

Ecological Education: Bowers' Post-Liberal Theory of Education

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Abstract

Many criticisms on our treatment of natural environment and skeptical views on how we can survive in the next century and after have become one of the many main issues discussed by postmodernists, ecosophers, and environmental educators. A. C. Bowers advocates a radical ecological educational theory based on his criticism on four liberal theories of education. The author intends to trace Bowers' post-liberal theory of education in its origins and theoretical backgrounds.

Bowers' theory reflects strong post-modern characteristics. He questions the legality of rational knowledge, the anthropocentric way of thinking, and the power of language. When he criticizes liberal theories of education, he identifies four theories including the scientific-democratic liberalism, the neo-Marxist-existentialist liberalism, the neoromantic liberalism and the techno-behaviorist liberalism. Among these four theories, Bowers thinks that if we want to maintain an ecologically sustainable environment for future generations, the basic assumptions of these liberalisms should be reconceptualized and developed as post-liberal theory of education. Bowers' theory has two positive theoretical origins: sociology of knowledge developed by Schutz, Berger and Luckmann and ecology of mind advocated by Gregory Bateson.

In conclusion, the author makes some comments on and points out problems about Bowers' theory.