

Innovations in Science Education and Technology

Education for a Sustainable Future

**A Paradigm of Hope
for the 21st Century**

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Foreword

WHY EDUCATE FOR SUSTAINABILITY?

Ask most people—especially young people—what the future looks like to them. They will paint for you a rosy picture of their individual lives, their future homes, their careers and sometimes even the lives of their children. Then they will paint for you a depleted, conflicted and weary picture of the planet as a whole. Do any of us note the incongruence? We are becoming increasingly aware that the very things we need, the things we adore most in this world are the very things we are undermining through our individual and collective behaviors. We can feel the disconnect between the consequences of our actions and our values, but we do not necessarily understand it or know how to reconcile it.

Living with behavior that feels, and in fact is, inconsistent with our values is a recipe for anguish. We have disconnected so drastically from our sense of place that ironically we poison our water, our air, and our food while at the same time we work hard to secure a healthy and meaningful future for ourselves and our children. This just doesn't make sense.

Hope is the union of a vision with the capacity to realize it. Education for sustainability helps us to create optimistic visions and develops in us the capacity for actions that are consistent with those visions. It makes sense for us to cultivate hope in our children for themselves and for the world around them. What would be the point of being educated for a future for which we have no hope?

Another reason to educate for sustainability is that it is the ethical thing to do. Aldo Leopold wrote: "All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. His instincts prompt him to compete for his place in the community but his ethics prompt him also to co-operate (perhaps in order that there may be a place to compete for)." Simply put, it is the right thing to do.

Finally those of us who have already been provoked to educate for sustainability continue to do so because it is the most ambitious, creative, elegant, innovative, out of the box, exhilarating, difficult, frustrating, comprehensive, enlightening, rewarding, holistic, ego-boosting, and humbling work there is to do. And we would not miss it for the world.

Whoever you are and whatever compels you to move, to grow, and to change, this book is an invitation to you to learn, and to educate for a sustainable future.

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