

# **Ecopedagogy and Citizenship in the Age of Globalisation: connections between environmental and global citizenship education to save the planet**

Greg William Misiaszek

## **Introduction**

*Ecopedagogy* is a critical approach to the teaching and learning of connections between environmental and social problems. Although these aspects are often inseparable (Commoner, 1971; Gadotti, 2008a), the connections are nevertheless often avoided or intentionally mistaught. Some scholars argue that this is because of the power relations that are embedded both inside and outside educational systems. Hence, a critical approach is essential because it helps to reveal important aspects that are otherwise difficult to observe (Cox, 1996). Other forms of Environmental Pedagogy (EP) include environmental education (EE) and education for sustainable development (ESD). While these different EPs can be approached critically or non-critically, *ecopedagogy* emphasises the critical approach. It is guided by the critical, popular education methods of the Brazilian educational scholar Paulo Freire. Scholars that follow the critical approach suggest that there is a tension within different types of EPs, as within all education, namely between pedagogies focused on transforming societies and those that (often unintentionally) contribute to reproducing historical socio-environmental oppressions. *Ecopedagogy* emphasises the former transformative aspects as well as the global and holistic inclusion of all individuals and societies and the natural world. Researchers following an *ecopedagogy* approach seek to reveal how reproductive tendencies associated with dominant power relations help to sustain and even intensify socio-environmental oppressions. In this vein, the goal of *ecopedagogy* is to promote transformative action by helping to reveal socio-environmental connections that oppress individuals and societies.

This article suggests some of the policy and practice changes needed for EP to be more effective and socially just, and how local vs global models of citizenship education are both relevant for effective transformative action in this regard. A core argument put forth is that on the one hand, there is a gap in understanding the rights and responsibilities of citizenship without an understanding of the socio-environmental connections that the *ecopedagogy* approach has the potential to offer. On the other, without an understanding of how citizenship connects to environmental rights and responsibilities, transformative action is much less effective. In short, the *ecopedagogy* approach and citizenship education are seen as inseparable. Moreover, with the intensification of globalisation, the notion of citizenship is not singular but plural, encompassing spheres ranging from the local to the global. Environmental issues are increasingly global in scope, with the ever-increasing impact of distant influences on local matters. Hence, *Global Citizenship Education* (GCE) and *ecopedagogy* are seen as essential elements to understand and respect socio-environmental connections in different contexts. *Ecopedagogy* goes hand in hand with GCE's aim to foster understanding of the roots of social problems

within cultures. Both have the same overall transformational goal to end the world's oppressions and I argue that both are needed together to achieve this end.

This article proceeds with an overview of the tenets of *ecopedagogy* and its interdependence with GCE models. Aspects of globalisation are analysed as both positively and negatively altering EP and citizenship education models. Next, the changes needed with EP and citizenship models are discussed to highlight the risk that certain approaches to EP may in fact help to sustain socio-environmental oppressions. Then, implications of a GCE-ecopedagogy implementation are considered within a framework of multiple spheres of citizenships and identities. Finally, a summary is provided of suggested changes to policy and practices needed for an effective ecopedagogy approach.

### **Ecopedagogy-GCE Constructions: an assumption and some considerations**

Before suggesting that a change in how ecopedagogy-GCE is taught is needed within all levels of educational systems, I discuss three important considerations. The assumption is that all environmentally destructive human actions are carried out for some entity's (e.g. individual(s'), group(s'), community(ies')) benefit (e.g. economically, acquiring needed/wanted resource(s)) which often leads many others to be negatively affected. Without such benefit to some, there would be no intentional environmentally damaging action because there would be no reason for this. Education models need to critically question who benefits, who does not, and why socio-environmental disparities exist: this is a major focus of *ecopedagogy*. EPs that selectively resist problem-posing such disparities and/or educational institutions that systematically oppose such teaching contribute to a perpetuation of inaction on these issues because of what is left 'untaught'. Policy and practice (locally, nationally, globally) should support individuals' efforts to counter this in classrooms, as well as at institutional levels.

The first consideration is that defining citizenship education in the context of globalisation processes is important because GCE models can be either empowering and/or disempowering in different societies. Disempowering models help to sustain and intensify current global inequalities. Educators who (often inadvertently or unknowingly) teach Westernisation as a sole endpoint of global citizenship are an example. Due to this contested terrain of citizenship education, GCE and associated research should be continuously analysed through local contextualisation in order to determine the positive and negative impacts of globalisation on different societies. Empowering GCE and ecopedagogy are not one-off solutions or one-off practices, but rather an outline for a foundation to be constructed locally utilising empowering processes of globalisation. Given the ecopedagogy-GCE interdependence, ecopedagogues teach to unveil oppressive global citizenship models that help to sustain social inequalities caused by environmental ill actions.

The second consideration is that the terms 'societies' and 'populations' are to be understood beyond an anthropocentric focus; they are biocentric and include all organisms and non-organic systems (e.g. landscapes). Biocentricity is thus fundamental to ecopedagogical practice and research; it must consider both the human and beyond-human toll from environmental ills caused by human actions. However, in the definition of ecopedagogy presented in the introduction, I chose to focus on humans because they are the only beings who can reflexively determine

their actions using their knowledge, cultural histories, and empathy to transform the world in positive and negative ways (Freire 2005).

Third, the importance of effective EP models is rooted in the need to alter the current path towards the destruction of the Earth. In terms of policy, this refers to the need for drastic global and local changes to educational structures in the form of the holistic inclusion of ecopedagogy in all disciplines and levels of education rather than just an additional course or altering a few classes.

## **Two Key Elements of Ecopedagogy**

### *The use of theoretical framing*

The use of theoretical framing in ecopedagogy is crucial to enable individuals to understand the complexities of diverse societies. I have analysed this aspect in detail in other writings (Misiaszek, 2011, 2012, 2014a). Here, I briefly provide a number of reasons why theoretical framing is necessary for transformative and action-orientated EPs.

Theoretical ‘lenses’ in ecopedagogy are not centred on purely academic pursuits, but instead can be seen as tools to enable researchers and practitioners to better understand socio-environmental issues from globally diverse perspectives — this is important if there are to be transformative actions (Gadotti, 1996). Coinciding with Giddens’ (1999) definition of globalisation, socio-environmental issues are transcending physical distances. Ecopedagogy is therefore only possible if one learns about socio-environmental perspectives and traditions that are different from our own. However, individuals may not already have such understandings because of their positionality. For example, theories of feminism allow for a better understanding of socio-environmental issues from diverse female perspectives, while critical race theories allow the same for ‘othered’ and often minority populations. In addition, this approach can be important to enable students and teachers to consider solutions outside their normative societal structures (social, economic, and policy), which is often otherwise difficult because of deep normative ideologies that are embedded in those structures.

It is important, however, that theoretical frameworks are democratically constructed within spaces for learning and for research, allowing for an effective interaction between contextualised and decontextualised knowledge. This includes the need for self-reflexivity of the educator(s)/researcher(s)/student(s). Local, bottom-up pedagogical constructions enable deeper socio-environmental understandings. Not least, EPs should be constructed to respect local knowledge and values in order to determine the socio-environmental issues that individuals should focus on and the resources to be used in the process. This does not mean that all students need to delve into esoteric theoretical issues, but that teachers should have the knowledge and ability to infuse theories into the classroom dialogue in order to foster students’ understanding of socio-environmental knowledge from different perspectives. This has implications for teacher training and curricular policy, in particular, the development of flexibility, so that ecopedagogues have the space to increase students’ abilities to understand and solve socio-environmental problems rather than focus on the amount of didactic environmental knowledge they have ‘gained’. Since ecopedagogical teaching is centred on helping learners to address, develop, and expand their curiosities, policy changes should focus on supporting spaces in which flexible critical analysis and decision-making can occur.

*The democratisation of learning spaces*

As previously stated, learning spaces in an ecopedagogy perspective should be democratic in the sense that both teachers and students work together to develop shared meanings of socio-environmental issues through reflections based on prior knowledge and experiences, as well as by seeking to understand diverse perspectives outside the learning space. This is in opposition to the 'banking' model of education in which students are only lectured to and assessed on their abilities to repeat knowledge that reflects the teacher's thinking (Freire, 2005). In ecopedagogical spaces, students are not treated as blank slates, but their knowledges are respected and dialogue is central. These learning spaces reflect the ideals of democratic citizenship. In this sense, they also represent the ideals of multiculturalism which teach 'a way to identify the importance of multiple identities in education and culture' (Torres, 1998, p. 421).

Freirean pedagogy refers to teaching which focuses on determining how someone wants the world to be, the gaps between this constructed reality and the perceptions of current reality (i.e. *limit situations*), and what is necessary to eliminate these gaps. In ecopedagogy, this type of education is used to lay out current socio-environmental realities and possible realities in order to consider potential changes to existing societal, political, and economic structures and eliminate the gap between them. A fundamental philosophy of Freirean pedagogy is that if humans have constructed the current world, it is possible to change it. In this respect, it is a *pedagogy of hope* as opposed to pedagogies that promote fatalism in which deeper, structural change cannot occur (Freire, 1992, 2005). Ecopedagogues facilitate citizenship and learning through discussions of power relationships and how these affect the constructs of what is 'good' and 'bad' civil engagement. Posing these questions is important not only to understand the causes and effects of socio-environmental issues within the global sphere, but also how the global affects local societies and how the local can affect the global. In practice, ecopedagogues pose uncomfortable questions that are not posed every day, often questioning social systems that are seen as natural and unchangeable. Policy change to EPs requires flexibility within educational structures and teacher training in order to implement such Freirean teaching methods.

There is a tension in ecopedagogy that can be seen as being at odds with critical pedagogy. All EPs aim to increase environmental well-being through education. However, the goal of critical pedagogy is not to tell students what to do and how to do it, but rather to develop critical skills to solve problems. The Appalachian educational scholar Myles Horton has written about how he was not an 'organiser' (who promoted an organisation's mission) but rather an educator who worked in solidarity with students who sought to critically determine their own understandings and actions (Horton *et al.*, 1990). Critical pedagogies aim to end oppressions through deeper holistic understanding of these oppressions; however, this does not mean that education is prescriptive as to what and how to think. There is no guarantee that education will ever directly lead to socio-environmentally beneficial actions. However, deeper understandings of these issues will afford greater possibilities for such beneficial actions. This emphasises the need for EP practice and assessment to focus on critical thinking rather than on didactic environmental information or 'correct' ways of thinking/acting to 'fix' the environment.

### Globalisations from Above and from Below

To understand the impact of globalisation on socio-environmental issues and their teachings, deconstructing its processes is essential. As previously mentioned, the numerous definitions of globalisation place different emphases on the processes, agents, and effects, and often tend to give an overall positive or negative outlook on globalisation. Opposing definitions reflect that globalisation is a process that forms a contested terrain which includes complex, multiple dimensional phenomena that can be either empowering or oppressing, depending on the population in question (Kellner, 1998). From this perspective, 'globalisation' is a plural phenomenon denoting its multiple processes and resulting influences. Many critical pedagogues divide globalisations into *globalisation from above*, which is oppressive (often synonymous with neo-liberal globalisation), and *globalisation from below*, which empowers the global masses from local communities; however, an absolute division does not exist (Torres, 2009).

Not everything stemming from local traditions and cultural aspects is environmentally 'good' and not everything from a distance (the global) is 'bad'. Determining the socio-environmental benefits of actions for a local society leads to the following question: How do cultural rights intersect with socio-environmental rights? These analysis skills are more and more necessary, as determining global influences becomes increasingly difficult when their impact continues to grow stronger. On the other hand, other processes of globalisation can help to develop understandings by increasing the amount of information to draw from such an analysis. Another way of reading 'from below' is the incorporation of local population(s) in all aspects of socio-environmental decision-making that affects their community.

### Global Citizenship Education (GCE)

I will focus here on the following goal of GCE developed by Davies (2006, p. 23): 'a collection of "global citizens" who will act concertedly in particular ways to challenge injustice and promote rights'. There is a wealth of literature of definitions and practices of GCE with this as the praxis goal when GCE is transformational. Shultz (2007) defined the following three approaches to global citizenship and their goal(s):

*Neo-liberal citizenship*: global understanding for increased economic profit through global expansion

*radical global citizenship*: eliminating global structures that are seen as mostly sustaining the world's inequalities, especially financial ones

*transformationalist global citizenship*: views globalisations as both empowering and disempowering with the goal of social justice at the local level by strengthening empowering processes and eliminating oppressive ones.

The last approach is the most intimately connected with ecopedagogy, together with the second (radical), with both approaches opposing the first (neo-liberal). Both focus on challenging social and environmental injustices.

I argue that GCE and ecopedagogy are inter-dependent. The dependency of GCE upon ecopedagogy is teaching for deeper contextual understandings of the world's diverse cultures for environmental decision-making, realising that local happenings, with increased globalisation, are often decided upon by distant

entities. GCE is dependent on ecopedagogy because of the inherent socio-environmental connections, which means that determining globally diverse social oppressions is inherently connected to understanding environmental oppressions.

There are possible negative aspects that celebrate the 'emerging cosmopolitan, universalistic intentions' of global citizenship in developing areas of the world; this universality may ignore 'viable citizenship contexts [that] should be directly attached to the promise or problems of democracy, human rights, the rule of laws and social justice' (Abdi, Shizha, & Ellis, 2010, p. 19). While the authors discuss cases in Africa, the importance of contextual understanding in GCE is essential anywhere. Thus, any GCE-ecopedagogy policy should consist in guiding aspects rather than be a prescriptive structure (e.g. curricula, pedagogies), with an emphasis on bottom-up implementation. In simple terms, global citizenship education should not be an implementation of globalisation *from above*.

### **Changes Needed in EP and Citizenship Education Models**

The ecopedagogues' task is to counter reproductive models of education, including EPs and citizenship education models. A critical questioning of EPs at all levels (formal, non-formal, and informal) does not only concern research, but also educational practice. Non-critical EPs coincide with the social control functions of public education and citizenship models centred on the social reproduction of power and social relations and those who are disadvantaged (e.g. natives, persons of colour, etc.) (Apple, 2004; Giroux, 1980, 2001; Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2007). Many aspects of these citizenship models are constructed to sustain oppressions by ignoring unjust societal structures and promoting the idea that oppressions are self-acquired and self-maintained. This reveals the need for critical theory and the historical deconstruction of citizenship and environmental acts, and the development of curricula, research, and teaching to counter such models. In addition, scholars have argued that many citizenship education models have as a priority to condition students to become socially-tiered economic producers (Apple, 2004, 2006; Torres, 2002). For example, neo-liberal globalisation places an economic focus only on monetary profitability. In contrast, critical GCE-ecopedagogy places a focus on economic inequalities that arise as a consequence. Non-critical EPs help to promote citizens' decision-making and actions to be in allegiance with those who benefit rather than with those who are their fellow citizens. Ecopedagogy counters such framings by seeking to decentre economic profitability as a focus and instead focus on oppressions that arise as a result of economic inequalities. Ecopedagogy and critical GCE are inherently multidisciplinary in nature. Both should have a special focus on local-global economic matters which sustain oppressions.

#### *Questioning 'Development': ecopedagogy-GCE connections with ESD and EE*

Many models of education for sustainable development (ESD) place the teaching of environmental issues second to that of economically-measured development. This neo-liberal emphasis, which is increasingly spreading through Westernisation, has made critical environmental educators position themselves within more nature-based, biocentric environmental education (EE) models. There are many polarising arguments between the positive and negative aspects of the two models. However, many scholars, such as the expert Brazilian ecopedagogue Moacir Gadotti (2008b), argue that the essence of both models have more similarities than differences with the ecopedagogy approach.

Historical goals of ESD included connecting society and the environment within education, as compared to EE models that were seen as too isolated from human concerns and prosperity. However, over time, ESD models were hijacked to have only economic and Western goals. Ecopedagogical-based ESD models place emphasis on posing the problem of what are ‘development’, ‘sustainability’ and ‘sustainable development’ through global and local lenses. GCE helps to understand globally diverse interpretations of these terms. Again, GCE models need ecopedagogy to understand global socio-environmental connections that affect local societies. Deconstructing and redefining *sustainable development* are at the heart of constructing citizenship education with ecopedagogy as an element. How we understand sustainable development is directly linked to how we define our civil obligations towards the environment in terms of how they affect our self-determined ‘fellow citizens’.

### Spheres of Citizenship and Ecopedagogy

The ecopedagogy-citizenship education arguments presented in this article stem from research conducted in Brazil, Argentina and the Appalachian region of the US (Misiaszek, 2011). The research is qualitative and comparative and one main focus is on how globalisation has affected EPs. The citizenship-ecopedagogy theme of environmental rights (and responsibilities) has emerged as part of this research (Misiaszek, 2014b), together with the civil, political, and social elements of citizenship as defined by Marshall (1963). Ecopedagogy was linked to citizenship education because of its critical approach and goals of transformation that are in line with the inclusionary and democratic approaches to citizenship (Misiaszek, 2011).

Both ecopedagogy and citizenship education aim to train individuals who can fully participate in and better their societies. However, what does ‘better’ mean and what is ‘their societies?’ The global, all-inclusiveness of well-being is the goal of being a ‘global citizen’. Global citizenship captures the spheres of citizenship that intersect with socio-environmental rights and responsibilities. In simpler terms, the question becomes, ‘Who is your fellow citizen?’ Globalisations have restructured who we consider our fellow citizens by establishing connections that reach beyond traditional nation-state framings of citizenship (Burbules & Torres, 2000; Carnoy, 2003; Torres, 2013). Just as they have multiple identities, people also have different spheres of citizenship they need to contend with as the world becomes more interconnected and borderless. For example, circumstances increasingly arise in which ‘. . . a given local condition or entity succeed in traversing borders and extending its reach over the globe and, in doing so, develops the capacity to designate a rival social condition or entity as local’ (Jenson & Santos, 2000, p. 11; Stromquist, 2002). The inclusion of citizenship is not singular; it could be framed as inclusive of different degrees of civil connectedness between planetary,<sup>1</sup> global, and nation-state citizenships. Such incorporations are necessary for social-environmental well-being to exist (Gutiérrez & Prado, 1989).

With global citizenship, there are civil responsibilities among societies beyond traditionally-framed spheres of citizenship that extend to the local, global and biocentric perspectives, as well as environmental responsibilities towards future generations. In the past, determining citizenship would coincide with individuals and societies under the same leadership (e.g. nation-states). This is not to deny the existence of oppressive forms of domination such as colonialism, slavery, and war.

The point however, is that the question of leadership and influence on societies is much more complicated in a more globalised world when defining the rights and responsibilities of individuals who have multiple and often conflicting citizenships. Who has environmental rights and responsibilities towards those in distant societies? This is a very poignant question because most environmental problems are global and rarely respect geo-political borders. For example, air and water pollution are rarely divided because a flag has changed.

There has also been a shift from traditional framings of citizenship education focusing on homogeneity for social cohesion to critical GCE's focusing on understanding and respecting heterogeneity. During his keynote speech at the Second UNESCO Forum on Global Citizenship Education (Paris, January 29, 2015), Carlos Alberto Torres argued that there are *global common goods* that are essential for all transformative GCE models. They include: 1) sustainable development education, moving from diagnosis and denunciation to action and policy implementation, 2) global peace, an intangible cultural good of humanity with immaterial value, and 3) the discovery of ways that people who are all equal manage to live together democratically in an ever growing diverse world, seeking to fulfil their individual and cultural interest.

It is important to discuss individual livelihood and spheres of citizenship. In neo-liberalism, individualism and the private sphere are prioritised as 'good' and the public sphere is characterised negatively as non-private (Postma, 2006). Torres (2002) discussed the greater focus on *personhood* being 'moved to an universalistic plane, transcending the boundaries of particular nation-states' through a complex but systematic reasoning that the Nation-State has become less significant in two of its often contradictory roles: 1) providing structures of social cohesion and justice and 2) stimulating the economy. *Absolute individualism* and *personhood* are opposing ideas. Absolute individualism focuses on self-benefit, as opposed to personhood which focuses on an individual's rights and responsibilities within spheres of citizenship. In short, absolute individualism devalues the public sphere which includes the 'public' environment.

Although the private sphere will eventually be negatively affected by environmentally-harmful acts, much of the negative aspects can be isolated by individuals' ability to acquire necessary resources. For example, if a water supply is polluted, those with sufficient economic resources could purchase water or move from the affected area. With the decreasing emphasis on social cohesion within the public sphere, collective socio-environmental rights, together with its education, become greatly devalued. In a sense, the over-prioritising of the private sphere centres livelihood on individuals' money and material accumulation, with little importance given to equity. Deeper understanding of the connectivity between private and public spheres and socio-environmental aspects should be a primary focus of policies and practices related to EPs and citizenship education models.

### **Policy and Pedagogical Strategies for Ecopedagogy**

To conclude, the following summarises the policy and pedagogical features and strategies needed for an effective ecopedagogy approach as discussed in this article. They mostly focus on ecopedagogy but, because of the inherent connections between ecopedagogy and GCE, they also extend to the kinds of strategies needed for effective GCE. It is important that such strategies be constructed with and



through local contextualisations. Hence, these are guidelines rather than specific recommendations for implementation.

*Holistic analysis of educational structures and teaching practices*

Critical reflexivity through analysis at the system level determines how ecopedagogical learning is supported or hindered within educational structures. System-reflexivity to determine the politics of educational structures of EPs, including the curricula, assessments, resources, and supported pedagogical practices, is essential to determine the influences of their construction and inclusion. As with critical methods, determining what is left out is as important as analysing what is present in current structures. Examples of critical questions include the following:

- Which societies and populations are represented and which ones are not in educational decision-making and practices?
- Are GCE aspects incorporated within ecopedagogical teaching to better understand cultural diversity of socio-environmental understandings?
- Do teaching practices include problem-posing of global influences upon local socio-environmental well-being?

By answering these and similar questions, the analysis should turn to questioning the political influences behind what is emphasised or not in teaching. Paulo Freire wrote that it was impossible for education to be apolitical (1998, 2005); however, critical deconstruction through research of local, national and global influences helps to understand how to reconstruct EPs toward an ecopedagogy approach. Such reconstructions must occur at local and global levels of educational systems. Inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations have more and more influence upon local EPs. In addition to analysing these organisations' local influences, constructing ecopedagogical models within EP models is essential for an empowering influence which must, by the very nature of ecopedagogy, be both *from above* and *from below*.

*Holistic inclusion of ecopedagogy*

Problem-posing, and dialogical methods of teaching must be carried out in environmental teaching at all levels and in all disciplines. Ecopedagogy and global citizenship should be intertwined in all subjects of a curriculum. This calls for a transformation of not only the content taught, but also of how teaching occurs. Curricula should be restructured to incorporate ecopedagogical teachings in all disciplines. This implies the need for critical pedagogical training and greater socio-environmental understanding of teachers with different expertise.

No doubt, both institutional and disciplinary parochialism act as barriers. Traditional schooling structures are often not conducive to the tenets of critical global citizenship education, ecopedagogy, and their interconnections. Educational structures are often divided into disciplinary vacuums that segment rather than increase the interconnectivities of GCE and ecopedagogy. In reality, schooling should not be separated from society (Dewey, 1963; Freire, 2005); and society is not artificially divided into disciplines. Many critical pedagogues stress that what happens outside the classroom is more important than what happens inside. Transdisciplinary educational methods allow for more holistic understandings of the world, breaking away from linear and singular approaches that delve into

values, ethics, and philosophical perspectives, to name but a few (Jorgenson & Shultz, 2012). Max-Neef (2005, p. 16) stated that without transdisciplinary approaches ‘harms to society and to nature [will continue], because of our partial fragmented, and limited visions and assumptions’.

The holistic inclusion of ecopedagogy has a number of implications. For example, educational structures should be flexible to allow for the construction of knowledge by both students and teacher(s) — exploring topics through dialogue that students help to identify. Teaching should remain within curricular aims and guidelines, but be flexible enough to incorporate content agreed upon by both teacher(s) and students. Democratic and dialogical ecopedagogy methods are impossible in educational structures that prescribe fine details without flexibility. Such rigid educational structures de-skill teachers and counter ecopedagogical methods.

Availability and selection of teaching resources should be determined by how they allow teacher(s) and students to explore socio-environmental issues from diverse and conflicting perspectives. This is in opposition to the political determination of resources which promote reproduction. The Internet, for example, provides access to an overwhelming amount of such information. However, this is also a contested terrain which requires actors to acquire *critical Internet literacy (CIL)* in order to be able to determine the politics of accessible information (Kahn & Kellner, 2006). Using CIL is similar to the critical analysis of other types of EP resources, helping to determine socio-environmental knowledges that are ignored and for what reasons. Internet issues include the ways in which particular search engines (e.g. Google, Yahoo, Bing) act as gatekeepers to knowledge.

Holistic inclusion also has implications for assessment. Assessment is a contested terrain, with standardised testing increasingly prioritised due, in large part, to neo-liberal globalisation (Apple, 2006). On the one hand, without the inclusion of environmentalism in testing, environmental teaching is de-prioritised in the curriculum. On the other, such testing prioritises simple didactic knowledges with single ‘correct’, ‘politically neutral’ answers. It is essential for testing to access critical, decision-making skills, to be culturally contextual, and to focus on socio-environmental transformation.

#### *Connecting pedagogical practices and research*

As discussed, the assumption in ecopedagogy is that if socio-environmental connections are not understood, it is much less likely that environmentally-positive actions will emerge. These understandings should be fostered in classrooms through problem-posing pedagogies. Thus educational research towards this end should be supported.

#### *Theoretical framing*

The incorporation of theoretical framing is important to foster understanding of the perspectives of the world’s diverse populations, and hence to develop successful models of ecopedagogy and GCE. Theories are not only relevant for scholars, policy-makers, and administrators, but also for students. As discussed, using theories can be helpful to enable better understandings of what students do not experience first-hand. It fosters multi-perspective self-reflexivity, not only for teachers and students, but also for those influencing global EP directions. In conjunction with this, learning spaces should include historical readings of

socio-environmental oppressions, both local and global. Examples would be the historical oppressions developed by colonialisation, masculinities, and white supremacy in current socio-environmental oppressions.

### *Teacher training*

Teacher training should seek to increase teachers' socio-environmental and theoretical knowledge; however, I argue that critical, ecopedagogical teaching practices are more important for education. Ecopedagogical quality is not based on quantitative assessments of students' 'gained' socio-environmental knowledge, but rather on students' critical abilities to formulate and pose better environmental questions and propose possible solutions. Although I focus here on teacher training, the argument also pertains to educational decision-makers at all levels.

*Greg William Misiaszek, Beijing Normal University, Faculty of Education, Institute of Educational Theories, Yingdong Building, Room 311, N.19 Xijiekou Wai Street, Beijing 100875, P.R. China, gmisiaszek@gmail.com, <http://fe.english.bnu.edu.cn/faculty/facultyprofile/inquiry/77584.htm>*

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### **NOTE**

1. Planetary Citizenship is based on a unifying vision of a planet and a worldwide society. It manifests itself in different expressions: 'our common humanity', 'unity in diversity', 'our common future' and 'our common homeland'. Planetary citizenship expresses a set of principles, values, attitudes and behaviours that brings a new perception of the Earth as a single community. Frequently associated with the concept of 'sustainable development', it is much broader than simply a relation with the economy. (Gadotti, 2011, p. 20).

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