Learning to Care:

Education and Compassion

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> In this new millennium we have the opportunity to create something wonderful or something disastrous with our lives, with each other, and with the planet. Even the scientists today tell us that global survival not only depends on our brains but on our hearts.[1]

Enhancing our abilities to learn, to live sustainably, and to love is the only way we will be able to address the ecological and social imperatives we face as we seek to build a fairer, less troubled and sustainable world for our children. This was the conclusion of the twenty-year follow-up study to *The Limits to Growth*, which used the most sophisticated computers at MIT to model the population growth against resource use and pollution.[2] The report, entitled *Beyond the Limits*, argued that we must do more than draw upon the natural, ecological and social sciences to learn how to live and work sustainably. This is where we have specialized in environmental studies and environmental education – and I have been as guilty as any in advocating sociological and educational theory to understand the processes of social change through environmental education.[3] We also need to draw on the humanities, the arts, philosophy and ethics to learn how to care for, and yes, love, each other and Earth. As Meadows, Meadows and Randers, the authors of *Beyond the Limits*, wrote, "The transition to a sustainable society requires … more than technology; it also requires maturity, compassion, wisdom."[4]

At this point, I am mindful of Chet Bowers' three-fold criticism of the way too much education (a) ignores ecological imperatives; (b) fails to adopt holistic perspectives and thus separates "mind and body", the "personal and the political" and "people and nature"; and (c) enshrines personal empowerment through rational critical reflection to the neglect of "spiritual" forms of knowledge, experience and empowerment.[5]

In 1993, I responded to Bowers from the viewpoint of the critical approach to environmental education that we were developing here at Griffith University and with colleagues elsewhere. I pleaded not guilty to the first charge of ignoring ecological imperatives. After all, environmental education was – and is - blossoming. For example here at Griffith we had established the Master of Environmental Education program and had enrolled our first PhD students - and last year we graduated our 150th Master of Environmental Education student and now have 21 scholars completing PhDs in environmental education.

However, I pleaded "guilty" to Bowers' second and third charges. It is true, we have focussed on structural change to the neglect of personal change in environmental education, and we have neglected the important links between personal, social and ecological well-being. And it is also very true that we have ignored spiritual ways of knowing and empowerment.

I concluded at the time that the critical curriculum theory of education *for* the environment we were developing was an incomplete one, and that "more theorizing, reflection, action, and more reflection again" would be necessary to develop the ideas more fully than they were. I argued that "What we will be thinking about in environmental education in the years to come is an important question to start considering now" and that "attention to ways of integrating personal and structural transformation through environmental education should be one of our major concerns".[6]

Thus, in a small way, this paper is a first and belated step in returning to a decade-long challenge. It involves broadening the theoretical frameworks within which I have taught and researched for the past two decades. But as Julie Davis wrote in her PhD thesis:

> The challenges of sustainability are too great, and the implications for children and future generations, too severe for environmental educators to be timid about changing their own theories and practices.[7]

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Those of you who grew up or live around Griffith University will know where I mean when I talk about the "tram terminus". It is called Mt Gravatt Central, today. My first memories of learning about caring and compassion were at children's services at the back of the Congregational Church at The Terminus. It was a small village-style church where Photo Continental now stands. I used to enjoy singing the song, "Deep and Wide", not the least because the hand actions for "wide" allowed us "boof" the boys on either side of us. Such acts aside, the words of the song have remained with me, and form two of my key messages in this paper. I will be talking about what Stan van Hooft calls "deep caring", caring for each other and non-human nature in ways that go "all the way down" into the character of our being to constitute compassion.[8] I will also be talking about the need to extend our caring in ever-widening circles so that it encompasses not just ourselves, our families and friends, our communities and nations, but also to encompass all people on Earth and all of creation.

How can we take our caring "deep and wide"? And how can we promote it through education, especially in schools where education is secular and teachers have to approach values-laden issues in ethically professional ways? And, how can we promote deep and wide emotional concern for other people and nature without going "all New Age" on you?

Indeed, it has been a fear of "New Ageism" that has prevented many environmental educators from exploring issues of caring and compassion to date. As Bjarne Bruun Jensen from Denmark, who was once a Sir Allan Sewell Fellow at Griffith University, has argued, the New Age aspects of nature-based education run the risk of romantic escapism on two levels – first, the romanticism of nature and, second, introspective romance with ourselves - neither of which can effectively solve environmental problems. He continues, "Such activities ... have value in themselves for other purposes, ... [but] they do not solve the paradox of increasing anxiety and the currently increasing action paralysis" of the modern world.[9] Along with Bjarne Jensen and John Huckle, I have often argued that nature-based approaches to environmental education need to be balanced with social and political engagements with the root causes of unsustainability that people face in their communities.[10] We have argued that nature-based learning is necessary, but not sufficient, for learning to live sustainably. However, I wish to argue that, equally, our resultant emphasis on social and political education is also necessary but not sufficient.

I can illustrate this by showing you the way I often teach about the characteristics of education for sustainable living. I use a music video from Midnight Oil and the Warrumpi Band called "Black Fella, White Fella". After enjoying the music, I ask teachers to identify the characteristics of environmental education and we would make a list, something like this:

- It adopts an holistic view of the environment, integrating the natural and the social world.
- It involves people-nature relationships.
- It involves personal beliefs and political commitments.

All of this is true, and I would then go on to emphasise the need for environmental educators to practice what they preach by emphasising the role that Peter Garret plays as an active member of community organizations when he is not performing. I have come to realise however, that in focusing on this "necessary but not sufficient" aspect of environmental education, I have neglected the other.

Thus, when we say that environmental education adopts an holistic view of the environment, integrating the natural and the social world, what do we really mean? And what do we mean when we say that environmental education involves people-nature relationships? These questions beg many philosophical issues about the nature of nature and the position of humans as a part of nature. And what place do such issues have in a comprehensive theory and practice of environmental education?

And when we say that environmental education involves personal beliefs and political commitments, what does that mean? What beliefs? And commitment to what"? It is not surprising that Bora Simmons, a former President of the North American Association for Environmental Education,

says that most of us display "an overly simplistic view" of environmental ethics when we say that developing a sensitive and caring environmental ethic as a goal of environmental education. She argues that much of what we say tends to be "vaguely worded" and to lack any of "the necessary directions, permissions and prohibitions" on which to evaluate ideas and morality.[11]

As Nel Noddings (1984) argues in her book, *Caring: A Feminist Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, the dilemma of much environmental education, indeed education generally, is that too many of us consciously and deliberately fail to teach young people to care for each other, other creatures, and for the natural world:

> Schools give some attention to environmental problems, but they are not giving enough to the development of caring human beings.... Students in today's schools do learn about ecosystems and food chains, and about extinction and habitat preservation. But the problems they tackle are often focused on faraway places.... [T]hey do not learn to work through sophisticated political processes to make the measurable improvements - sometimes small ones. If they knew how to do this, they might be able to plan for a continuous series of small changes that would make a significant difference.[12]

In this passage, Nel Noddings exposes the fallacy of seeing the personal and political transformation sides of environmental as binary opposites. She shows how they are interdependent. We have to learn to care enough to want to act. Central to this is the capacity to care deeply and widely.

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The importance of caring as an educational objective, and suggestions for developing the curriculum around "centres of care", are outlined in two books by Nel Noddings, the one I mentioned earlier, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* and *The Challenge to Care in Schools*.[13] In them she identifies the paradox that sees us living in a world in which to care and be cared for are the ultimate human experience - but many people, such as patients in the medical system, clients in the welfare system, adolescents in schools and the young and the elderly in some families, feel un-cared for. Noddings acknowledges the debates that distinguish between notions of caring as a personal attribute and of caring as a lived process of empathy and active – and acted-upon - solidarity. In seeking a reconciliation of these perspectives, she outlines the nature of the caring process to involve three components:

(i) conceptual and emotive understanding,
(ii) deep positive regard and respect for the feeling and intrinsic value of other persons, animals, plants and non-living things, recognition of her/his/its/their rights, and

(iii) the motivation, willingness and skills to act to protect and enhance these feelings, values and rights.

Together, these three aspects of caring add up to what van Hooft calls "deep caring" and I would like to call compassion. While difficult to define, compassion is not mere pity or sympathy. Perhaps, it is best defined by seeing it as the opposite of its dictionary antonyms, the opposite of ruthlessness, cruelty, indifference, hard-headedness and insensitivity.[14]

Like love in Christianity, compassion is the great virtue of Buddhism.[15] As moral virtues and active and acted-upon solidarity, love, caring and compassion are not emotions we can decide to feel. We cannot decide to love, to care or to act on our compassion. However, we can experience the acts of love, care and compassion of others towards us and we can be taught to express them to others. Thus, Kant argues that it is a moral duty to nurture our capacity to feel compassion and to act on it, indeed to seek out opportunities to nurture the poor, the marginalised and the suffering wherever they be found in human or non-human nature.[16] Thus, compassion refers not only to the emotional willingness to enter into another's feelings and express empathy and solidarity; it also involves the active will to share and help alleviate the plight of others.[17] In this way, compassion moves us from the emotional realm to the ethical realm, from the world of what we feel and want to do to the world of what we are and what we must do.[18]

To help young people develop and practice an ethic of care, Noddings argues for a curriculum organised around "centres of care" in which attention is given to learning how to care for ourselves, for intimate others, for associates and acquaintances, for distant others, for non-human animals, plants and the geophysical world, for the human-made world of objects and artefacts, and for ideas.[19] She laments that too much contemporary education values caring for ideas above all other "centres of care", and argues that educational goals and processes have become distorted as a result. Indeed, she sees contemporary curriculum models and classroom practices that reify knowledge acquisition, cognitive performance and measurable outcomes at the expense of caring for ourselves, others and the rest of living and non-living nature as the key to the paradox of un-caring in the modern world. Environmental educators who acknowledge the three-fold goal of teaching the young (and others) to live as *healthy people* within *healthy communities* in a *healthy environment*[20] are well-paced to reorient the curriculum around Noddings' "centres of care" to help redress this problem.

I would like to make two special points about these widening circles of care and compassion. The first refers to importance of education for international understanding and peace; the second to care and compassion for non-human nature.

The global imperative underlying an ethic of care was identified nearly thirty years ago in the preamble to one of the seminal documents in environmental education. The 1975 Belgrade Charter advocated that

education be directed at solving the social and environmental problems that flow from poverty, hunger and exploitation:

> Inequality between the poor and the rich among nations and within nations is growing and there is evidence of increasing deterioration of the physical environment in some forms on a world-wide scale....
>
> What is being called for is the eradication of the basic causes of poverty, hunger, illiteracy, pollution, exploitation and domination. The previous pattern of dealing with these crucial problems on a fragmentary basis is no longer workable....
>
> It is absolutely vital that the world's citizens insist upon measures that will support the kind of economic growth which will not have harmful repercussions on people; that will not in any way diminish the environment and their living conditions....
>
> We need nothing more than a new global ethic - an ethic which espouses attitudes and behaviour for individuals and societies which are consonant with humanity's within the biosphere.[21]

Gro Harlem Brundtland, who chaired the World Commission on Environment and Development, outlined the nature of the transition required to create such an ecologically sustainable and socially just society, and the role envisaged for education, when she wrote:

> The transition to sustainable development touches on core issues of our societies. It concerns basic values and moral codes for human behaviour, attitudes and consideration for fellow human beings and for nature itself. In order to reverse the present negative trends, there is an urgent need for commitment and action at all levels of society. Today, there is an increased awareness that solidarity and responsibility must be extended to encompass the interests of future generations....
>
> Teachers play a very important role in the transition between generations, in the knowledge from one generation to the next. Consciousness-raising is vital for change. Teachers can convey to children a sense of respect and responsibility for nature and for the global environment....
>
> But respect for the environment alone will not be enough to save our common future. A sense of solidarity with the world's underprivileged will be equally important. There is no way we can win the battle to save the global environment unless we deal squarely with the issue of world poverty. We must teach the next generation that necessity of caring for the poor and the dispossessed.[22]

Education for peace and international understanding are therefore essential elements of learning to care through environmental education. We are very fortunate in this regard that Professor Toh Swee-Hin, the UNESCO Laureate for Peace Education in 2000, will soon be taking up his appointment

as Director of the Multi-Faith Centre and strengthening the linkages in our teaching and research in the areas of culture, religion, peace, sustainability and education.

The second area of learning to care I wanted to emphasise is the relationship between people and the environment. That we talk about "people and the environment" rather than "human and non-human nature" is a major philosophical flaw in western thinking and the way we think about nature in environmental education. It draws attention to questions about the place of humans in nature and to the isolation of humans from nature. This separation from nature is exemplified in a David Suzuki's story:

> "Look at that insect," the grandmother said, pointing at the beetle lying motionless on the sidewalk. "Oh, it's battery must be dead!" responded the boy.

Suzuki continues, "Apocryphal or not" the story illustrates "how disconnected from nature modern people have become. To the boy, even an insect is merely an object manufactured by humans".[23]

Today, apart from irregular visits to nature parks or zoos, children's experiences with animals have most commonly been reduced to a commercial transaction: Mum paying five dollars for a child to have his or her photograph taken with a lamb in a children's farm set up on the tiles in the middle of a shopping mall! But worse, our separation from nature is a major cause of alienation not only from nature and each other, but also from reality. As David Orr, the American environmental educator argues:

> The consumer society required that human contact with nature, once direct, frequent, and intense, be mediated by technology and organization. In large numbers we moved indoors. A more contrived and controlled landscape replaced one that had been far less contrived and controllable. Wild animals, once regarded as teachers and companions, were increasingly replaced with animals bred for docility and dependence.
>
> Our sense of reality, once shaped by our complex sensory interplay with the seasons, sky, forest, wildlife, savannah, desert, river, sea and night sky, increasingly came to be shaped by technology and artful realities. Compulsive consumption, perhaps a form of grieving or perhaps evidence of boredom, is a response to the fact that we find ourselves exiles and strangers in a diminished world that we once called home.[24]

I think the point I wish to make is very clear – as humans, we are not separate from nature. We are part of it. As Albert Einstein argued, and with apologies for the sexist language of his day:

> A human being is a part of the whole that we call the universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and

> feelings, as something separated from the rest – a kind of optical illusion of his consciousness. This illusion is a prison for us, restricting us to our personal thoughts and desires and to affection for only the few people nearest us.
>
> Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living beings and all of nature.[25]

Certainly, diverse social and political patterns over time and across cultures mean that how we define nature and our place within it varies enormously and results in a series of "'contested natures', which are constituted and reconstituted over historical time, geographical and cultural space."[26]

Nevertheless, 'nature' is also a physical reality that comprises the human species, the multitudinous other living creature and plants as well as air, water and Earth[27], all deeply embedded in biophysical and ecological webs which allow "*all* beings (not just humans) to unfold in their own ways".[28] Such a view also allows us to see both human and non-human nature as cultural creations, formed by the decisions and acts of people. After all, a wilderness is only a wilderness because economic and political decisions have been made to minimize human activities within them.

Thus, there is a key difference between human and non-human nature – the capacity to value, evaluate and prioritise. As Fernando Savater argues:

> We cannot affirm that 'nature' feels greater sympathy towards the fish in the sea than towards the chemical substances that decimate them, nor towards the forests as opposed to the fires that destroy them…. But to 'evaluate' is precisely to establish differences between things, to prefer one thing to something else, to select that which should be preserved because it appears more worthwhile. The task of evaluating is the human task par excellence, and the basis of human culture. In nature indifference [note from our earlier definition, an antonym of compassion] reigns, in culture what matters is distinction and values.[29]

And herein lies the moral obligation to care deeply for all aspects of nature. Savater suggests that we can use three categories of criteria when making decisions about caring[30]:

(i) *Aesthetic value*. According to culturally determined tastes, it is possible to contemplate various aspects of nature – a flower, a bird, a landscape, a starry night, an ecological process – and consider it "beautiful" and therefore worth preserving. We can educate for aesthetic awareness and reasoning and many techniques have been developed for achieving this in natural and even urban environments.[31]

(ii) *Utilitarian value*. According to this criterion of "use value", we should preserve those aspects of nature that are useful or valuable

for humans and cannot be replaced by a substitute. From this perspective, it would be wrong to damage the natural environment, for the same reasons it would be wrong to set fire to our house or a neighbours. This is the Brundtland notion of sustainable development: "If today we destroy, through stupidity or greed, the things we shall need tomorrow, we are acting suicidally; if for the same bad reasons we harm the environment of other human beings or even those things we suppose our children might need in the future, we are behaving criminally".[32] We can educate for the utilitarian values and decision making skills in education for sustainable development and many guidelines have been developed for achieving this.[33]

(iii) *Intrinsic value*. All aspects and components of nature have value in and of themselves. However, it is difficult to establish this proposition rationally. It is a matter of belief, but beliefs about which we must make pragmatic judgements. After all, if all of non-human nature was of equal intrinsic value and worthy of deep caring, we would have nothing to eat and no clothes to wear for non-human nature provides our food and the fibre for our clothes. Indeed, even Jains who sweep the ground before they sit in order to avoid crushing an insect and wear face cloths to avoid swallowing one, do eat vegetables and fruit. This is a judgement about different levels of intrinsic value. Thinking through such issues requires us to develop criteria for making such evaluations and I would like to suggest one over-riding one – the duty to respect the life of sentient beings, to avoid causing unnecessary suffering to animals whose nervous systems enables them to feel pain. However, as Savater argues, "The difficulty now lies in clarifying what we mean by "unnecessary".[34]

This returns us to the utilitarian value of nature because our own human needs are the measure by which this can be decided. Savater continues, it is "unnecessary" to torture an animal just to see it suffer but can it be seen as "necessary" to kill an animal humanely for protein nutrition in the human diet? And if so, is it necessary or unnecessary to force-feed geese for *foie gras*? to hunt whales or fight bulls for cultural reasons? Or to rear chickens in tiny enclosures because their eggs are cheaper than free-range ones? Or to cull dingoes on Fraser Island, or feral pigs damaging forest scrub, or horses in the fragile Snowy Mountain National Park?

How can we make distinctions between the intrinsic and utilitarian value of parts of non-human nature? But, more importantly, how can teachers wishing to develop an ethic of deep caring, do so without indoctrination? And what values constitute an ethic of deep caring?

Answering these questions provides the last two sections of this paper.

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First, I propose eight values that, together, constitute an ethic of deep caring. They are known as the World Ethic of Sustainability and were developed by the IUCN, WWF and UNEP as a contribution to the 1992 Rio Earth Summit.[35] In summary form, the eight values can be divided into two sets - those related to our responsibility to care for non-human nature (or ecological sustainability) and those related to our responsibility to care for each other (social justice), with four values in each set:

People and Non-Human Nature: Ecological Sustainability

Interdependence: People are a part of nature and depend utterly on her. They should respect nature at all times, for nature is life. To respect nature means to approach nature with humility, care and compassion; to be frugal and efficient in resource use; to be guided by the best available knowledge, both traditional and scientific; and to help shape and support public policies that promote sustainability.

Biodiversity: Every life form warrants respect and preservation independently of its worth to people. People should preserve the complexity of ecosystems to ensure the survival of all species, and the safeguarding of their habitats.

Living lightly on Earth: All persons should take responsibility for their impact on nature. They should maintain ecological processes, the variety of life, renewable resources, and the ecosystems that support them. They should use natural resources and the environment carefully and sustainably, and restore degraded ecosystems.

Interspecies equity: People should treat all creatures decently, and protect them from cruelty and avoidable suffering.

People and Human-Nature: Social Sustainability

Basic human needs: The needs of all individuals and societies should be met, within the constraints imposed by the biosphere; and all should have equal opportunity for improving their lot.

Inter-generational equity: Each generation should leave to the future a world that is at least as diverse and productive as the one it inherited. To this end, non-renewable resources should be used sparingly, renewable resources should be used sustainably, and waste should be minimised. The benefits of development should not be consumed now while leaving the costs to the future.

Human rights: All persons should have the fundamental freedoms of conscience and religion, expression, peaceful assembly, and association.

> ***Participation***: All persons and communities should be empowered to exercise responsibility for their own lives and for life on earth. Thus they must have full access to education, political enfranchisement and sustaining livelihoods; and they should be able to participate effectively in the decisions that most affect them

These eight values formed the basis of ten years of international, intercultural and inter-faith dialogue after Rio and have now been encapsulated in the 16 principles in the Earth Charter (See Appendix 1).

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Despite the universality of the Earth Charter, indoctrination is a very real concern for teachers and parents; teachers-in-training are generally taught how wrong it is and are shown various ways of ensuring they adopt a balanced approach in their work. In place of indoctrination, balanced perspectives and neutrality are claimed as virtues. However, claims to balance and neutrality often deny the reality of much educational decision-making by curriculum planners and teachers.

Education, like all social institutions and processes, is a human creation, its nature and purpose determined by human values, history and changing patterns of power. Another reason why education cannot be neutral is that there is insufficient time to teach everything that is possible to be taught. Thus, all educational objectives, emphases in curriculum content and classroom processes must necessarily be a selection of the culture from which curriculum planners and teachers make their selections of objectives, content, resources and teaching methods - and there is no rational way of making such selections without holding certain values to establish priorities. In this way, the processes of education continually expose students to filtered experiences. Thus, Grant and Zeichner conclude that "There is no such thing as a neutral educational activity" while Stanley reminds us education is "not a random or neutral process but purposeful and value oriented".[36]

This means that the key issue for educators concerned with questions of values and ethics should not be to check whether a particular idea or approach is indoctrination but to ask questions about the ways, and in accordance with what values and ends, should schools and teachers "indoctrinate" – or "inculcate" to use a less pejorative term. What is required is a practical way of handling values issues in the classroom in a professionally ethical manner.

I would like to conclude by suggesting such a practical and ethical way of teaching for an ethic of deep caring and compassion by distinguishing between two types of affective constructs - values and attitudes. These concepts are similar in that both are a part of the affective make-up of one's identity although values are more stable and enduring than attitudes.

Rokeach defines a value as an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or desired state of existence is more preferable than others. Values lie

at the very centre of what we hold to be important principles to live by, or goals to work towards. Attitudes are derived from values and are value-expressive for particular situations. That is, attitudes are beliefs that have been derived from a particular value and express a view about what should happen in particular situations. Thus, while values give rise to the attitudes we might have towards particular situations, attitudes mediate between values and action. In this way, attitudes are expressions of opinion about what should happen in a particular situation and, thus, guide decisions and action about situations that arise in everyday life.[37]

One of the dilemmas people face in deciding their attitudes towards a situation is the possibility of tension between particular values that they hold. This arises because the degree of personal commitment with which different values are held varies. In addition, situations sometimes arise in which several values may be in competition and need to be weighed against each other before an attitude can be formed and a decision about a particular course of action made.

What then is the role of committed teachers in relation to values and attitudes and an ethic of care? How can we teach in a professionally ethical way when guiding young people in learning why and how to care for themselves, for each other for Earth, and all her non-human creatures? There are two parts to the answer to this question.

Firstly, in relation to values, I suggest that the role of the teacher needs to be a pro-active one. This involves planning learning experiences that promote the conscious adoption of an ethic of care and encouraging students to engage in active ongoing reflection on it by consciously seeking consistency between the values or principles that are parts of it.

Secondly, in relation to formation of attitudes, the teacher's role needs to be more circumspect. The role of the committed educator is not to tell students how their values should be applied on particular issues or how they should act as a result. Thus, while I believe that teachers have a responsibility to promote particular values, they do not have a licence to direct the attitudes that can be formed from these values. This distinction suggests that the teaching technique of "values clarification" is misnamed and needs to be replaced by "attitude clarification".

An example may be used to illustrate this distinction. For example, in relation to teaching about the question of pesticide use in agriculture and chemical residues in food, teachers should promote key value principles in an ethic of care by asking students to evaluate the issue according to principles such as ecological interdependence, living lightly on the earth, and meeting basic human needs. This does not mean that such values would be taught as absolutes but as moral guides that people in other times and places have found useful and which students can subject to critical analysis and review, and use as mirrors to examine the contribution they could make to their individual lives and society. However, the ways these values are applied by students when clarifying their attitudes to particular agricultural situations

(e.g. what chemicals should a farmer use in a particular local case, in what concentrations, and how should they be applied?) - and deciding how to act as a result - are decisions for students to make after a comprehensive examination of the political economy of food production in the area under investigation.

This distinction between *promoting the core values in an ethic of care but refraining from teaching particular attitudes* is based upon a definition of indoctrination developed by Newfield and McElyea twenty years ago.[38] They argue that indoctrination occurs in education when a teacher leads a student to accept certain propositions about a situation or issue regardless of the evidence, i.e. when the evidence is not challenged and evaluated, when it is presented as secondary to belief, or when it is simply not presented at all. Such a view of indoctrination clearly refers to the teaching of attitudes not values. Being principles for living, values generally stand independently of evidence. However, attitudes relate to particular circumstances and demand the application of reason through the marshalling and evaluation of evidence about particular circumstances before they can be formed.

To return to the example of pesticide use in agriculture, teachers could encourage students to assess the relevance of value principles such ecological interdependence, living lightly on the earth, and meeting basic human needs when evaluating alternative proposals for types of sprays and application levels and various means for regulating and monitoring compliance with local legislation. However, the attitudes that students form, and the actions they take, would be determined by their assessment of appropriate evidence about the social and environmental contexts and impacts of agricultural practices in the region concerned and the nature and likely impact of the particular proposals.[39]

Teaching for values and not particular attitudes is a practical and ethical approach to issues in environmental education because it resolves many of the questions concerning indoctrination. It acknowledges the inevitability of values in the curriculum by advocating the promotion of the values in an ethic of care but does not dictate how students should respond to particular issues.

Footnotes

[1] Halifax -Roshi, J. (2000) Foreword, in Bloom, P., ed., *Buddhist Acts of Compassion*, Conari Press, Berkeley, p. xi.

[2] Meadows, D.H., Meadows, D.L., Randers, J. and Behrens, W. (1972) *The Limits to Growth,* Universe Books, New York; Meadows, D.H., Meadows, D.L. and Randers, J. (1992) *Beyond the Limits: Global Collapse or a Sustainable Future,* Earthscan, London.

[3] See, for example, Fien, J. (1993a) *Education for the Environment: Critical Curriculum Theorizing and Environmental Education*, Deakin University, Geelong; and Fien, J., ed. (1993b) *Environmental Education: A Pathway to Sustainability*, Deakin University, Geelong.

[4] Meadows, Meadows and Randers 1992, xv-xvi

[5] Bowers, C. A. (1991) The anthropocentric foundations of educational liberalism: Some critical concerns, *Trumpeter*, 8 (3), 102-107.

[6] Fien, J. (1993a), *op.cit*., pp. 96-98

[7] Davis, J. (2003) *Innovation through Action Research in Environmental Education: From Project to Praxis*, unpublished PhD thesis, Griffith University.

[8] van Hooft, S. (1995) *Caring: An Essay in the Philosophy of Ethics*, University Press of Colorado, Niwot, Co. I am grateful to Max Charlesworth for sharing this book with me.

[9] Jensen, B. 1992, 'Current Research in Environmental and Health Education', unpublished paper to Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, Deakin University, Geelong.

[10] See, for example, Huckle, J. (1983) Values education through geography: A radical critique, *Journal of Geography,* 82, March - April, 59-63; Huckle, J. (1986) Ten red questions to ask green teachers, *Green Teacher*, 1 (3), 11-15; and Fien, J. (1997) 'Stand Up, Stand Up and Be Counted: Undermining Myths of Environmental Education', keynote address to Biennial National Conference of the Australian Association for Environmental Education, Hobart.

[11] Simmons, D.A. (1988) Environmental education and environmental ethics: Theory, practice and mixed messages, *Environmental Education and Information,* 7 (2), 52-61.

[12] Noddings, N. (1984) *Caring: A Feminist Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, University of California Press, Berkeley, p. 135.

[13] Noddings, Nel (1992) *The Challenge To Care In Schools: An Alternative Approach to Education*. Teachers College Press, Columbia University, New York.

[14] Comte-Sponville, A. (2003) *A Short Treatise on the Great Virtues: The Uses of Philosophy in Everyday Life*, Vintage Books, London, p. 103.

[15] Swadesh Mohan argues that compassion is central to all the great religions that originated in Asia – Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Confucianism, Christianity and Islam. See Mohan, S. (2002) Education in love and compassion: A teaching-learning approach, in *Learning to Be: A Holistic and Integrated Approach to Values Education for Human Development*, UNESCO-APNIEVE Sourcebook 2, UNESCO, Bangkok, 67-71.

[16] See *Ibid*., p. 116 and fn 54.

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APPENDIX 1

THE EARTH CHARTER

PREAMBLE

We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise. To move forward we must recognise that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace. Towards this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.

Earth, Our Home

Humanity is part of a vast evolving universe. Earth, our home, is alive with a unique community of life. The forces of nature make existence a demanding and uncertain adventure, but Earth has provided the conditions essential to life's evolution. The resilience of the community of life and the well-being of humanity depend upon preserving a healthy biosphere with all its ecological systems, a rich variety of plants and animals, fertile soils, pure waters, and clean air. The global environment with its finite resources is a common concern of all peoples. The protection of Earth's vitality, diversity, and beauty is a sacred trust.

The Global Situation

The dominant patterns of production and consumption are causing environmental devastation, the depletion of resources, and a massive extinction of species. Communities are being undermined. The benefits of development are not shared equitably and the gap between rich and poor is widening. Injustice, poverty, ignorance, and violent conflict are widespread and the cause of great suffering. An unprecedented rise in human population has overburdened ecological and social systems. The foundations of global security are threatened. These trends are perilous - but not inevitable.

The Challenges Ahead

The choice is ours: form a global partnership to care for Earth and one another or risk the destruction of ourselves and the diversity of life. Fundamental changes are needed in our values, institutions, and ways of living. We must realise that when basic needs have been met, human development is primarily about being more, not having more. We have the knowledge and technology to provide for all and to reduce our impacts on the

environment. The emergence of a global civil society is creating new opportunities to build a democratic and humane world. Our environmental, economic, political, social, and spiritual challenges are interconnected, and together we can forge inclusive solutions.

Universal Responsibility

To realise these aspirations, we must decide to live with a sense of universal responsibility, identifying ourselves with the whole Earth community as well as our local communities. We are at once citizens of different nations and of one world in which the local and global are linked. Everyone shares responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world. The spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life is strengthened when we live with reverence for the mystery of being, gratitude for the gift of life, and humility regarding the human place in nature.

We urgently need a shared vision of basic values to provide an ethical foundation for the emerging world community. Therefore, together in hope we affirm the following interdependent principles for a sustainable way of life as a common standard by which the conduct of all individuals, organisations, businesses, governments, and transnational institutions is to be guided and assessed.

PRINCIPLES

1. Respect Earth and life in all its diversity

- Recognise that all beings are interdependent and every form of life has value regardless of its worth to human beings
- Affirm faith in the inherent dignity of all human beings and in the intellectual, artistic, ethical, and spiritual potential of humanity

2. Care for the community of life with understanding, compassion, and love

- Accept that with the right to own, manage, and use natural resources comes the duty to prevent environmental harm and to protect the rights of people
- Affirm that with increased freedom, knowledge, and power comes increased responsibility to promote the common good

3. Build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable, and peaceful

- Ensure that communities at all levels guarantee human rights and fundamental freedoms and provide everyone an opportunity to realise his or her full potential
- Promote social and economic justice, enabling all to achieve a secure and meaningful livelihood that is ecologically responsible

4. Secure Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations

- Recognise that the freedom of action of each generation is qualified by the needs of future generations
- Transmit to future generations values, traditions, and institutions that support the long-term flourishing of Earth's human and ecological communities

In order to fulfil these four broad commitments, it is necessary to:

5. Protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecological systems, with special concern for biological diversity and the natural processes that sustain life

- Adopt at all levels sustainable development plans and regulations that make environmental conservation and rehabilitation integral to all development initiatives
- Establish and safeguard viable nature and biosphere reserves, including wild lands and marine areas, to protect Earth's life support systems, maintain biodiversity, and preserve our natural heritage
- Promote the recovery of endangered species and ecosystems
- Control and eradicate non-native or genetically modified organisms harmful to native species and the environment, and prevent introduction of such harmful organisms
- Manage the use of renewable resources such as water, soil, forest products, and marine life in ways that do not exceed rates of regeneration and that protect the health of ecosystems
- Manage the extraction and use of non-renewable resources such as minerals and fossil fuels in ways that minimise depletion and cause no serious environmental damage

6. Prevent harm as the best method of environmental protection and, when knowledge is limited, apply a precautionary approach

- Take action to avoid the possibility of serious or irreversible environmental harm even when scientific knowledge is incomplete or inconclusive
- Place the burden of proof on those who argue that a proposed activity will not cause significant harm, and make the responsible parties liable for environmental harm
- Ensure that decision making addresses the cumulative, long-term, indirect, long distance, and global consequences of human activities
- Prevent pollution of any part of the environment and allow no build-up of radioactive, toxic, or other hazardous substances
- Avoid military activities damaging to the environment

7. **Adopt patterns of production, consumption, and reproduction that safeguard Earth's regenerative capacities, human rights, and community well-being**
    - Reduce, reuse, and recycle the materials used in production and consumption systems, and ensure that residual waste can be assimilated by ecological systems
    - Act with restraint and efficiency when using energy, and rely increasingly on renewable energy sources such as solar and wind
    - Promote the development, adoption, and equitable transfer of environmentally sound technologies
    - Internalise the full environmental and social costs of goods and services in the selling price, and enable consumers to identify products that meet the highest social and environmental standards
    - Ensure universal access to health care that fosters reproductive health and responsible reproduction
    - Adopt lifestyles that emphasise the quality of life and material sufficiency in a finite world
8. **Advance the study of ecological sustainability and promote the open exchange and wide application of the knowledge acquired**
    - Support international scientific and technical cooperation on sustainability, with special attention to the needs of developing nations
    - Recognise and preserve the traditional knowledge and spiritual wisdom in all cultures that contribute to environmental protection and human well-being
    - Ensure that information of vital importance to human health and environmental protection, including genetic information, remains available in the public domain
9. **Eradicate poverty as an ethical, social, and environmental imperative**
    - Guarantee the right to potable water, clean air, food security, uncontaminated soil, shelter, and safe sanitation, allocating the national and international resources required
    - Empower every human being with the education and resources to secure a sustainable livelihood, and provide social security and safety nets for those who are unable to support themselves
    - Recognise the ignored, protect the vulnerable, serve those who suffer, and enable them to develop their capacities and to pursue their aspirations
10. **Ensure that economic activities and institutions at all levels promote human development in an equitable and sustainable manner**
    - Promote the equitable distribution of wealth within nations and among nations

- Enhance the intellectual, financial, technical, and social resources of developing nations, and relieve them of onerous international debt
- Ensure that all trade supports sustainable resource use, environmental protection, and progressive labour standards
- Require multinational corporations and international financial organisations to act transparently in the public good, and hold them accountable for the consequences of their activities

11. Affirm gender equality and equity as prerequisites to sustainable development and ensure universal access to education, health care, and economic opportunity

- Secure the human rights of women and girls and end all violence against them
- Promote the active participation of women in all aspects of economic, political, civil, social, and cultural life as full and equal partners, decision makers, leaders, and beneficiaries
- Strengthen families and ensure the safety and loving nurture of all family members

12. Uphold the right of all, without discrimination, to a natural and social environment supportive of human dignity, bodily health, and spiritual well-being, with special attention to the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities

- Eliminate discrimination in all its forms, such as that based on race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, religion, language, and national, ethnic or social origin
- Affirm the right of indigenous peoples to their spirituality, knowledge, lands and resources and to their related practice of sustainable livelihoods
- Honour and support the young people of our communities, enabling them to fulfil their essential role in creating sustainable societies
  Protect and restore outstanding places of cultural and spiritual significance

13. Strengthen democratic institutions at all levels, and provide transparency and accountability in governance, inclusive participation in decision making, and access to justice

- Uphold the right of everyone to receive clear and timely information on environmental matters and all development plans and activities which are likely to affect them or in which they have an interest
- Support local, regional and global civil society, and promote the meaningful participation of all interested individuals and organisations in decision making
- Protect the rights to freedom of opinion, expression, peaceful assembly, association, and dissent

- Institute effective and efficient access to administrative and independent judicial procedures, including remedies and redress for environmental harm and the threat of such harm
- Eliminate corruption in all public and private institutions
- Strengthen local communities, enabling them to care for their environments, and assign environmental responsibilities to the levels of government where they can be carried out most effectively

14. Integrate into formal education and life-long learning the knowledge, values, and skills needed for a sustainable way of life

- Provide all, especially children and youth, with educational opportunities that empower them to contribute actively to sustainable development
- Promote the contribution of the arts and humanities as well as the sciences in sustainability education
- Enhance the role of the mass media in raising awareness of ecological and social challenges
- Institute effective and efficient access to administrative and independent judicial procedures, including remedies and redress for environmental harm and the threat of such harm
- Recognise the importance of moral and spiritual education for sustainable living

15. Treat all living beings with respect and consideration

- Prevent cruelty to animals kept in human societies and protect them from suffering
- Protect wild animals from methods of hunting, trapping, and fishing that cause extreme, prolonged, or avoidable suffering
- Avoid or eliminate to the full extent possible the taking or destruction of non-targeted species

16. Promote a culture of tolerance, nonviolence, and peace

- Encourage and support mutual understanding, solidarity, and cooperation among all peoples and within and among nations
- Implement comprehensive strategies to prevent violent conflict and use collaborative problem solving to manage and resolve environmental conflicts and other disputes
- Demilitarise national security systems to the level of a non-provocative defense posture, and convert military resources to peaceful purposes, including ecological restoration
- Eliminate nuclear, biological, and toxic weapons and other weapons of mass destruction
- Ensure that the use of orbital and outer space supports environmental protection and peace

- Recognise that peace is the wholeness created by right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth, and the larger whole of which all are a part

THE WAY FORWARD

As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning. Such renewal is the promise of these Earth Charter principles. To fulfil this promise, we must commit ourselves to adopt and promote the values and objectives of the Charter.

This requires a change of mind and heart. It requires a new sense of global interdependence and universal responsibility. We must imaginatively develop and apply the vision of a sustainable way of life locally, nationally, regionally, and globally. Our cultural diversity is a precious heritage and different cultures will find their own distinctive ways to realise the vision. We must deepen and expand the global dialogue that generated the Earth Charter, for we have much to learn from the ongoing collaborative search for truth and wisdom.

Life often involves tensions between important values. This can mean difficult choices. However, we must find ways to harmonise diversity with unity, the exercise of freedom with the common good, short-term objectives with long-term goals. Every individual, family, organisation, and community has a vital role to play. The arts, sciences, religions, educational institutions, media, businesses, nongovernmental organisations, and governments are all called to offer creative leadership. The partnership of government, civil society, and business is essential for effective governance.

In order to build a sustainable global community, the nations of the world must renew their commitment to the United Nations, fulfil their obligations under existing international agreements, and support the implementation of Earth Charter principles with an international legally binding instrument on environment and development.

Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.

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The Earth Charter Initiative
<www.earthcharter.org>