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**How the Environment is Written:
A Study of the Utilisation of Textbooks
in Environmental Education
in Brazil and England**

by

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For me education is simultaneously an act of knowing, a political act and an artistic event. I no longer speak about a political dimension of education. I no longer speak about knowing dimension of education. As well, I do not speak about education through art. On the contrary, I say education is politics, art and knowing.

Paulo Freire

1985

ABSTRACT

Environmental education has not been successfully integrated into school teaching. Many studies have addressed this problem, but little attention has been paid to the "educational side" of environmental education. In Brazil and England, traditional education still remains established, emphasising the cognitive domain over the development of skills and behaviour for promoting environmental consciousness. Textbooks have emerged as one of the main educational devices for promoting mainly scientific information content rather than the interrelationships between the physical and human environment.

The purpose of this study was, therefore, through the analysis of textbooks, to suggest some ways of improving the quality of environmental education. Approximately four hundred textbooks were analysed, based on the major principles, methods, techniques and objectives of environmental education. Furthermore, Brazilian and British teachers were surveyed in order to verify the methodology used for conducting environmental education. The ultimate goal of environmental education, which is the political participation in solving environmental problems, remains largely neglected by teachers and textbook authors.

The discussion of this problem starts with a definition of the aims of environmental education. This study assumes the practicability of environmental education using the Paulo Freire methodology, which is based upon human action and reflection as an aid to transforming society. Freire challenges the focus of traditional academic learning by emphasising students' daily experiences, the development of critical thinking, skills and political participation that would lead to the achievement of environmental management and citizen action. Since the seventies, the literature has stressed the critical problem-solving objective of environmental education, and this study focuses attention on how teachers should use textbooks critically, recognising education as a political tool for problem-solving as a contributor to enhancing the development of world sustainability.