Holistic, Sustainable Development (SD) in the Education

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"We hold the future in our hands. Together, we must ensure that our grandchildren will not have to ask why we failed to do the right thing, and let them suffer the consequences." UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 2007

Abstract

In this paper the investigator focus on two different aspects of education. The sustainable and the holistic development. The interest of the leaders of education is the best point to start talking about development. The truth is that the education is in the neolithic all over the world.

Keywords: Education, Holistic Education and Sustainable Development.

Introduction

Sustainable development is the overarching paradigm of the United Nations. The concept of sustainable development was described by the 1987 Bruntland Commission Report as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Sustainability is a paradigm for thinking about a future in which environmental, social and economic considerations are balanced in the pursuit of development and an improved quality of life. These three spheres – society, environment and economy – are intertwined. For example, a prosperous society relies on a healthy environment to provide food and resources, safe drinking water, and clean air for its citizens. The sustainability paradigm is a major change from the previous paradigm of economic development with its damaging social and environmental consequences. Until recently these consequences have been seen as inevitable and acceptable. However, we now realize that major damage or serious threats to the well-being of humans and the environment in pursuit of economic development have no place within the sustainability paradigm. We might then ask, what is the difference between sustainable development and sustainability? Sustainability is often thought of as a long-term goal (i.e. a more sustainable world), while sustainable development refers to the many processes and pathways to achieve it (e.g. sustainable agriculture and forestry, sustainable production and consumption, good government, research and technology transfer, education and training, etc.). Tha main aim of

Sustainable development is enabling every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future.

Principles of Sustainable Development

- All sustainable development programmes must consider the three spheres of sustainability – environment, society and economy – as well as an underlying dimension of culture. Since sustainable development addresses the local contexts of these three spheres, it will take many forms around the world. The ideals and principles that underlie sustainability include broad concepts such as equity among generations, gender equity, peace, tolerance, poverty reduction, environmental preservation and restoration, natural resource conservation, and social justice. The Rio Declaration1 contains 27 principles, including:
- People are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature;
- The right to development must be fulfilled so as to meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations in an equitable way;
- Eradicating poverty and reducing disparities in living standards in different parts of the world are essential to sustainable development.
- Environmental protection is an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it.

Sustainable Development

Education for Sustainable Development allows every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future. Education for Sustainable Development means including key sustainable development issues into teaching and learning; for example, climate change, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity, poverty reduction, and sustainable consumption.

It also requires participatory teaching and learning methods that motivate and empower learners to change their behavior and take action for sustainable development. Education for Sustainable Development consequently promotes competencies like critical thinking, imagining future scenarios and making decisions in a collaborative way.

Education for Sustainable Development requires far-reaching changes in the way education is often practised today."

Council of the European Union, 2010

"ESD is essential for the achievement of a sustainable society and is therefore desirable at all levels of formal education and training, as well as in non-formal and informal learning."

Sustainable Development Education Panel Report, 1998

"ESD is about the learning needed to maintain and improve our quality of life and the quality of life of generations to come ... ESD enables people to develop the knowledge, values and skills to participate in decisions about the way we do things individually and collectively, both locally and globally, that will improve the quality of life now without damaging the planet for the future."

Sustainability in the curriculum

At Plymouth, we take the approach that there is no definitive knowledge content that should be included in a curriculum addressing sustainability or sustainable development. Rather, following Tilbury & Wortman (2004), we point to indicative curricular themes that may be more or less relevant to each disciplinary area and which might be used and adapted as 'entry points' to develop sustainability education further.

Environmental sustainability	Economic sustainability	Social sustainability
Natural resources management	Alternative futures	Sustainable communities
Food and farming	Leadership and change	Cultural diversity
Ecological systems	Learning organisations	Intercultural understanding
Waste / water / energy	Corporate Social Responsibility	Sustainability in the built environment
Biodiversity	Consumerism and trade	Travel, transport and mobility
Climate change	Globalisation of economy	Health and wellbeing
	Accountability and ethics	Peace, security and conflict
	International development	Citizenship, government, democracy
	Sustainable and ethical tourism	Human rights and needs
	Population	

Pedagogical approaches in ESD

There is no 'correct' pedagogy for sustainability education, but there is a broad consensus that it requires a shift towards active, participative, and experiential learning methods that engage the learner and make a real difference to their understanding, thinking and ability to act.

We've identified five pedagogic elements that cover a host of pedagogical approaches or methods that staff at Plymouth might use to bring these elements into the learning environment.

1. Critical reflection – including the more traditional lecture, but also newer approaches such as reflexive accounts, learning journals, and discussion groups.

2. Systemic thinking and analysis – the use of real-world case studies and critical incidents, project-based learning, stimulus activities, and the use of the campus as a learning resource.

3. Participatory learning – with emphasis on group or peer learning, developing dialogue, experiential learning, action research/learning to act, and developing case studies with local community groups and business

4. Thinking creatively for future scenarios – by using role play, real-world inquiry, futures visioning, problem-based learning, and providing space for emergence.

5. Collaborative learning – including contributions from guest speakers, work-based learning, interdisciplinary/ multidisciplinary working, and collaborative learning and co-inquiry.

Holistic Education

In the holistic education teacher only observes and helps. The government, NGOs and the parents are providing opportunities to the children and the teacher helps the students using their opportunities wisely and effectively. Teacher also gives positive feedback, encourages, praises students and gives them wings to fly. Holistic education is not a race. Students never compared to each other. The feedback is only for the student, not for the fellow students, nor for the parents. Holistic education is the Way itself, the Life itself. It creates happiness and freedom. The really sustainable development of education. And more over, everybody is a winner who walks in the holistic Way of Education. There is a bad and a good news. Let me start with the bad one. The holistic education is only a dream within the scholar education system. The interest of the leaders of education is absolutely against it. The good news is that everybody can create a holistic education environment for a handful of children. Holistic education doesn't need a system. Let me present it to you. My father was a very simple railway man. Not a teacher-kind of person. And not rich at all. But he was a holistic educator. He rose up five children, two sons and three daughters. He took us to the children railway to learn hard work and responsibility. He took us to the swimming pool to learn swimming and keep our body fit. He took us to the music school and we learnt playing musical instruments. He also sacrificed money and time on travelling. He took all his family to England several times which was only a dream for most of the people in the communist Hungary in the 70s and 80s. He wasn't interested in our test results. But he was interested in our spirit, soul and body development. He was a partner for our teachers and they accepted and respected him. What is the result? Four of us have big family with three-four children. We all have work to do; our own place to live, food to eat, yet only two of my sisters have a Super Job. Moreover, we all can help our widow mother who cooks Christmas dinner for twenty people. Is this result attractive? As I told you earlier: everybody is a winner who walks on the holistic way of education. Please stop racing. Slow down and start walking. Look around and realize how beautiful this worlds. And win the Super Prize: life, happiness and freedom.

Students are taught to reflect on their actions and how they impact the global and local community, as well as how to learn from the community around them. Teachers often engage students in projects that apply critical-thinking skills toward solving real-world problems.

Holistic education is a relatively new movement developed in the 1980s to counteract the existing US learning structure that was perceived as mechanistic, according to Education Corner. However, the theory of educating based on a person's entire experience has roots in ancient concepts of instruction, including those of Greek and native indigenous cultures, and has increased in prevalence over the past century. Several different approaches based on whole-person education gained steam in the 20th century, including Maria Montessori's self-motivated growth philosophy and Rudolf Steiner and Emil Molt's Waldorf experiential learning technique.

Many states are now incorporating holistic goals into their educational system improvement plans. This trend is encouraged by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which provides federal funding to foster state efforts. School systems are increasingly accepting the theory that learning conditions, whole-child services, and social and emotional development are measurable variables of education and can improve equity and outcomes, according to EducationCounsel.

Holistic Education Methods

The goal of holistic education is to cultivate a developing child's physical, emotional, moral, psychological, and spiritual attributes. Serving the whole child means providing opportunities that are personalized to a child's skills and feelings. Lessons are conducted in a safe, supportive environment that allows students to utilize their individual strengths. Teachers must be prepared to nurture students with varying educational levels and learning capabilities. While holistic education is guided by one overarching philosophy, teachers may employ a number of methods and strategies to create a holistic learning culture.

Educational Models

Experiential Learning: Schools focused on experiential learning provide hands-on educational experiences. For instance, students might work in groups exploring different learning styles to determine which styles are most effective for them. Holistic, experiential techniques often include problem-solving exercises to address community problems or create innovative products.

Self-Guided Learning: In self-guided educational environments, teachers allow students to learn at their own pace in the style that best suits them. The self-guided culture allows for personalization to mitigate the inadequacies of one-size-fits-all learning models. Low-stakes assessments are used to adjust the curriculum's content and pace. Classrooms may be smaller and contain students of different ages and ability levels.

Community Schools: Community schools are based on the idea that people find meaning through connections with their community. Teachers partner with community members, including families, residents, organizations, and

officials, to provide integrated support and expanded learning opportunities, including after-school and summer programs. Schools are a hub of the community bringing together academic, social, development, and engagement activities.

Interdisciplinary Coursework: Part of what makes up holistic education is the idea that students' cognitive growth is improved when multiple subjects are addressed together. Some schools are creating integrated programs where teachers from different disciplines come together to teach thematic courses that address issues from multiple perspectives. Coursework might also include independent research, travel, fieldwork, and internships.

Teacher Strategies

Strong Student-Teacher Relationships: When teachers are able to form strong bonds with students, performance and engagement is positively impacted. At-risk students have a higher chance of success when they feel safe and nurtured. Teachers can foster strong relationships by responding to students' strengths and needs and by acting in a culturally sensitive manner. Allowing students to help develop classroom rules and take on leadership roles helps encourage trust and communication among students and enhances their motivation to succeed.

Encouraging Self-Confidence: Students need to believe that they belong at school and have the ability to succeed. Teachers can help build self-confidence by providing multiple opportunities for students to digest structured information and communicate their understanding in a variety of ways. Teachers must recognize students' unique strengths and treat all students equally. Student motivation can be enhanced by making sure that lessons are relevant to students' lives and focus on realistic issues.

Incorporating Emotional Reflection: As a teacher, it's not always easy to look beyond academic performance to nurture the mental and emotional well-being of a child. To encourage emotional reflection in daily routines, teachers might provide moments for students to reflect, contemplate, or meditate. Lessons to teach empathy could focus on effective listening and observation techniques or literature that presents varying perspectives on social issues.

Benefits of Holistic Education

Holistic education is based on a learning philosophy that brings a number of benefits to students, teachers, schools, and communities. Students are empowered to improve their educational outcomes and gain the life skills necessary to take on a successful professional career.

Improved Academic Achievement: Holistic education can improve the academic achievements of all children, regardless of background and circumstances, by catering to individual learning styles and providing a supportive learning environment. Children's brain capacities are increased when they feel physically and emotionally safe and connected to others, according to the Learning Policy Institute.

Enhanced Mental and Emotional Well-Being: In a supportive environment, where social and emotional learning is emphasized along with academics, students have a better chance of emerging with self-awareness, confidence, and a sense of social responsibility.

Increased Problem-Solving Ability: Students who are tasked with solving real-world problems that exist in their communities emerge with strong critical-thinking skills. These hands-on projects give students skills that will apply to their adult careers, such as how to gather, analyze, and report data and how to collaborate with others.

Reduced Impact of Inequities: By emphasizing integrated learning concepts, the whole-child approach to education has been shown to reduce the psychological impact of issues such as violence, abuse, or poverty on academic achievement, according to the Learning Policy Institute.

Conclusion

Holistic education is a comprehensive approach to teaching where educators seek to address the emotional, social, ethical, and academic needs of students in an integrated learning format. Emphasis is placed on positive school environments and providing whole-child supports (services that support academic and nonacademic needs, also known as wraparound supports) to students.

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