UNESCO Expert Meeting on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Reorienting Education to address Sustainability

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES OF ESD
Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Understanding

Thailand 1-3 May 2006

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UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Promotes awareness of the positive value of cultural diversity

Seeks to humanise globalization to be more equitable & culturally sensitive

Inter-cultural understanding is the best guarantee of peace.
The links between language, culture and the environment suggest that biological, cultural and linguistic diversity should be studied together, as distinct but closely related aspects of the diversity of life on Earth.

“Cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. It is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations.” (2001)
REORIENTING EDUCATION FOR ESD

ESD is more than acquiring knowledge and understanding issues (ie content areas), it is also about developing skills, values and perspectives*

Fits with UNESCO four pillars:
Learning to Know, to Do, to Be and to Live Together

*Guidelines and Recommendations for Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainability, UNITWIN/UNESCO Chair, York University, Toronto, UNESCO October 2005
REFORM OR TRANSFORM?

Education about sustainability, peace, equity, human rights

Accommodating Response - emphasis on content, information, knowledge.
Easily integrated into curricula and existing paradigms but values & behaviours don’t change.

Education for sustainability, peace, equity, human rights

Adaptive response towards Learning for change - knowledge, values, skills
Reform of curricula within existing paradigms. No whole system change.
Contradictions between values taught & those practised.

Education as sustainability, peace, equity, human rights

Transformative response towards Learning as change (ie Content = Context)
Emphasises process, quality learning, the whole person, the whole school community and facilitates transformative learning experiences.
Creative, participative, dynamic, integrated, holistic, relational and collaborative

(Stephen Sterling, Sustainable Education)
Learning processes to enable the integration of ESD within existing reform efforts and facilitate:
the raising of awareness (ie issues);
acquisition of knowledge (ie content);
the understanding of diverse perspectives;
the development of skills and competencies, and the formation of values and understanding of others’s values and world views,
to be flexibly adapted to diverse contexts and cultural learning styles.
TEACHING/LEARNING PROCESSES
that are conducive to ESD:

Accommodate diverse learning styles & cultures - all ways of learning/knowing/being/doing
Develop the whole person
Draw out full creative potential of the learner
Active, interactive & participative
Integrated across the curriculum
Informed by ‘whole systems’ thinking
Dialogical – reflection, discernment, critical thinking
Teach/learn for relevance & meaning
Appropriate to the age level
Models & reflects values being promoted
Qualitative & quantitative assessment & evaluation
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT conducive to ESD

Student–centred - Teacher role model, facilitator, co-learner
Observes human rights – equitable & inclusive
Safe, secure, supportive, respectful, valuing
Active, participative, shared decision-making
Encourages critical reflection, discussion, questioning
Integrates learning across curriculum
Fosters full development & potential of whole child
Provides a wide range of learning opportunities catering to diverse learning styles & preferences
Involves learner’s experience & interests - relevance
Involves whole community – reflects shared values
WHOLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

ESD concepts reflected in:

- Shared values
- Education policies and guidelines
- School management
- Behaviour of students, teachers, school staff, parents
- Curriculum content across all learning areas
- Learning materials across all learning areas
- Teaching/learning processes, methodology, pedagogy
- Community projects and activities
- The whole school culture and environment.
INTEGRATED APPROACH TO ESD
Rights-Based, Values-Based

Underpinned by Universally Shared Values

The values we need to share to live together peacefully, inclusively, equitably and sustainably, while observing human rights and respecting diversity.

- International instruments and agreements (eg. UDHR)
- Published research identifying universally shared values
- Core Values underpinning World Faiths
- Personal Qualities and Virtues advocated for millennia
- Eastern, western and indigenous world views
UNIVERSALLY SHARED VALUES FOR INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

Appreciation of Diversity
Mutual Respect, Tolerance, Acceptance, Understanding
Human Dignity, Individual Worth
Equality, Equity, Justice, Fairness, Equanimity
Peace, Harmony, Social cohesion, Non Violence
Care and Concern for others, Compassion,
Inclusion, Sharing, Collective well being
Truth, Reconciliation, Forgiveness
Valuing cultural identity, language, heritage
CONTENT INTEGRATION

ESD is about interdependent systems
Understanding ESD forces a transformation in our thinking, opening new pathways in our brain, requiring us to take an integrated, trans disciplinary, systems-thinking approach to teaching and learning.
Holistic or *Integrative* Education

*Education is about the development of the whole person; physically, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually* (Delors)

**ESD requires a Whole Person Pedagogy**

An *integrative, holistic methodology* which brings together the:
- cognitive – intellectual
- affective – emotional
- behavioural - physical
- spiritual – inspirational, aspirational
Learning to BE **WHOLE** for Peace, Conflict Resolution, Reconciliation & Healing

**Conflict Resolution** is more than strategies and techniques. It is also **who you are being** when seeking a resolution.

For real **understanding**, deep **empathy**, genuine feelings of **regret** and true intentions to **make amends**, we must develop our **basic humanity** through the **full development and integration** of all the dimensions of the human person.

By integrating **body, mind, heart** and **spirit** we view conflicts from a **transpersonal perspective** where we transcend our differences and no longer see ourselves as separate or different from others.

This results in **healing** not only the conflict but also ourselves.
LINKING PERSONAL TO LOCAL & GLOBAL

Learner in the Family, in the Local, Community and as Global Citizen.

World

Nation

Community

Family

Self as individual & member of society
UNDERSTANDING TRANSDISCIPLINARITY

- Disciplinary
- Multidisciplinary
- Interdisciplinary
- Transdisciplinary
**Disciplinary**
Epistemologies, assumptions, knowledge, skills, methods within the boundary of one discipline eg Physics, History,

**Multidisciplinary**
Using the knowledge/understanding of more than one discipline eg Physics & History; Biology & Architecture

**Interdisciplinary**
Using the epistemologies/methods of one discipline within another eg Biochemistry, Ecophilosophy, Astrophysics

**Transdisciplinary**
Focus on an issue such as pollution or hunger both within and beyond discipline boundaries with the possibility of new perspectives.
Transdisciplinary approaches involve multiple disciplines & the space between the disciplines with the possibility of new perspectives 'beyond' them.

Where multidisciplinary & interdisciplinary inquiry focus on the contribution of disciplines to an inquiry, Trans disciplinary inquiry tends to focus on the inquiry or issue itself.

New knowledge and perspectives emerge from the synergies created by integrating knowledge when focussing on the issue itself.

The Trans disciplinary Evolution of Learning
What’s in the SPACE??

VISION
Imagining – creating a vision of a sustainable world

PURPOSE
Meaning and Identity – what is my role in it?

PRINCIPLES
Universal principles applicable to all knowledge

VALUES and ethics
Universal values in how we relate to self, others, all life
Issues for Cultural Diversity & Intercultural Education

**Equity**, equal opportunity, equal access (gender & marginalised)

**Human rights** – incl cultural & linguistic rights (indig. refugees)

**Social and Cultural Inclusion** – participation in all areas of life

**Diversity** – Respect for diversity and sharing commonalities

**Unity in Diversity** - universal values of cultures & spiritual traditions

**Productive Diversity** – diversity as a socio-economic benefit, sharing & learning from each other, productive synergies

**Mutual Respect** for Cultural identity, language, faith, heritage

**Peace**, inner/outer, harmony – conflict resolution, mediation

**Indigenous issues** – linguistic, cultural, spiritual, land rights, traditional law, Traditional knowledge (knowledge appropriation)

**Countering Racism**, discrimination, xenophobia

**Reconciliation**, forgiveness, healing
Cultural Inclusive Principles for Intercultural Education

All benefit from appreciating/understanding cultural diversity

Develops knowledge, concepts and skills enabling learners to participate effectively on national and international levels.

Promotes, values and uses the cultural/linguistic diversity.

Includes and values a range of knowledge, experiences and viewpoints of a culturally plural society.

Provides students with accurate information of the history, lives and cultures of indigenous and other peoples.

Values and includes the cultural and linguistic knowledge and skills of learners in learning.

Promotes a human rights and human relations approach for countering racism and discrimination.

Allows learners to recognise, acknowledge and engage in diverse learning experiences.
A Culturally Inclusive Curriculum requires:

A **whole-organization approach** - content, curriculum, teaching practices, learning environment, organisational processes and ethos.

A **learner-focussed approach** valuing the cultural/linguistic background and experience of learners.

**Democratic processes** in teaching/learning, & supportive teaching and learning environment that models democracy in action.

A **integrative curriculum approach**

Promotion of **language learning**

A **conflict-sensitive curriculum** address socio-historical issues to understand causes of injustice and how these may be resolved.

A **supportive learning environment** - affective, cognitive, practical/functional and relevant to the learners.

**Involves parents and communities**, by increasing their involvement in the children’s learning.

**Educators become central figures** who care, understand, guide and motivate learners.
Culturally appropriate Indigenous Education

Teachers use relevant and effective, culturally-appropriate methods of teaching.

Learning strategies acknowledge and accommodate different learning styles of all learners.

Students learn directly from Indigenous people or use resources developed by/in consultation with Indigenous people.

Learners are provided with opportunities to actively develop understanding, skills, knowledge and empathy.

Develop skills in critical analysis to understand the structure of power and injustice.

Awareness of racism & discrimination & strategies for countering racism.

Learning involves Indigenous peoples’ stories and viewpoints.
Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

Incorporate Indigenous Perspectives across the curriculum
Foster understanding and work together for a shared future in which all peoples are treated with respect and dignity
Consult local indigenous communities, elders and custodians
Celebrate, value and learn from & about indigenous peoples, histories, cultures, languages, achievements, issues past/present, in indigenous places if possible & with cultural instructors
Positive interactions between
Strive for equitable access to education & learning outcomes
Use culturally appropriate strategies for indigenous learners
Consult elders & use indigenous approved teaching resources
Value human rights, counter stereotyping and racism
Students learn about and participate actively in Reconciliation, healing and forgiveness with indigenous peoples.
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