



Education for the Future We Want: Working from Authentic, Grounded Hopefulness

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UNESCO FRAMEWORK FOR EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT(2004)

Underlying Values:

- Respect for the dignity and human rights of all people and a commitment to social and economic justice
- Respect for the human rights of future generations and a commitment to intergenerational responsibility
- Respect for the greater community of life in all its diversity (protecting and restoring the Earth's ecosystems)
- Respect for cultural diversity and a commitment, locally and globally, to a culture of tolerance, non-violence and peace



Aim of Education for Sustainable Development

The aim of ESD is to empower individuals to actively participate in shaping an ecologically sustainable, economically efficient and socially just environment, while remaining mindful of the interconnectedness between the local and global dimensions.

- PERL *Active Learning Methodologies*



Sustainable Development

‘Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs’

- World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987.



The Lost Key

He was found to be looking for it under a light. He looked and looked and couldn't find it. Finally someone asked where he had lost the key. He answered, "Well, I did in fact lose it over there." And when asked why he didn't look for it over there, he said, "Well. It's dark over there, but there is light here for me to look."

Sufi story



Growth Fetishism



The Growth Delusion

‘The irrational insistence on endless growth as a non-negotiable axiom by a large proportion of the world’s population’

-Bob Lloyd, 2009.



Thought from a Darkened Corner (1)

*Are we preparing students for
life on a planet or life in a
growth-oriented global
marketplace?*



Follow-on Thoughts

- *Do our learning materials critically interrogate economic growth?*
- *Who are the creators (the bees) in the global economy? Who are the predators (the locusts)? Do our learning programs identify them?*
- *How can learning help empower the bees and restrain the locusts in any transition from deleterious growth?*
- *Do our curricula explore green (e.g. steady state and gift economy) alternatives to growth, giving students local, lived experience of them?*



It is Time to Name and Interrogate Economic Growth in our Discourse and Curricula

‘There are unavoidable limits imposed by growth by the material world, and we can’t afford to continue pretending they don’t exist.’

- Geoff Mulgan, *The Locust and the Bee: Predators and Creators in Capitalism’s Future* (2012)



Blessed Unrest

‘The grassroots stirring of people defending timeless ways of being human now threatened by global forces that do not consider people’s deepest longings’

- Paul Hawken



Thought from a Darkened Corner (2)

Does our sustainability education uncritically accept 'globalization from above' or does it give equal attention to the 'blessed unrest' of 'globalization from below'?



Key Dimensions of Sustainability

- ✓ Economic
- ✓ Environmental
- ✓ Cultural
- ✓ Social



Thought from a Darkened Corner (3)

The different dimensions of sustainability are only attainable if economic sustainability is expressed through no growth or steady state economics.



Education for Sustainable Development and the Human/Nature Relationship

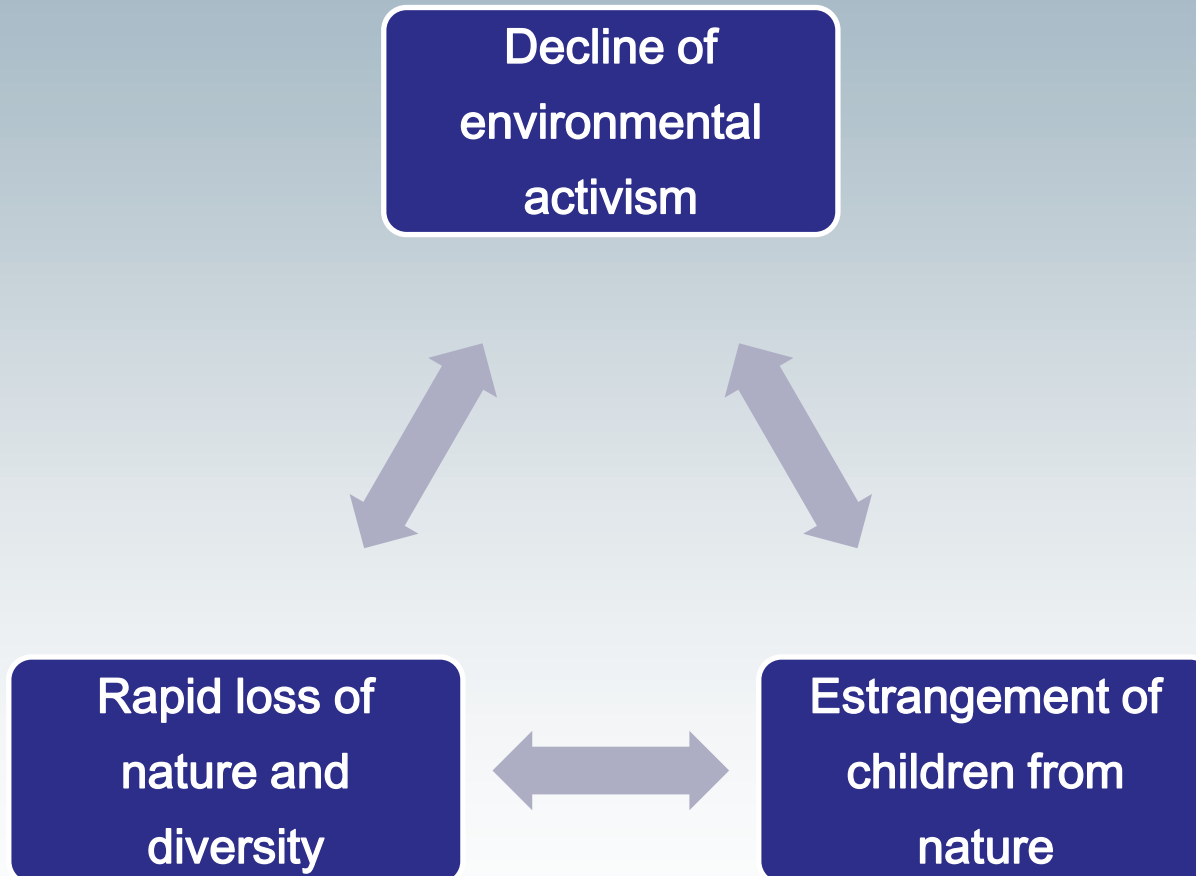
- ✓ Instrumental/utilitarian and exploitative view of nature (nature as ‘resource’, ‘natural capital’, ‘ecosystem services’)
- ✓ Denial of the intrinsic value of ecosystems and the other-than-human
- ✓ Failure to cultivate students’ intimate engagement with nature
- ✓ Failure to cultivate the poetic



Words Missing from the Lexicon of Sustainability Education

- Attunement
- Awe
- Beauty
- Celebration
- Enchantment
- Enfoldment
- Intuition
- Reverence
- Wonder

The Second Environmental Crisis



- George Monbiot, 2012



Thought from a Darkened Corner (4)

*Education for Sustainable Development needs to remedy the **dissociation of sensibility** (T.S. Eliot: 1921), i.e. the breaking up our ability to feel and relate to life.*



Climate Changed Futures

- Ubiquitous environmental disaster (including biodiversity loss)
- Massive internal and external population displacements as seas swallow the land, wildfires happen yearly
- Resultant social dislocation
- Loss of food security (hunger and malnutrition)
- Strife, violent conflict, tribalism
- Aggressive localism
- Dangers of genocide



The Myths We Tell Ourselves*

- The Myth of Unending Growth
- The Myth of Progress
- The Myth of Human Centrality to Existence
- The Myth of Separation from and Dominance over Nature

*[*i.e. the people of the North and the elites of the South]*



Some Mainstream ESD Responses to Climate Change

- Technological problem calling for technological innovation and policy solutions
- Crisis addressed through a 'business as usual' lens requiring green development
- Reluctance to explore economic growth and consumerism as key drivers of climate change
- Focus on climate change adaptation
- Failure to address climate change denial
- Blind spot with respect to climate injustice
- Avoidance of climate changed personal and societal futures
- Avoidance of coming to terms with the pain and grief of loss



Thought from a Darkened Corner (5)

We need to move to *Deep Climate Change Education* that:

- Addresses fundamental drivers of climate change
- Focuses on means of mitigating those drivers
- Incorporates anti-consumerism education
- Addresses climate injustice
- Develops denial-critical students (detect, name, confront)
- Explores climate changed future scenarios (as call to action in the presence)
- Confronts the pain and grief of loss

Time Trends of Reported Natural Disasters, 1975-2011 (EM-DAT & UNISDR, 2011)





Disaster Risk Reduction Education: Key Dimensions

- Understanding the science of natural disasters
- Learning and practicing safety measures and procedures
- Understanding risk drivers and how hazards can become disasters
- Building community risk reduction capacity
- Building an institutional culture of safety and resilience

- Selby & Kagawa, 2012

The Three Priorities for the Second Half of DESD (UNESCO)

Climate Change
Education



Disaster Risk
Reduction Education



Biodiversity
Education



‘We cannot address the future in a serious and comprehensive way without embracing the dark and perilous threat that hangs over us as a human and planetary species.’

- Diarmuid O’Murchu, *Quantum Theology*, 2004.



Thought from a Darkened Corner (6)

Given that the climate crisis is already upon us, and given we face the looming prospect of it deepening still further, silently and slowly but also abruptly and ficklely, education for future sustainability needs to confront denial and also address despair, pain, grief and loss



Education for Sustainable Contraction



Education for Sustainable Moderation



THANK YOU!

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