

Review: The Failure of Environmental Education [And How We Can Fix It]

By Charles Saylan and Daniel T Blumstein

Reviewed by Elery Hamilton-Smith
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Saylan, Charles and Blumstein, Daniel T. *The Failure of Environmental Education [And How We Can Fix It]*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011. xii + 241 pp. ISBN 9780520265394. US\$24.95, paperback. Alkaline paper.

This is at the same time a fascinating yet frustrating book. It is essentially a presentation of many ways in which the social and political assumptions of globalized society serve to block sustainability. This theme is treated in a creatively critical way with due attention to the various theoretical bases which have been evoked. The result is a thorough analysis of the governance of the global system.

Regrettably, the place of education within this system is treated narrowly. It is all too often assumed to be the major underlying problem. Despite the immense and inevitable gap between schooling and the determination of public policy, it is education which is blamed for failures of policy. Yet the authors appear to assume that secondary schooling is the major force in education and relies upon didactic processes. There is no attention to the potential power of transformative or action-based modes of education.

So, I find the book to be a truly frustrating one in its failure to deliver the promise of the title.

I would strongly and positively recommend the book to both practitioners and research scholars who want to explore and extend our understanding of environmental governance. I found a great diversity of exciting insights which have stimulated me to reassess my own approach to problems in governance.

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Electronic Green Journal, Issue 32, Fall 2011, ISSN:1076-7975