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Sustainable Development Teaching: Ethical and Political Challenges

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Over the last decades, we have increasingly been confronted with fascinating, often complex sustainability issues: climate change, food crises, poverty, urbanisation, inequality, loss of biodiversity, etc. The pursuit of sustainable development became one of the major societal challenges of our times. In 2015 the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: 17 sustainable development goals to transform our world by ending poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring prosperity for all. Since it proves to be very difficult to come up with adequate solutions for sustainability problems, realising a more sustainable world is often considered to be a matter of *learning* to find a way out of unsustainability (Finger & Asun 2001; Loorbach 2007). Yet, also for educative practices, sustainability issues are very challenging. Often characterised by a lack of clear-cut solutions (Rittel & Webber 1973; Hisschemöller & Hoppe 2001; Lönngren et al. 2016), sustainability problems are at odds with common conceptions of teaching and learning in terms of transferring unambiguous knowledge and acquiring pre-set skills, values and attitudes. Instead, they confront teachers with the challenge to handle the ethical and political dimension of sustainability issues. Acknowledging this, however, should not be conflated with an 'anything-goes' approach. The far-reaching consequences of sustainability problems underline the importance of not falling into undue relativism – a concern that is particularly relevant in our times that have recently been labelled and criticised as a 'Post-truth' era. When, on the one hand, single 'right' answers do not exist and, on the other, the seriousness and urgency of the problems faced cannot be neglected, questions arise about what and how to teach and teachers are challenged to take on new roles. Teaching sustainable development is, thus, a matter of finding and implementing appropriate, contextual ways to deal with knowledge, (un)certainty, values and norms, ethical dilemmas, political controversies, concerns for the planet and its inhabitants, struggles over truth, etc. Obviously, this is not only a cognitive but also an ethical and political challenge (e.g. Öhman & Östman 2008; Van Poeck et al. 2016; Håkansson et al. 2018).

If learning and teaching are, indeed, indispensable elements for achieving social justice and ecological sustainability, teachers' efforts to contribute to that merit the best possible support. Accordingly, this workshop engages with the following questions:

1. How can relevant scholarship on ethical and political challenges in sustainability education be brought together?
2. How are state-of-the-art academic insights regarding the ethical and political dimension of teaching sustainable development be applied to educational practices?
3. How can theoretical/conceptual frameworks on ethical and political challenges in sustainability education be translated into didactic models for teachers?

The aim is to identify and discuss diverse frameworks that have the potential to offer (future) teachers guidance in dealing with these challenges. Our focus is threefold: (a) frameworks that allow teachers to further develop their understanding of the ambiguous concept 'sustainable development', of the complex process of sustainability transitions and of the specificity of sustainability issues; (b) frameworks that can guide teachers in how to prepare their courses and lessons (defining education goals and intended learning outcomes, selecting subject matter, deciding on suitable teaching approaches) and that foster reflection about how to position themselves and their teaching practices within a multiplicity of approaches to addressing the ethical and political dimension of sustainability education; and (c) frameworks that focus on the performance of teaching practices, i.e. that are useful for the concrete design and implementation of the prepared practices.

Methodology, Methods, Research Instruments or Sources Used
This workshop will address a variety of theoretical frameworks and analytical models and methods that the authors consider fruitful in relation to the above outlined aims and objectives. Each of them will be introduced via a brief (Pecha Kucha) presentation and subsequently discussed with the audience:
- The multilevel perspective on sustainability transitions
- Companion meanings
- Fact-based, normative and pluralistic environmental and sustainability education
- The political tendency in environmental and sustainability education
- Teaching as a matter of staging encounters
- Taking-up ethical global issues in the classroom
- Authenticity in environmental and sustainability education
- Political and ethical moves
The focus of the workshop is on how to translate theoretical frameworks and analytical models and methods into didactic models for teachers.

Conclusions, Expected Outcomes or Findings
The work underpinning this contribution will result in a book on sustainable development teaching as not only a cognitive but also an ethical and political challenge: a matter of finding and implementing appropriate ways to deal with knowledge, (un)certainty, values and norms, ethical dilemmas, political controversies, concerns for the planet and its inhabitants, struggles over truth, etc. By translating state-of-the-art academic research results into practical knowledge, we aim to support (future) teachers to handle ethical and political challenges in sustainability education, nourish their professional reflection, inspire their teaching practice and offer teacher trainers a coherent theoretical framework and a wide range of empirically grounded knowledge that is useful for training programmes and courses.
The book will consist of three parts. Part I outlines the challenge of building a more sustainable world and raises some questions and concerns regarding how to understand and develop adequate educational practices in this respect. It offers insights and models for understanding the interesting yet ambiguous concept 'sustainable development' and the complex process of transforming society in a more sustainable direction and addresses the question what those insights imply in relation to education. Part II guides teachers in how to prepare their courses and lessons and fosters reflection about how to position themselves and their teaching practices within a multiplicity of approaches to addressing the ethical and political dimension of sustainability education. The described and illustrated insights, models and typologies help to define education goals and intended learning outcomes, to select subject matter, to decide on suitable teaching methods, etc. Part III focuses on the performance of teaching practices. It is focused on the concrete design, implementation and evaluation of practices and offers the reader useful concepts,

frameworks and models which are illuminated by descriptions of practical examples.

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Intent of Publication

As mentioned (see conclusions/expected outcomes), this work in progress will we published in a book: "Teaching Sustainable Development: Ethical and political challenges" (Van Poeck, Östman & Öhman – Eds.). The proposal for this edited volume has been accepted for publication by Routledge and the book's publication is expected in 2019. The outcomes of this workshop will be used by the authors in the (further) development of their manuscripts by December 2018.