

Erratum

Erratum: Using the satellite-derived NDVI to assess ecological responses to environmental change

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In this article by Nathalie Pettorelli and colleagues, the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index was incorrectly abbreviated as ‘NVDI’ a number of times. It should have read ‘NDVI’. We apologise to readers for any confusion.

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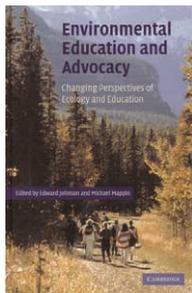
Book Reviews

Adding requisite complexity to the struggle of ideas

Environmental Education and Advocacy: Changing Perspectives of Ecology and Education edited by Edward Johnson and Michael Mappin. Cambridge University Press, 2005. £55.00 hbk (346 pages) ISBN 0521824109

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I appreciated the title of this book because of the ambiguity of ‘changing’. Is this a verb or adjective, or somehow both? Are the authors and editors setting out to change our perspectives or chart our changing perspectives? I hoped all of this was deliberate, as the tension between environmental education as a social movement advocating the espousal of particular ways of

living, and its role as a mode of education that helps people understand and reflect on how they might live in the world, has been persistent, pervasive and, at times, deeply troubling.

Following an extended introduction by the editors, an educator and an ecologist, there are four sections to the book: (i) changing perspectives of ecology; (ii) changing perspectives of education; (iii) assessing changing perspectives of ecology and education; and (iv) integrating changing perspectives of ecology, education and action. Just as the editors represent both sides of this ecology–education coin so, variously, do the chapter authors, which put me at a disadvantage as my expertise lies only on the education side. However, as I fell among ecologists as I read, I was able to discuss the book with them.

The challenge for any edited text is to have a well-formed structure and coherence across chapters; in other words, the editors not only have to think through the issues well, but also have to hold the chapter authors to account. I think that the editors have done the first of these pretty well, but have been less successful with the

second, because what we have is a series of disparate essays rather than a coherent narrative or thesis, with some authors taking the opportunity to restate arguments, and reconfirm established positions (usually their own). In other words, they have looked back, rather than around and ahead. And at the end, I wanted to read a chapter that was not there, that is, the final one, in which the editors attempted a synthesis of what the various chapter authors were saying.

However, I think that *Environmental Education and Advocacy* is an important book for environmental and/or science educators to read because of chapters 2 and 3. These two chapters will be enlightening for anyone who thinks that an understanding of ecology as a science, and an understanding of ecological processes in nature, are important, but who has little exposure to recent ideas. These chapters are well written, scholarly attempts to add, what I am going to call ‘requisite complexity’ to our understanding and, by and large, they succeed admirably.

In chapter 2, Des Jardins provides a lucid exploration of how ecology might be understood and the pitfalls of particular perspectives. He discusses the naturalistic fallacy and the philosophical challenge that we all face when tempted to derive values from facts. This, and his sections on teleology, models and metaphors, constitute valuable ground clearing in which much intellectual detritus is swept away, including the popular idea that there can be a long-term balance and equilibrium to natural systems. Much environmental education and/or philosophical theorizing depends on the idea of finding such a balance between the needs of humans and nature, a balance it has to be said that never proves theoretically well grounded. In chapter 3, Kolasa and Pickett complement all this in their thoughtful exploration of modern ecology and its paradigms, processes, and problems, and

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