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Growing Environmental Citizens: Education for the Green State

Clare Ryan

From the *école républicain* of 19th-century France, to the Cold War push for math in American public schools, to the fundamentalist schools of the modern Middle East, education and re-education carry deep significance and power. Education is a potent weapon for spreading hateful ideology as well as a powerful tool in the struggle for greater understanding. Students develop personal and group identities based largely on how and what they learn at school. Children are malleable and less able to defend themselves against manipulation, but they are also more open to new modes of thought than are adults. They represent the future citizens who will realize our visions, if our visions are to be sustainable, translatable, and realistic. Yet this is a difficult proposition: we want our work to last beyond this generation, but we also want future generations to realize their own visions. How do we reconcile sustainable environmental action with innovation and creativity from new generations?

I argue that education in America must allow children to experience communication, choice, and consequences. Through deliberation, children decide to act and then see the direct effects of their actions. This kind of education teaches deep human skills like communication, self-confidence, and empathy—skills that are learned through exploration, not indoctrination. I contend that this educational system should replace the current paradigm of consumer ideology, which values free consumption, materialism, wealth-based status, and environmental dominance. At the same time, it would replace the competing paradigm of second-wave environmental conservation ideology, which

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includes limited consumption and reducing waste and pollution, with a deep skill-based system that places value on the process rather than on specific outcomes. Currently, public education in America promotes consumer ideology with such force that we may simply want to override this dominant ideology with a new, more environmentally friendly model. I propose a third option, which requires creating a new dominant ideological paradigm that values the processes of creation, communication, and freedom within education, as it does social and political participation. This option draws from Third Wave environmentalism, which espouses freedom to create and innovate, working with others to build from the world in which we live to a world that can address the environmental concerns of the future.

This essay explores the potential of public education in a broader, Third Wave environmental movement. First, I examine the transference of ideology, weighing the benefits and problems of an ideology-based model of environmentalism. I link arguments about ideology with questions about education's role in America. This exploration of education and ideology leads to an examination of environmental citizenship and how environmental citizens develop. I conclude the discussion of this concept by positioning public education within the "Green state" model. In the following section, I interrogate a variety of methods for teaching environmentalism to children. Finally, I argue that public education is the ideal location for creating environmental citizens by providing children with the skills to examine their community with more depth and understanding than previous generations have expressed.

Environmental citizenship encompasses many important issues of which only a few are covered in this article. I focus on the role of children and education in the development of environmental citizens and the Green state. I draw from philosophy, educational theory, and environmental theory to construct a model for education. This model does not include specific curricula, however, but rather provides a normative framework for analyzing goals and implementing environmental education strategies. I examine education for the environmental citizen from an American perspective, using the secular, state-run system of public education as a starting point for further development. While my proposed model has broader applications than the American public education system, that system provides a base for the entire argument and its current state should be held in comparison to each of the following suggestions for innovation.

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I. Transferring Ideology

Education and the transference of belief systems have been linked for as long as the two have existed. For approximately five thousand years of human history, "School is the place where culture gets formally inculcated...schooling [is] a formal and institutionalized procedure for teaching culture."¹ To some extent, education and cultural value systems are inseparable, since any transference of information implies value judgments. Nevertheless, ideological educational practices manifest themselves in widely differing manners. While on the one hand, education can remove all agency from learning, replacing thought with imperatives for behavior, on the other hand, it may be possible for education to value a process that promotes deliberation and pluralistic belief systems, rather than simply enforcing the attitudes of those people in charge of the curriculum.

Ideological education as it has been implemented in the past (even with the best intentions) is ineffective or even dangerous for our current needs. To remove the threat of ideological indoctrination from the dramatic shift in values that will accompany national attention to environmental concerns, the model of environmental citizenship education that I propose values deep human skills rather than shared beliefs. Leaders of the environmental movement, particularly those associated with Second Wave environmentalism, may balk at an argument that implies that their beliefs ought not to be taught to children.² This is worsened by the contention that "years of constant conflict created a bunker mentality, causing the environmental community to remain exclusively focused on its ideological goals and self-protection."³ Nevertheless, I contend that this attitude represents dated, Second Wave environmentalism, whose pessimism and semi-rigid structure do not serve the needs of current and future citizens. Human skill-based learning will serve future generations better in the long run than even environmental value-based education, in which children are expected to learn predetermined answers to scientific and ethical questions about the world.

Some environmental scholars call for a new "myth" about humans and nature.⁴ They critique the current myth, contending that it asserts an inaccurate and dangerous belief in a nature-human dichotomy. A new myth would reconsider humanity's place on this planet, with particular emphasis on dismantling theories of superiority and dominance. Perhaps, however, humanity does not require a myth of any

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kind. In political philosophy, many argue that myths serve to obfuscate sources of power and control by legitimizing the current system and framing power relations as natural and inevitable. In other words, the environmentalist myth dupes unwitting consumers into becoming unquestioning adherents of new values. Even if this myth makes people act and think like perfect environmentalists, it does not serve the greater interest of human development because it limits critical thinking and ultimately does not serve the long-term purpose of the environmental movement.

Much of the frustration of the environmental movement seems to stem from the fact that even when people learn about the realities of environmental degradation and are taught methods for changing behavior, "It is often admitted that knowledge does not necessarily lead to action."⁵ When given a choice to implement ideas learned in school, young people may choose not to practice the behaviors that they learn. Ideological education, which replaces personal choice with social necessity, evades this problem by giving students imperatives instead of information. The consequence is that "efforts are made to influence pupils directly—outside the 'knowledge component,' as it were—and thus, students are not necessarily allowed to make up their own minds and decide on intentional behavioral change."⁶ New activists, who represent a Third Wave in the history of environmentalism, replace the frustration at inaction and apathy (which has previously resulted in attempts at shaming and fear-based coercion) with more positive attempts to transform society. These projects value freedom and creativity even within societies that remain entrenched in consumerism and wastefulness. The seemingly impossible task of getting an entire generation to continue the environmental movement's work without telling them what to do does not provide easy solutions. Fear, dogma, shame, and other linked strategies for changing behavior provide efficient solutions to the blight of inaction. Yet they may pose more problems than they solve if people fail to understand why they are compelled to act and if those people lack the skills to act effectively.

II. Education and Environmentalism

How do current generations create a world where people value awareness and stewardship? Unless we want environmentalism to be a passing fad or a movement reserved for an elite few, rather than a lasting

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mission, the ideas generated by scholars and activists today need to transfer broadly to the younger generations. Environmental crises have long- and short-term consequences, and environmentalism likewise requires immediate and broad actions. While in theory few would disagree, in practice it is difficult to keep this idea in mind because of the pressing need for action and immediate changes to lifestyle and behavior regarding the environment. This essay takes a long view of the issue, examining not what needs to change, but how those changes may be sustained.

In America, there is a long history of debate over the role of education. Some educational practices have deep ties to cultural history and have changed little over the centuries while others shift and advance based upon innovations by thinkers and movements. William James, a 19th-century American philosopher, wrote, "Education...cannot be better defined than by calling it the organization of acquired habits of conduct and tendencies of behavior."⁷ This sentiment resonates in 21st-century America as well. School is the first direct contact that many people have with the state. Public school replaces, or at least augments, the family in forming a child, and might not always promote the same values as the family encourages at home. Despite Americans' belief in personal liberty, public school has withstood many attacks. There is a balance between the state's power to influence a child and the power of the child's parent, but American history suggests that public education might be an important location to begin teaching about environmental citizenship, even if parents remain entrenched in consumer ideology.⁸

Many difficult hurdles immediately confront public education for environmental citizenship. The American public education system is in bad shape and it will take a lot of work to get it to a place where we can even consider environmental citizenship. Some might wonder how we can go from failing inner-city schools and the legacy of programs like No Child Left Behind to a system that teaches every child how to participate and engage in the world. It will not be a simple transformation and it will require changes outside of the school system. Education in a vacuum means little in the broader political and social world. Educational practices cannot change until national priorities shift to address poverty, racial disparity, and similar issues in America. Systems change outside of the realm of public education falls outside the scope of this article, but public education is not simply one institution upon which to test new environmental concepts. Education is the first link between

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the child and the state, where the state has the most influence, but can also do the most harm to its future citizens.

American public schools promote the current consumer or industrial paradigm. They emphasize certain areas of history, science, economics, and culture, and they encourage and facilitate consumer values through peer status and teacher role models. The current educational system provides a pedagogical model that also conflicts with environmental innovation. Ecological awareness calls into question "progress" and "pursuit of knowledge;" the very underpinnings of education. The unrelenting quest for information has been defined by increased control over the environment for human gain. This model poses fundamental problems for merging education and environmentalism. As Mike Seymour wrote in *Education for Humanity*, "We can no longer pursue knowledge and technology for their own sakes, as if the unending possibilities of human imagination deserve to be reified and not held accountable to larger considerations supporting the whole community of life."⁹ The paradox of education and environmentalism resolves itself when one realizes that education's pursuit of conquering progress and knowledge springs from, and reinforces, consumer ideology. School does not need to exist merely as a place to sharpen our skills of domination.

Despite the obstacles, public education is the ideal starting point for a shift to environmental citizenship for several key reasons. The system of state governments in the U.S. provides myriad opportunities for experimental changes to curriculum that would begin to shift the nation's conception of what education should be like. Children are more open to new ideas and skills than adults, in part because they have not perfected the internalization of learned beliefs. As the juvenile justice system embodies the belief that all children can grow into law-abiding adults if given the right resources, so the educational system could embody the belief that all children can grow into environmental citizens if given the opportunity to develop certain competencies. In the long view, change in education would touch the lives of many Americans. There are few places in America where large numbers of people are compelled to participate in training. Perhaps the idea of the captive audience threatens the basic foundation of Third Wave environmentalism, which emphasizes freedom and choice, but it may also provide a structural opportunity within the current system to increase freedom of thought and action.

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III. Environmental Citizenship and the Green State

Environmental education's ultimate goal must be to create environmental citizens. At first glance, this may seem a contradiction since the defining nature of environmental citizenship is "characterized not by rights, but by the self-imposed duties of the citizen."¹⁰ In *The Virtues of Environmental Citizenship*, James Connelly asks, "To what extent is it possible to promote the life of eco-virtue? What role can the state have in this?"¹¹ He concludes that because environmental citizenship is predicated upon voluntary action, the state cannot make laws that coerce people into becoming environmental citizens. Despite his argument against state influence in the development of environmental citizenship, the state can play an important role in this process by equipping its future citizens with the skills required to access and practice environmental citizenship. Connelly describes the virtues of an environmental citizen as faith, hope, charity, courage, wisdom, justice, moderation, frugality, care, patience, righteous indignation, accountability, asceticism, commitment, compassion, concern, and cooperation.¹² While this list describes who environmental citizens are, it is perhaps better to describe what they do.

Even the most virtuous individual can accomplish little without the skills to put virtue into practice. To that end, environmental citizens educated under the system proposed in this article engage, think critically, and act with compassion. Children whose educational experiences allow them to develop into engaged, informed, and compassionate people will be better suited to deal with scenarios that arise in the future as unexpected consequences of past actions. Past and current generations embody certain positive elements of environmental citizenship, as individuals learn to consume more consciously and live with attention to non-human interests. More will be required in the future, because generations who know that consumerism is bad and that stewardship is good might not contribute to environmental degradation, but that will be insufficient to combat the realities of environmental degradation. Enough damage has already been done that the next generation will need skills to govern their lifestyles and confront the mistakes of the past.

The environmental citizen is a person who engages with the community in a compassionate and non-adversarial manner. The community includes the entirety of the world with which the citizen interacts, human and nonhuman. Environmental citizens have the skills to assert

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their beliefs and argue with others, but they do not see the purpose in asserting only personal interests. The environmental citizen has a sense of self that is not inherently connected to the notion that one's life is more important than other lives. Such a citizen can see the ways in which what is best for the community is also what is best for oneself. In this way, the individual is unique, but one's self-interest is not superior to other members of the group. This distinction between self-superiority and self-identity has an important place in environmental citizenship.

Where does this fit in a larger plan for the new "Green state"? This essay employs Robyn Eckersley's position on deliberation and participation in the Green deliberative democracy. Eckersley contends, "Three features of deliberative democracy—unconstrained dialogue, inclusiveness, and social learning—arguably make deliberative democracy especially suited to dealing with complex and variable ecological problems and concerns."¹³ Teaching children to be environmental citizens cannot be disentangled from teaching them to be citizens. Another way to consider this idea is that "One of the key virtues [of environmental citizenship]...will need to be the virtue of deliberating on what the sustainable environmental good itself is."¹⁴ Since a wide range of participants will take part in political decision-making, it is particularly crucial that those involved in the deliberation are equipped to process information and generate new ideas, rather than simply recite a belief system based on environmental ethics.

The dominant citizenship paradigm must shift before citizens can change their relationship with the environment. The passive citizenship model wherein a citizen self-identifies simply by living in a particular country—maybe voting, maybe sitting on a jury, maybe paying taxes—cannot sustain the kind of large-scale lifestyle changes that our past destruction of the natural world will demand in the future. The most direct way to combat passive citizenship is to empower new generations of citizens to take ownership of governance. This ownership is predicated on the ability to choose future paths when confronted with unique challenges. Only those who feel equipped and entitled to participate in deliberative processes will be able to engage with others to create new models of governance.

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IV. Models of Environmental Education

Educators and activists across the globe have employed varying techniques to teach the environmental citizenship qualities described above and other similar qualities. Why propose a different environmental education model, rather than adopting current practices? Past environmental education has been limited in two ways: either the educational practices failed to produce the desired results or, although successfully fulfilling the educator's goals, the desired results fell short of the environmental citizenship features described above. Innovations continue daily in this field and the new model described in the article draws inspiration from a variety of such innovations. Nevertheless, understanding the proposed model's advantages requires understanding the limitations of popular current models.

The new model for environmental citizenship and education must not be conflated with earlier positivist or "scientific" models of environmental education, which teach children skills for measuring scientific facts about the external environment. This form of education, dominant in the 1980s and 1990s, distinguishes "facts" about the environment from "values" and so might seem to echo the model proposed here.¹⁵ The environmental education model that I propose, however, encourages students to introduce their own values into their learning. It pays little attention to learning and internalizing specific predetermined information. Attempting to remove values from education merely masks their source, while education that is open to diverse perspectives and beliefs reveals the roots of beliefs and allows us to question them. Rather than learning to count and measure the world around them, students would learn to interact with and discuss this world.

If science does not answer the needs of environmental citizenship, then perhaps behavioral change responds to the problems presented by fact-based learning. Does environmental education have the power to control human behavior and, if it does, is that desirable? One way of understanding environmental education is that we want children to do certain things, such as recycle, consume less, not litter, etc. At first glance, a statement such as "The bottom-line purpose of environmental education, in the view of most of its supporters and many of its practitioners, is the development of responsible individual and societal environmental behavior"¹⁶ does not seem unreasonable. However, "positivist research in environmental education has a strongly

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deterministic character. It seeks to control (through prediction and reinforcement) certain ways of thinking and acting valued by the researchers."¹⁷ We might consider instead that we want children to choose what actions they will take, giving them the tools to discover why recycling and conservation are important or, perhaps, developing new tactics that older generations have not considered.

Religious environmental education provides the inverse of scientific environmental education. Scholars have examined a variety of links between environmentalism and religious belief. Some religious doctrine supports environmental ethics, while at other times religion and the environment seem at odds with each other. It is tempting to enlist the religious doctrine's aid in the environmental citizenship movement. Few ideologies have done more to motivate people and bring them together than have religious beliefs.¹⁸ Reverence for the earth as understood in a religious context might be a powerful motivator in some circumstances, but it is untenable in American public education. Religion poses the same problems as ideological education, with the further complication that the American public education system is strictly secular.

Each method fails because it deprives the child of choice and personal exploration. By committing to a certain outcome, teachers deny the child's agency in the process. They envision the child as an empty vessel who does not influence the process, but passively absorbs information without questioning its source, the values it carries, or its impact upon her/his life and the life of the community. Adults determine the desired outcome, whether it is the correct answer on a test or a behavioral modification. The outcome, even if it has positive environmental consequences, loses much of its value because the child does not learn to act beyond replication of the teacher's ideas.

V. A New Model for Environmental Education

Creating environmental citizens requires three elements: education, example, and experience. *Education* governs learning within the classroom, which remains a fundamental part of the system. *Example* implies that children must see that adults act upon their convictions, that promises are kept, and that actions have consequences. As such, educators must become the first environmental citizens. *Experience* entails that all children must participate and engage in democratic deliberation and solving real problems from a young age. Their partici-

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pation would include choice and consequences so that children might see how their actions impact the larger world. Young people need to learn the skills required by full democratic participation in environmental citizenship through adult mentors and deep engagement in real issues. The essence of all three elements is that children need tools much more than they need preconceived solutions based upon a belief system created by previous generations.

Skills like deliberation, participation, global awareness, communication, and empathy allow children to make new decisions about future environmental issues. Some earlier works describe this as “action competence,” designed to equip children with the capacity to solve problems with direct action.¹⁹ This model goes beyond specific problem-solving skills to education for redefined human interaction with the world. Public education provides a location and pre-existing mechanism in which children could develop environmental citizenship skills. Despite the complexities of implementation, the formula for successful education is quite simple. A litmus test for positive educational practices under this philosophy asks if the individual child gets to make choices. Does the teacher allow the student to think and debate? And does the child see the consequences of the choices? This model is uniquely related to environmental citizenship because it emphasizes a broader range of interactions with the world.

Public education should provide the basis for a child to create her own understanding about how she relates to the natural world. Let’s compare two situations in which schools teach children about environmental citizenship. In the first scenario, the teacher brings her students into the woods, points to a tree and tells them, “Love this tree; it is part of nature and so are you.” In the second scenario, the students ask to go outside, where the teacher asks, “What catches your attention? What are you thinking?” The students then determine what actions they would like to take in response to their interaction with this new environment and the teacher contributes experience and knowledge to help the students explore what they need in order to create change. This example demonstrates the difference between ideology and deep human skill-building. The first teacher shares an environmental ethic with her students, but she is not equipping them to be environmental citizens when she is gone. The most important thing that the teacher provides in the latter example is the fundamental equipment to address real-world problems that the children identify.

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Public education has always been training for productive citizens. Education in the Green state would not fundamentally change this purpose, but would shift the focus from training workers and consumers to training active and engaged citizens. The word “training” perhaps holds too many negative connotations to be useful. In its broader sense, however, training implies developing a skill-set in order to approach certain tasks. Children need certain tools to be successful. Realizing the deep human skill of communication, for example, demands that all children know how to read and communicate clearly with each other. Confidence requires certain competencies and it also requires empowerment. Education cannot be a free exchange of ideas, because people need some common ground to effectively express opinions. Anarchic systems deprive children of the wisdom, experience, and knowledge of previous generations. Thus while it might be tempting to reject the entire educational model, that would ignore basic reality about child development. None of the environmental citizen’s qualities require teaching a value-based system of environmental ethics. Instead, education for environmental citizens values the process of teaching children cognitive and emotional skills to face large societal questions with a new perspective. Our current understanding of environmentalism is limited by our ability to process information and see beyond our personal interests. The worst thing that we could do is to make our children recite a dogmatic set of values, which would soon become meaningless, but it would be equally damaging to allow complete liberty among the very young.

When the child learns to expand her community, it represents the crucial turning point in effective environmental education. Teaching empathy and inclusion pose different pedagogical challenges than teaching math or history, but it is within the power of the current public education system to incorporate these essential skills into the framework of child development. Community expansion includes two essential components in the movement toward environmental citizenship. Global awareness and non-human community inclusion allow the child to interact in previously untapped ways with the broader community. The skills that she learns in school, such as critical thinking, empathy, and communication, equip her to interact in new ways with this broader community. The first component of community expansion, global awareness, links environmental citizenship to global citizenship. American students often lack connection with the children in the next school district, let alone a child in another country. Parents,

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teachers, and media of all kinds teach children to define themselves based on difference. Belonging to a defined group provides a child with security and support, but it also teaches the child how to identify those who are not a part of that group. One environmental scholar argues:

We need to teach a world view. Americans know little of world history and are geographically illiterate. A greater appreciation of the diversity of cultures and peoples in the world should help us realize the selfish consequences of our consumption. "Not in my backyard" is not a sustainable rallying cry in an interconnected world when we are faced with global climate change.²⁰

Teachers could incorporate global awareness into a wide range of subjects, always emphasizing the student's participatory inclusion in the wider world, which also includes non-human community members. The non-human community includes animals and plants, which do not normally have an advocate in human affairs.²¹ Including new kinds of membership in a child's community will translate in adulthood into advocacy for non-human beings in political deliberation and lifestyle choices. By including a broader range of community members, children learn through experience the value of other kinds of life. Children could explore differences between themselves and other members of the community without including judgments about superiority and entitlement that are the trademark responses of modern American society.

Young people must have the ability to construct their personal identities in this global framework from an early age if we are to escape the limitations of regionalism. Education that fosters empathetic responses to suffering will go a long way in creating environmental citizens. Empathetic responses are different from guilt or shame responses, which might produce the same immediate result, but which entail a different sort of education and a very different kind of citizen. Environmental ideology might give children a sense of guilt at seeing children across the world go hungry in extreme droughts or it might make them afraid of what people will think of them if they don't help. Both of these responses seem desirable for the environmental movement. Both compel the child to act in an environmentally conscious manner. Nevertheless, these responses ultimately inhibit environmental citizen development. After a time, children may begin to associate

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the negative feelings of shame and guilt with the suffering of others. Instead of trying to help, children might implement mechanisms for ignoring the situation or for inventing excuses to limit personal culpability. Guilt and shame are powerful motivators and in the short-term environmentalists might implement strategies which access these emotions in adults with great success. In the long-term, empathetic responses to suffering will mostly likely bring about greater positive change. Empathetic feelings compel actions in keeping with environmentalism's goals, but do so through an entirely different mechanism than guilt and shame. Rather than fearing internal or external reprobation for non-action, empathetic feelings compel response because they reveal the common bonds between members of a community. Empathy arises from feelings of shared experience or identity and is inhibited by exclusive definitions of community. Empathy responds to suffering in others, but joy and success in others also evokes empathetic responses, thus empathy is not associated solely with the negative, but with all experience.

Since empathy does not change based upon the opinions of others and appears only without coercion or even conscious thought, teachers might struggle to incorporate it into their lesson plans. It seems strange to label empathy as a skill. It may perhaps be better explained as an element of human nature, which we can access, or not access, based upon our ability to see past differences. Teachers could help students access natural empathy by reducing the level of distance that they teach the child to place between herself and others. In other words, children already possess empathic natures, and the skill is holding onto that natural impulse to share in the suffering of others. Developing empathy also includes broadening the sphere of empathic response to distant humans and non-humans as the child grows and builds skills like abstract reasoning.

Environmental citizenship strikes a delicate balance between individual identity and community identity. The environmental citizen never forgets the good of the group when making personal choices. Conflict and compromise will likely continue since people have different ideas about the best course of action, as well as different perspectives and life experiences to guide decision-making. Conflict leads to innovation and development, so it should not be sacrificed in favor of all people sharing a common belief about the earth. The self does not disappear, but neither does it reign supreme over all other kinds of identity. Third Wave environmentalists contend that actions do not

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need to fall into the category of selfish or altruistic, but rather can and should be good for the individual *and* the whole. The way to allow children to develop their personal identities as environmental citizens is through skills like deliberation, confidence, and critical thinking, not by providing a shared belief system. Children have a strong sense of fairness, which serves them well as environmental citizens. In fact, children are in many ways closer to the ideals of environmental citizenship than are most adults. What they lack are the necessary tools to analyze the value of new information and ideas, and the skill to articulate their response. Developing internal barometers for ethical behavior is far more valuable than applying actions to an external rubric. Learning to express beliefs about ethical behavior in ways that create positive change is the most valuable skill any child can learn.

VI. Growing Environmental Citizens

Some people alive today, including many of the authors cited above, act with great passion and determination, creating a world of environmental awareness and positive action. These people lead protests, write groundbreaking books, change standards of consumption and waste, and practice lifestyles that bring them closer to the ideals of environmental citizenship. While these actions are inspiring, they are limited by the simple fact that there is no Green democracy in which they might participate at present. Few people even attempt actions that are possible within the current system. Most Americans live their lives without much regard for the kinds of dramatic behavioral shifts that are likely to take place in the near future. Are they evil people? Stupid? Selfish? Certainly some of them possess some of these qualities, but the fatalistic notion that these people are incapable of participating in a Green democracy does little to address the issues we will be faced with, whether we are able to handle them or not.

People taking action distinguish themselves from those who do not take action in the deep human skills that they possess. Scientific and technical skills have value in new ideas and innovation, but they do not represent the kind of skill that all meaningful environmental action requires. Meaningful action requires critical thinking, empathy, communication, and engagement. While there are very few people who are incapable of learning these skills, there are all too few who possess the ability and confidence to act using these skills. All citizens should have the requisite training and experience to confidently act for the

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good of the planet. Training and experience begins in school, where American children become environmental citizens unburdened by the limited perspective of their parents and able to provide new solutions to environmental crises. No discussion of environmental citizenship or even environmental action is complete without first understanding how people change from passive consumer to active engaged citizen. Some adults may be able to make this shift through self-education and determination. Although individual choice will continue to drive participation, public education could facilitate the process by providing new generations with the power to adapt, communicate, and think about their world in ways current generations cannot imagine.

Notes

1. Donald Sharpes, *Advanced Educational Foundations for Teachers* (New York: Routledge Falmer, 2002), p. 13.
2. For more on Second Wave and Third Wave environmentalism, see Philip Shabecoff, *A Fierce Green Fire: The American Environmental Movement* (Washington: Island Press, 2003).
3. D.T. Blumstein and C. Saylan, "The Failure of Environmental Education (And How We Can Fix It)," *PLoS Biol* 5, no. 5 (2007): e120.
4. See Mike Seymour, ed., *Educating for Humanity: Rethinking the Purpose of Education* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2004).
5. Andrew Dobson, and Derek Bell, eds., *Environmental Citizenship* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), p. 238.
6. Ibid.
7. Sharpes 2002, p. 405.
8. See Perry Zirkel et al., *A Digest of Supreme Court Decisions Affecting Education*. 3rd ed. (Bloomington: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1995).
9. Seymour 2004, p. 135.
10. Dobson 2006, p. 63.
11. Ibid., p. 66.
12. Ibid., p. 70.
13. Robyn Eckersley, *The Green State: Rethinking Democracy and Sovereignty* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004), p. 117.
14. Dobson 2006, p. 51.
15. See Ian Robottom, and Paul Hart, "Behaviorist EE Research: Environmentalism as Individualism." *Journal of Environmental Education* 26, Issue 2 (Winter 1995).
16. Ibid., p. 4.
17. Ibid.
18. See Kadija Al-Naki, "How do we Communicate Environmental Ethics? Reflections on Environmental Education from a Kuwaiti Perspective," *International Research on Geographical and Environmental Education* 3, no. 2 (2004).

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19. Dobson 2006, p. 241.
20. Blumstein 2007, p. 975.
21. See Eckersley 2004, p. 134.

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