SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT TEACHING IN VIEW OF QUALIFICATION, SOCIALISATION AND PERSON-FORMATION

Katrien Van Poeck (in collaboration with Leif Östman)
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3 FUNCTIONS OF EDUCATION

Teaching is supposed to achieve 3 overall purposes:

1. Qualification
2. Socialisation
3. Person-formation
Education as a matter of preparation: Equipping students with the knowledge, skills and understandings that prepare them for a (future) role or task

- Very specific or more general

- Major function, important rationale for organised education – often connected to economic arguments but not always
QUALIFICATION IN ESE: SOME EXAMPLES

- UNECE: Education is important for the shift towards a green economy: ‘Values, competences, knowledge and skills that are necessary to put the green economy concept into practice’, ‘skills for green jobs’, etc.

- ‘Fact-based’ sustainability education: Acquiring basic knowledge in the natural sciences can prepare students for understanding the limits of Earth

- Teaching people which kind of behaviour can contribute to reducing their ecological footprints.
IN TERMS OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ‘The learner understands how extremes of poverty and extremes of wealth affect basic human rights and needs.’
- ‘The learner is able to communicate on the connections between combating hunger and promoting sustainable agriculture and improved nutrition.’
- ‘The learner is able to include health promoting behaviours in their daily routines.’
- ‘The learner understands the concept of gender, gender equality and discrimination and knows about all forms of gender discrimination, violence and inequality and understands the historical causes of gender inequality.’
- ‘The learner is able to plan, implement, evaluate and replicate activities that contribute to increasing water quality and safety.’

Equip students with **knowledge, skills and understandings** that prepare them for contributing to realising SDGs such as overcoming poverty, ensuring good health and well-being, achieving sustainable agriculture, ensuring clean water and sanitation.

- Teaching certain values, attitudes, norms and worldviews so as to socialise students into the prevailing standards of a particular social, cultural and political order or group. E.g.: initiation into cultural or religious traditions, a professional community, democratic values and practices.

- Always an ‘effect’ of education: teaching and learning are never neutral
SOCIALISATION IN ESE: SOME EXAMPLES

- UNESCO: The pursuit of a more sustainable world requires that ‘everyone … learn[s] the values, behaviour and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation’
- UNECE: ‘a shift in economic thinking’ by changing people’s mindset, i.e. ‘a reorientation of values and attitudes’
IN TERMS OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ‘The learner is able to feel empathy and solidarity with those who differ from personal or community gender expectations and roles.’ (p. 20)

- ‘The learner is able to feel empathy for and to show solidarity with people who are discriminated against.’

- ‘The learner is able to maintain a vision of a just and equal world.’

- ‘The learner is able to feel responsible for the environmental and social impacts of their own individual lifestyle.’

Transmitting values such as equality, solidarity and justice, and worldviews related to a just and equal world.
Education as the formation of the self, the cultivation of people’s personalities, the process of personal maturation.

Closely related to ‘Bildung’: a form of general education aimed at personal growth, development of individual agency and qualities such as critical thinking or moral judgement (> < mere training in specific skills, i.e. ‘Ausbildung’).

Life-long process that takes place through everyday actions that shape people’s ways of acting, thinking and being – also in the classroom.
PERSON-FORMATION IN ESE: SOME EXAMPLES

- ‘Normative competency: the abilities to understand and reflect on the norms and values that underlie one’s actions, and to negotiate sustainability values, principles, goals, and targets, in a context of conflicts of interests and trade-offs, uncertain knowledge and contradictions.’

- ‘Critical thinking competency: the ability to question norms, practices and opinions, to reflect on own one’s values, perceptions and actions, and to take a position in the sustainability discourse.’
IN TERMS OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ‘The learner is able to reflect on their own gender identity and gender roles.’
- ‘The learner is able to reflect on their own personal belonging to diverse groups (gender, social, economic, political, ethnical, national, ability, sexual orientation etc.) their access to justice and their shared sense of humanity.’

Can take different forms:

Identification, e.g. taking on the identity of a critical and sustainable consumer.

Subjectification = dis-identification, taking on a way of being that has no place in the discourses, habits, practices... in which one is taking part.
QUALIFICATION, SOCIALISATION AND PERSON-FORMATION AS COMPANIONS

How to organise or teaching in order to include all 3 functions?

- Handling each of them separately in a specific time and place?
- Integrative model: Forefront – Background

→ Important to be aware of
FOR EXAMPLE: STUDY OF A BIOTOPE

Qualification:
Learning how to study a biotope

Socialisation into the practice / community of science
Biology student: ‘Hell, for crying out loud. It feels awful when you pull them loose [...] It seems weird. We’ve got to learn to pick them off with our hands’.

→ does not want to continue gathering animals
→ discovered a new self and does not want to take on the role of a manipulator of nature
Dewey: ‘Collateral learning’

Every teaching activity has certain meaning-making in the forefront while there are always other meanings that follow automatically & simultaneously, in the background: Companion meanings

When we teach knowledge, we offer students very particular worldviews and specific roles

Choice, judgement: Explicit teaching goals – implicit companion meanings
CAN YOU GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF COMPANION MEANINGS FROM YOUR OWN TEACHING OR LEARNING EXPERIENCE? WHAT WAS IN THE FOREFRONT – BACKGROUND?

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN SURPRISED BY SOMETHING THAT SUDDENLY BECAME FOREFRONTED?
### THREE FUNCTIONS OF EDUCATION

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#### Examples
- Learning to reduce one’s ecological footprint, learning skills for jobs in the green economy, learning knowledge about ecosystems…
- Learning sustainable values and attitudes, learning to feel responsible for the ecological and social impact of one’s lifestyle…
- Becoming an environmentalist, a sustainable citizen, a business person, a well-informed consumer…
- Change one’s perspective on what it means to be a business person, taking an emotionally invested political stand
Katrien Van Poeck

CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

E katrien.vanpoeck@ugent.be
T +32 9 264 82 07
M +32 475 59 05 54

www.ugent.be
www.cdo.ugent.be