concerned with didactics. Which methods are suitable for stimulating and moderating local Agenda 21 initiatives? Which potentialities are offered by new media with regard to specific themes, information or support of learning processes? Such and other questions are tackled by the[se] ... projects.

Exhibitions

Exhibitions are one of the many ways to inform about sustainable development in general or about specific aspects. Through the combination of visual and artistic means of expression with text and the organization of space, exhibitions are able to introduce pupils, experts as well as the general public to sustainability and invite further reflection.

Source: www.service-umweltbildung.de/eee/contentthem.html
ment from pollution and waste. In order to achieve sustainable development, we require new forms of economical development; greater participation from children, young people and all adults; new forms of consumption and the best possible standard of formal education for everyone, which is expanded to incorporate non-formal education. Based on this, education for sustainable development not only includes the traditional environmental education disciplines – biology, geography, physics, chemistry, ethics/civic studies, occupational training, politics – but it also shows strong affiliations to global learning and instruction in the areas of consumption, leisure time activities, mobility and other educational task fields.”

[p. 9]

Third, as exemplified in Table 2, what is used to exemplify appropriate fields for environmental education and education for sustainable development is, on the one hand, diverse and eclectic, on the other, reasoned and broad. While readers are likely to disagree over whether particular examples represent innovative practice, a stimulus for ideas, or provision of new contacts (as the editors claim), the framework for identifying and categorising the projects does shift the focus of debate from primarily that of the formal curriculum and the environmental management of a school, toward wider considerations of other educational institutions, community relations, alternative ways of representing the environment, and environmental, social and intergenerational impacts.

That said, there are a number of weaknesses in the volume. Firstly, on the preceding point, comment by the contributors and the editors on matters of context-specific and Europe-wide policy would have been one way of highlighting the configurations of pedagogy, philosophy and practice among the case studies. So would reflections on the editors’ criteria for ‘innovation’ and ‘innovative projects’; and discussion of the impact of Agenda 21 on the thinking and actions of actors, agents and participants in the projects. (For example, where do conceptions of sustainability ["Nachhaltigkeit"], sustainable development ["nachhaltige Entwicklung"] and environmental education ["Umweltbildung"] coincide or differ? When, and why?) Secondly, the 546 pages of the volume would be made more useable if an index were included, as would that of a search engine on the website. Likewise, greater depth to the overviews would have clarified the purported contributions of projects to environmental education and education for sustainable development, particularly when the 100 words or so in the abstracts failed to capture key features of the projects described thereafter (lessons learned, experience gained, or how the contributors categorised their projects in their own terms and those of the editors, e.g. as representative of a 'European perspective'?). Thirdly, a concluding section that summarised the editors’ thoughts about the projects (their strengths, groupings and the gaps in the “database”), and the prospects for the “Europeanisation” of environmental education, would enhance the reader’s capacity to identify trends and initiatives that promise or threaten change in these areas. It is not clear, for example, whether the editors or contributors believe that the formal education sector informs the theory and practice of environmental education more than the non-formal sector in all the European situations cited in the volume, or, whether there should be a strategy to change their relative importance to environmental education, particularly with the review of Agenda 21 at hand.

Perhaps more seriously, the profile and potential of multiple country projects in educating for sustainability are rendered low in both regards. (As it happens, this goes against the tide of papers published in *Environmental Education Research* during the corresponding period). In the book, the projects are predominately single country focused, with the bulk of transnational work being exemplified by work led by Spanish institutions at a sub-European level, e.g. proximal to the Mediterranean; or work that is already part of existing pan-European initiatives, e.g. FEE’s Eco-Schools ([www.eco-schools.org](http://www.eco-schools.org)). (The transnational examples in the book are: COPOL Coastal Pollution-Norway; ECO-Schools Programme-Portugal; College of Sustainable Development plc-Germany; Greening of the Initial Vocational Training in Tourism-Spain; Focus Eco Centre-Romania; MEDIAMWEB: a Doorway into the Internet-Spain; Ulixes 21-Spain.) This is compounded when the additional Internet examples from Germany and Austria are taken into account, while we also note that there is little evidence of projects that work to link North with South and East with West (or points in between), and very little that involves groups outside of Europe (although, for example, the College of Sustainable Development has links with two universities in Chile). This is regrettable considering the high levels of European Union funding in these areas that require transnational activity, networking and dissemination.
This leads us to our final criticism, which is, what is meant by a ‘European perspective’, as noted in the opening quotation? On the evidence of this volume, it is deeply ambiguous, neither being explicated in the case studies, or within the editors’ preface. To us, a ‘European perspective’ is inadequately constituted if it means little more than the presentation or accumulation of insights from a variety of geographically-bounded countries (e.g. existing or prospective members of the European Community). Nor is it when the publishers use more than one language of expression, while in this case, despite the widespread use of German (and to a lesser extent, French), English remains the dominant medium of the book and the Internet version (part of a more widespread phenomenon, albeit for well-rehearsed reasons). More positively, we would expect that in such a publication, a ‘European perspective’ would promote synthesis and transformation beyond the distinctions given to and by the countries and regions represented therein, where ‘Europe’ denotes both diversity and unity. Of course, conceptions of ‘Europe’ and ‘Europeanisation’ are heavily disputed within and beyond the territories, nations, ideologies and cultures of Europe. That this is not discussed in this volume is surprising, particularly when an additional layer of contestation is added to the discursive mêlée through acknowledging the variety of responses to Agenda 21 across Europe. Thus, it might be suggested that the unequal distribution of projects by themes across the countries and European sub-regions implies that certain project areas remain the priority of some countries but not others (e.g. Table 1 and environmental management related topics). In fact, the purported “Europeanisation” (p.9) of environmental education and the “assimilation” (p.10) of different cultural approaches look decidedly shaky when we move beyond the abstractions of political discourse and enter the realms of evidentiary praxis. In return, we would offer that ‘Europeanism’, as a project of unification and integration (whether interpreted geographically, politically, economically, culturally, or in terms of identity, self-understanding, citizenship or nation-building), presents a series of challenges, drivers or threats to be acknowledged, rejected or postponed; in short, a set of dynamics that remain key considerations for research and scholarship in, and exemplification of, environmental education in Europe.

All told, our final comment is to note that while none of the case studies stood out for us, publications such as this help remind communities of environmental education researchers that work and literature in this area is not restricted to those (partial) forms of internationalism and multiculturalism that start with the Anglocentric and Anglophonic and work outwards. The global discourse represented by education and sustainable development is, and ought to be, polyvocal, multilingual and multicultural; we welcome this publication as an attempt to widen the borders of debate as to what is successful and innovative in educating for sustainability-in theory, and practice.

ALAN REID AND JUTTA NIKEL
Centre for Research in Education and the Environment University of Bath
cree@bath.ac.uk

NB at the time of the review, the icon used to denote the French language version on the Internet site was a Yugoslavian flag, rather than the Tricolore. We also note that, in the German, the title, Umweltbildung und Agenda 21, directly translates as, Environmental education and Agenda 21, while conversely, sustainability tends to be rendered as Nachhaltigkeit, and sustainable development as nachhaltige Entwicklung. Hence, ‘educating for sustainability’ might well be translated as Bilden für Nachhaltigkeit, rather than Umweltbildung und Agenda 21.

Critical Environmental and Health Education: research issues and challenges
JENSEN, B., SCHNACK, K. & SIMOVSKA, V. (Eds), 2001
Research Centre for Environmental and Health Education, The Danish University of Education, Copenhagen
£15.00, 298 pp.
ISBN 8 77701 857 5 (pb)

There can be little doubt that both environmental education and health education raise major issues and pose significant challenges for those engaged with these fields at the levels of either
policy or practice. This collection, edited by three academics from the Danish University of Education in Copenhagen, is an important attempt to represent and discuss some of these. It is in part the outcome of the Fifth International Conference on Environmental and Health Education, held in Denmark in 1999; and its sixteen chapters convey a strong sense of a radical perspective shared across nations by the contributors.

What are the issues and challenges that the authors attempt to address? Fundamental to debates, perhaps, is the problem of conceptual ambiguity. What do we mean by environmental education, and by health education? Unless moves are made towards clarifying understanding — albeit with respect for the underlying contestedness within the fields — scope for influencing practice will be limited.

Most of the contributors to the collection are concerned to try and understand, and to characterise, environmental education and health education not so much by the content of their curricula; as by the processes the authors believe the fields should be representing and reproducing. For some policy makers (in the United Kingdom, for example), this emphasis might in itself be regarded as radical. One such process frequently discussed by the authors is that of participation. Drawing on her experience with the Macedonian Network of Health Promoting Schools, Venka Simovska makes a number of helpful clarifications with regard to the nature of participation. She argues for the identification of two ‘distinctive qualities of student participation’ (P35); token and genuine participation. Broadly speaking, token participation is anchored to focuses and outcomes pre-determined by ‘the expert’. Genuine participation, however, involves a profound orientation towards student determination of focuses and outcomes, with pedagogical techniques devoted towards supporting such self-determination.

Of course, the genuine participation characterised by Simovska poses a number of pressing questions for those attempting to operationalise this concept. Individuals working in environmental education and health education know that governments may be committed to notions of participation in schools in a rhetorical sense; but that, more often than not, this gives way to consumer and economic pressure for education systems which produce ‘results’. Can participation and self-determination co-exist with such pressures? If so, how? Is participation an end in itself? To what extent are education ‘consumers’ interested in such an end? Whether participation is an end in itself or not, how do we understand ‘effectiveness’ in environmental and health education; and how do we measure our ‘success’?

These questions preoccupy a number of the authors. Bjarne Bruun Jensen builds up a convincing case for the value of participation, even in the face of competing pressures. How can a democratic state afford not to develop the participatory capacity of its future citizens? And surely health and the environment represent central areas for democratic concern and action? It is this orientation towards action (we know that both individuals and society must change if health is to be improved, and relationships with our environment are to become sustainable) which informs Jensen’s argument for his desired conception of knowledge in health education and environmental education. There is a tendency, understandable perhaps, for critical environmental and health educators to spend considerable time justifying and defending their concern with processes (such as participation) at the expense of building up a credible picture of what the knowledge content of the fields might involve. Jensen proposes that knowledge is action-oriented, built fundamentally around a systematic appraisal of what we know about the root causes of societal difficulties related to health and the environment; about potential strategies for change; and about alternative ways of organising our society to deal with these difficulties and achieve change. This seems to me a helpful and illuminating way of understanding and starting to construct the ‘content’ of environmental education and health education; and of bridging the gap between ‘content’ and process within the fields.

Part of Jensen’s chapter describes actual school-based attempts to move from the acquisition and development of action-oriented knowledge to action itself. As educators in the crucially important areas of health and the environment, surely we must be prepared to accept that knowledge is vital, but by itself not enough. We must have the capacity to help learners develop their competence to act. A number of other authors contributing to the collection elucidate and discuss the concept of ‘action competence’. Indeed, support for, and development of, the concept can be seen as one of the book’s major themes. However, much like the concept of ‘empowerment’ (with which as a UK health promotion academic I am rather more familiar), ‘action competence’ is notoriously hard to pin down. A number of the contributors regard it as
tangible, something that can be operationalised. Soren Breiting, for example, talks of the ‘goal of developing … action competence …’ (p. 157). And Jorgen Svedbom refers to ‘working with action competence in school …’ (p. 175). While, though, we might to some extent accept Svedbom’s proffered definition of the concept in relation to health education— ‘pupils’ visions and potentials to take action to change circumstances that have influence on their health …’ (p. 175) — I am also inclined to be rather more circumspect. Thinking about the operationalisation of action competence, as with attempts to turn empowerment into practical reality, throws up a set of difficulties. Who are we attempting to render competent? At whose expense? Is it reasonable to talk of everyone achieving equal levels of competence? These questions, familiar in some debates about health education and empowerment, appear to me to be equally applicable here. It is perhaps a slight weakness of the book that they do not emerge, and are not subject to discussion, in a sufficiently forceful way.

In the end, I am inclined to agree with Karsten Schnack who, in a particularly richly discursive chapter, argues for action competence to be seen as ‘an educational ideal … [and] therefore neither a teaching method nor an objective to be reached …’ (P107). Schnack’s chapter also seems to me to provide one clear answer to the question raised through reading the text, but addressed only occasionally and very obliquely by it: is there an overarching way of understanding and characterising the relationship between environmental education on the one hand; and health education on the other? The question is raised partly because, in the main, the separate chapters tend to deal either with health education, or with environmental education, and seldom draw the two together. The answer implied by Schnack’s work — an answer I would support — is that action competence is one of a cluster of liberal educational ideals (which also includes sustainable development and equal communication) ‘[living] for, and indeed off, the fight against violence and oppression …’ (P108). I think it is relatively easy also to locate education for health and environmental education within this cluster, and for them thus to be bound to each other, as well as to the ideal of action competence.

The ambition and scope of this collection — the varied moves of its separate authors from the conceptual to the operational, and from the widely discursive to the highly focused — more than make up for the slight weaknesses I have so far identified. My main criticism of the book, however, is that no guide is provided to this scope. The territory covered by Jensen, Schnack, Simovska and their colleagues is extremely wide. Much of it is refreshingly different to that in which health and environmental educators are frequently required, by policy and organisational constraints, to work. Yet there is effectively no introductory commentary to provide a compass for readers as they navigate their way through the chapters. As it stands, this collection posed a stimulating challenge to my conceptions of health education and environmental education theory and practice. With a more careful and focused introduction, its value as such would be increased still further.

Peter Duncan
Centre for Public Policy Research, Department of Education and Professional Studies, King’s College London