Learning Together to Live Together: Promoting Action Competence through Democratic and Participative Education

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Introduction
1. Reorienting education towards sustainability
2. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)
3. Action Competence
4. Students’ Confidence on Own Influence
5. Students’ Experiences in Environmental Programmes
6. Students’ Views on Own Competence
7. Covariant among components of action competence

Conclusion
What is ESD?
Environmental Education;
simplistic definition and behavior modification approach

“as a process of recognising values and classifying concepts in order to develop skills and attitudes necessary to understand and appreciate the inter-relatedness among man, his culture and his biophysical surroundings,

...environmental education also entails practice in decision-making and self-formulating of a code of behaviour about issues concerning environmental quality.”

(IUCN, 1970)
Environmental Education; reviewed and developed to a more coherent context

redefined as:

“a process aimed at developing a world population that is aware of and concerned about the total environment and its associated problems, and which has knowledge, attitudes, motivations, commitments and skills to work individually and collectively towards solutions of current problems and the prevention of new ones,

...to succeed in making individuals and communities understand the complex nature of the natural and the built environments resulting from the interaction of their biological, physical, social, economic and cultural aspects.”

(UNESCO-UNEP, 1978)
Timeline of ESD development

1977
- UNESCO-UNEP sponsored Tbilisi conference
- Environmental education redefined and developed into a more coherent concept

1980
- The World Conservation Strategy Report (IUCN, UNEP and WWF)
- Conflict between development and environmental conservation first addressed
- ‘sustainable development’ first introduced

1987
- Our Common Future or better known as the Brundtland Report
- ESD emphasized as a new phase of environmental education

1992
- the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro adopted Agenda 21

1997
- critical role of education highlighted in the Thessaloniki Conference
- education’s central role since the Rio Summit
- the second most used noun in Agenda 21, following the word “government” (Fien, 1999)

2002
- United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESĐ) declared as proposed by the Japanese government and NGO networks during Johannesburg Summit
Sustainability Issues

Causes
Why?

Effects
What?

Change Strategies
How?

Vision
Where?

Traditionally knowledge has mostly concentrated here

Adapted from Prof. Bjarne Jensen, NZAEE conference Dunedin, 2008
Characteristics of an action competence approach in ESD

- ‘environmental issues’ arising from conflicts of interests at varying levels in the community
- should aim for the development of the action competence of students
- action competence develops a critical, reflective and participative attitude
- praxis had changed perspective which commits students to action rather than simply providing them insights and prescribing behavior toward an environmental issue
- basically different from the behavior modification approach
- encompass vital elements such as participation, dialogue and co-influence which are crucial in a successful environmental education program
Profile of students’ views on their own action competence related to environmental issues
### Students’ answers on direct action and decision experiences

**a. The student indicates that he/she participated in addressing an issue.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My class took part in addressing an environmental issue</td>
<td>1542</td>
<td>58.1</td>
<td>78.4</td>
<td>78.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have never tried taking part in addressing an environmental issue together with my teacher and classmates</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**b. The student indicates that he/she had a say in deciding such actions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I took part in deciding what our class should do about that environmental problem</td>
<td>1401</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>74.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was always the teacher or someone else in my class who decided what we would do to help the environment</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1879</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Profile of answers on action experience should be provided in schools
Profile of students’ views on their own action competence
Covariance between the three components of action competence.

Conclusion
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