Chapter 10

AN ESD PLANNING PROCESS

How do we plan ESD in inclusive curriculum-activated ways?

Most teachers participating in Handprint CARE education programmes initially approached ESD as a desirable extramural 'add-on' to an already crowded curriculum. Here many teachers considered ESD as primarily an outdoor and experiential learning opportunity. In this way ESD was a 'side-bar' to their mainstream job of teaching a subject.

In a recent review on teacher readiness to teach with an ESD focus (UNESCO and Education International 2021), educators reported how they were unsure about appropriate pedagogy and assessment and whether to approach ESD as a personal or group learning process. They also noted that there was still little curriculum coverage of ESD topics, a shortage of curriculum materials, as well as a lack of opportunities for students to act for more just and sustainable futures in school settings.

The Handprint CARE approach assists teachers to approach ESD as a curriculum-based expansion, to illustrate that ESD could arise in teaching settings and can play out as a transformative learning process. This can take place in a wide variety of ways where teachers and their students worked together for a common good. We worked with a schematic overview (Figure 18) to help us clarify suitable lesson planning strategies for the inclusion of ESD in local socio-cultural and curriculum contexts of teaching and learning.

For Handprint CARE we worked with this schematic overview to help us clarify suitable lesson planning strategies for the inclusion of ESD in local socio-cultural and curriculum contexts of teaching and learning by:

1. **Planning active learning together**
   Exploring how Handprint CARE emerged amongst young children who were enthusiastic to take positive actions for the common good **(see Chapter 2)**

2. **Including an ethics of CARE**
   Approaching ESD as an open-ended process that could be engaged as an ethical imperative in classroom settings **(see Chapter 3)**

3. **Co-defining of shared concerns with the SDGs**
   Clarifying complex concerns with the SDG Wheel **(see Chapter 6)**

4. **Sourcing real-world stories for story sharing towards ethics-led action learning**
   Working with start-up stories as an expansive learning process to activate the SDGs (see **Chapters 4 and 5** on story and expansive learning)

5. **Clarifying curriculum and ESD competences**
   Working from curriculum topics to activate action learning competences in curriculum settings **(see Chapter 7)**

6. **Planning learning together**
   Developing a deeper grasp of ESD as co-engaged deliberative learning. Seeking to understand how sustainability concerns developed out of the past to become manifest issues in the present. Noting how a situated grasp of the emergence of risk could activate a reimagining of more just and sustainable futures together **(see Chapter 8)**

Figure 18: Framework for ESD programme planning - *Adapted from UNESCO- Sustainability Starts with Teachers (SST).*

7. **Wider and more integral assessment practices**

   Working with wider and more inclusive approaches to assessment within a new social contract for education **(see Chapters 1 and 9)**

Through the above processes it is notable how teachers are able to plan subject teaching and learning activities from different perspectives. On the one hand, they are able to select appropriate knowledge, issues, skills, perspectives and values as attributes which can then be mobilised for working out and reflecting the environmental, social and economic spheres of sustainability. On the other hand, it is important for teachers to encourage learners to ask questions, analyse, think critically and make decisions. In this way, teaching and learning moves from a situation dominated by teacher and subject-centred learning, to a more participatory and student-led process of action for sustainable living. Planning, realization and reflecting /assessing of Handprint activities create opportunities for students to engage, to develop creative ideas (including the different voices / perspectives of the classroom), to motivate each other, and to experience cognitively and emotionally responsibility and self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is based on the belief that you are capable of carrying out a specific task or of reaching a specific goal. By working out Handprint activities students experience that they have influence, and can make a difference. These experiences can contribute to develop hope for a more just and sustainable world.

For a Handprint approach, the traditional role of a teacher changes step by step, from being an expert who transfers structured knowledge to being a facilitator of knowledge mediated learning. This comes with a partial shift in power, responsibility and decision-making to the student as a deliberative co-learner, working together with a teacher, to co-creating knowledge and to co-developing new ways of knowing and doing things together for a common good.

Continuing steps on an ESD learning journey

The Handprint CARE approach starts with subject teaching but does not end there. The journey continues by following UNESCO's proposal for a new social contract for education calling for a school education that strengthens ESD and capability. This includes an important question by Reimers (2020, p. 12): "What should students learn when, how can they be supported in learning it, and what and how should teachers teach and how can they be supported in learning so they can teach effectively?"

With regard to ESD and Handprint CARE, it is important to develop, step by step, possible ways of relating the school organisation to ESD. School organisation that is conducive to conversation and enhances students' possibilities for learning and capacity building for a complex and uncertain surrounding world, turns "the ESD vision into a practical reality", and contributes to quality education (Mogren, Gericke & Scherp 2019: 509) by applying different strategies and approaches. In a way this is what the "Whole School Approach" is all about. A school organization that promotes ESD in a holistic approach is becoming a model for learners by integrating sustainability issues in more and more areas of the institution (curriculum, organizational culture and values, participation of learners, management, cooperation with the local community and other partners in networks …). This requires shared responsibility and commitments including the school management (Henze et al. 2020: 134 ff.)

A first step could be working out ways to link a subject topic with other subjects by identifying the concept or matter of concern in different subjects, as ESD is interdisciplinary in nature. The ability of teacher educators, teachers, and eventually students, to draw such connections between ESD concepts and different school subjects and to work collaboratively and distribute leadership, will lead the way to wholesome/holistic education. This is especially significant in the case of countries where there are strict disciplinary/subject boundaries, and might not apply for countries where teachers have autonomy and flexibility within the curriculum, or where a theme-based approach is followed without any subject discipline boundaries. In primary education there are good opportunities, since natural and social science issues are usually taught in one subject.

The development of continuous collaboration with the local community (with local leaders, families, non-governmental and private sector actors working with sustainability issues) combines the curriculum with extended inter- and transdisciplinary learning opportunities. Working in this collaborative way transforms learning environments, and contributes significantly to quality education. This is of crucial importance as "meaningful transformations and transformative actions for sustainable development are most likely to take place in the community" (UNESCO, 2020, p. 34).

Teachers play an important role in implementing ESD, they are "key actors in facilitating learners' transition to sustainable ways of life" (ibid., p. 30). We all know that teaching is a complex and challenging profession. The traditional

model of schooling refers to a role of teacher who remains individually responsible for his/her own lesson plans and learning materials. This model places huge pressure on many teachers in different parts of the world. We promote the idea that teachers (and multipliers) work collaboratively to mobilise knowledge through dialogue, to support each other and to co-construct sustainability issues. Implementing ESD and transformative learning needs ongoing support, however, and continuing professional development, capacity building through workshops and training opportunities as well as "cooperation and collaboration (that) are woven into their modes of working" (UNESCO, 2021, p. 81).

All readers of this handbook are invited to join us, and, by working together with Handprint CARE as a culturally and ethics-led social learning, help make the world a better, more peaceful and more sustainable place:

**Learning to look after others
to best care for each other and to
explore change projects to improve
the surroundings that we all share**

Concluding Insights

The inclusion of sustainability matters of concern in subject teaching can be achieved as a curriculum-activated process with students and teachers working together to plan learning activities, change challenges and handprint actions for sustainability.

References

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