From Apathy to Empathy

Educating for Sustainability through Awareness and Action

*Education for Sustainable Development implies a shift ... to the recognition that we are all learners as well as teachers.*

Ahmedabad Declaration 2005

Patricia Parkinson
The Peninsula School
Victoria
Australia
Apathy
Reasons

- “What is it about globalisation that makes us feel as if we are on a journey without a map, in a car that is out of control.”
  J. Sachs *The Dignity of Distance*.

- Problems too complex for the individual.

- Overwhelmed rather than enlightened by information explosion.

- Sense of apocalypse - heading towards a shattering cataclysm in which world will shake on its foundations and lack any sense of moral order.

- Words such as duty obligation, judgement, wisdom have little or no meaning where violence and the exercise of power are dominant.
Empathy

• Provides road map, it is prophetic and moves us forward.
• Sense of morality becomes a necessity as the awareness develops that we inhabit One World.
• Morality is the language of hope.
• Hope empowers us to take risks, to live by our ideals
Unesco: Educating for a Sustainable Future

Paragraph 116

Perhaps we are beginning to move towards a new global ethic which transcends all other systems of allegiance and belief, which is rooted in a consciousness of the interrelatedness and the sanctity of life. Would such a common ethic have the power to motivate us to modify our current dangerous course?

There is no ready answer except to say that without a moral and ethical foundation sustainability is unlikely to become a reality.
Empathy and Engagement

• Sustainability provides that moral order and is a vital step towards understanding.

• Morality is the antidote to despair because it locates social change at a level at which we as individuals can make a difference.

• Out of this understanding; this respect for the natural world comes engagement; the desire to do something to change the world.

• Respect for the natural world is integral to showing respect for humanity.

• Sustainability to become a reality; needs people with compassionate wisdom and political acumen.
Importance of the Individual

• Where after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighbourhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm of office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.

Eleanor Roosevelt.
Sustainability and the Individual
The Challenge for the Teacher.

• Sustainability is about “thinking about forever.”

• The needs of the present must be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

• Learning activities must reflect a dynamic balance among four dimensions: the social, economic, political and natural and their corresponding values of peace and equity, appropriate development, democracy and conservation.
Teaching strategies and skills

• Curriculum is defined as “the sum of all the formal and informal teaching and learning experiences provided by a school.”

• Education for sustainability cannot be added as a new subject but rather it is a dimension to be emphasised in every aspect of school life.

• Teaching about sustainability emphasises critical and creative thinking, problem solving, decision making, analysis, co-operative learning, leadership and communication skills.
Constructive Strategies

- Community problem solving
- Fundraising
- International classroom links
- Soap Box
- Calendar and observing of world events
Be the change you want to see in the World. Mahatma Gandhi

Engagement of the individual student
Teaching Critical Analysis

- Media - newspaper and internet monitoring
- Understanding bias and propaganda
- Knowledge and awareness of current events
Creative Strategies

- Future Problem Solving
- Running campaigns
- Plays and song festivals
- Murals and Art displays
Curriculum Examples

- **The Sustainables**

- Household Audit

- 10 ways to change the world
The Earth Charter
Objectives for School

Brink Expeditions Classroom link
http://www.brinkx.org/SchoolRoom/
Ceres and Sustainability in Schools

Sustainable Schools Program Overview

Early Planning Phase
- Initial planning visit to school
- School completes State of School
- Core module – Becoming a Sustainable School

Develop & Implement Each Module
- TEN-STEP PLAN
  1. Make a commitment, form a committee
  2. Use a whole school approach, involving students
  3. Conduct an audit
  4. Write a policy
  5. Set targets
  6. Prepare an action plan
     - Operations
     - Curriculum
     - Whole school involvement
  7. Integrate actions with the curriculum
  8. Implement the program
  9. Monitor, evaluate and provide feedback
  10. Continuously improve the program

Complete Each Module – Achieve Targets
- BIODIVERSITY
- ENERGY
- WASTE
- WATER

Accreditation
- Module Accreditation
- Sustainable Schools Accreditation

Module Accreditation
- Module Accreditation
- Module Accreditation
Red Hill Consolidated School

Environmental Program
Einstein said:

No problem can be solved by the same consciousness that created it. We have to learn to see the world anew.
We live in a world where virtually no problem can be solved by individual action and yet in our world no problem can be solved unless individuals act.

Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.

For sustainability is the new peace.
Thank you

Questions