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LTP1 ‘A sustainable Europe’

Unit 3: Education for sustainability

# Learning objectives

* Critically consider the potential of education to transform society
* Identify competences for a sustainable future
* Explore the GreenComp framework of sustainability competences
* Reflect upon, exchange and explore methods for teaching sustainability
* Identify and critically reflect upon quality criteria for education for sustainability activities
* Identify strengths and weaknesses in relation to EfS in your own practice/practice at your institute and priorities for development

# Activity 1: The power of education

## Learning objectives

* Critically reflect on the potential of education to transform society

## Resources

If online, break-out rooms

## Steps

Divide participants into two groups, ‘for’ and ‘against’ for to prepare to debate the following statement.

‘Education can transform society’

The ‘for’ group totally agree with the statement, and should prepare arguments why it is true, with examples where possible. The ‘against’ group completely disagree, and should prepare arguments for why it is false, with examples where possible. Each group should also try and think of the arguments the other group will make, and prepare counter-arguments. Explain that debates will be held in pairs, so everyone needs to make notes of the arguments, which groups think of. Invite participants to consider different aspects of education e.g., classroom discourse (who gets to speak, what counts as knowledge, patterns of interaction, rules and norms); the physical environment of school, including resource use; the management of school including roles and relationships between students and families, teachers, school management, local and national education authorities.

After 15 minutes, preparation time, group participants in pairs (with one for an d one against). They should hold the debate, and note any additional points that they did not think of.

After 5 minutes, participants re-join their original groups, and share any additional points they gathered.

Finally, in plenary, use the ‘talking stick’ method, to give everyone the chance to state an argument, for or against the motion and/or their personal opinion on the topic.

**Feedback:**

* Education has the potential to reproduce or transform society, in complex i.e., often unpredictable ways. What we do in our classrooms and schools matters greatly, not only to the individual learners we work with but in relation to beliefs, values and practices in wider society.
* At the same time, there are many other social spheres which influence society e.g., government, business, entertainment, media, civil society. Schools do not hold all the responsibility, but can equip learners to participate critically in different spheres of social life.
* It is important for teachers to be aware of the potential of education to contribute to the reproduction and/or transformation of social inequalities and injustices

# Activity 2: Competences for a sustainable future

## Learning objectives

* Identify competences for a sustainable future
* Explore the GreenComp framework of sustainability competences

## Resources

* GreenComp animation Video
* GreenComp document

## Steps

**Synchronous**

Introduce the activity to participants, by linking it back to the rich picture of a sustainable future which they drew in unit 1.

*“In unit 1, you drew a rich picture, detailing your vision for a sustainable future that reflected the 17 SDGs. In this unit, we are considering how education can equip people to participate in building a sustainable future. Look back at your picture, and list the knowledge, skills and values people should have to be part of building a sustainable future for humanity at local and/or global level. “*

Divide participants into groups (knowledge, values, and skills). In their groups participants list the knowledge/values/ skills they think learners need for a sustainable future. If working online, this can be done in break out rooms, using an interactive whiteboard (e.g., jamboard) to record and share ideas.

* People should know and understand …
* People should value/believe in …
* People should be able to …

After approx. 15 minutes, allow a further 10 minutes for groups to visit the other two groups’ lists and add ideas. Finally, groups have a further 10 minutes to discuss additions made by other participants and how they can categorise the items.

Present to plenary

**Feedback**

– introduce the term ‘competence’ if it has not already emerged, “competences are combination of action, and the values and knowledge which underpins them”

Next, explain that we are going to critically review GreenComp, the European Commission’s competence framework for sustainability.

GreenComp animation video

**Discussion questions**

* What are the similarities and differences between the competences in GreenComp and our lists?
* What would you add or remove for your personal list?
* Is it useful to define competences for sustainability in this way, why/why not?
* How might you use GreenComp in your work at school?

**Feedback**

* It is useful to define competences, so that we can plan, teach and assess learners. At a collective level, this allows us to build shared understanding, and develop shared resources etc.
* Sustainability competences cannot be definitively fixed, because our understanding of sustainability challenges and possible responses depends 1) on who we are as individuals and groups i.e., our positions and perspectives, and 2) is emergent as we learn from additional, previously hidden/silenced people and as scientific knowledge develops.
* The challenge for educators is to construct and continually develop their own understanding of sustainability competences

# Activity 3: Teaching for sustainability

## Learning objectives

* Reflect upon, exchange and explore methods for teaching sustainability
* Critically reflect upon criteria for education for sustainability activities

## Resources

Teaching sustainability Roadmap

## Steps

* In the last activity we considered sustainability competences, including knowledge, skills and values for sustainability. Now, we are going to identify and explore some teaching and learning methods which can enable learners to develop sustainability competences.
* First, note down methods which you use or have heard about which you think are suitable. What do you know about them, why are they suitable?
* Share your ideas in a group of 3-5 people. Note down any similarities or new methods you have learnt.

**Discussion questions:**

* What do these methods have in common?
* What are distinctions?
* Are there criteria which an activity must have in order to be considered EfS?

**Feedback:**

There have been many attempts to define what EfS is and is not. For many people, to be considered EfS, educational activities must be:

* Local and global i.e., exploring global dimensions of local issues and vice versa
* Interdisciplinary i.e., not just approaching an issue from the perspective of a single subject (e.g., maths, geography) or domain (society, economy, environment, politics) but looking at how these are connected.
* Multi-perspective i.e., exploring different perspectives in recognition that there is no single definitive experience, understanding or point of view
* Concerned with justice – e.g., social justice, climate justice, futures justice …
* Address some aspect of the SDGs/related topics

Another distinction is drawn between:

* Learning *about* sustainability i.e., learning about sustainability challenges and possible solutions
* Learning *for* sustainability i.e., learning particular knowledge, skills and values to deal with a given sustainability problem, and/or sustainability as currently understood
* Learning *as* sustainability i.e., learning that engages learners in critical, participatory processes of reflection and action, such as service learning

(Sterling, 2001)

Arguably, all three levels of learning are important.

**Asynchronous task – Sustainability education in practice**

The task is to learn about and if possible try out a sustainability education game, activity or method and share a critical review of it with your colleagues.

On the handout (LINK) there is a list to choose from. You can also choose an activity not on the list, either one you already know or have heard about and are keen to try out. In addition, you could integrate some sustainability education criteria into an activity you already use.

Select a game, activity or method

Learn about it

Try it out, or consider how you would try it out, with a particular group of learners

Record a 3-5 minute podcast, detailing:

* Brief description of the game, activity or method
* Strengths and weaknesses in your context
* Ideas for adaption

**Handout –**

**Links for a selection of games and methods**

# Activity 4: Reflection and action planning

## Learning objectives

* Identify strengths and weaknesses in relation to EfS in your own practice/practice at your institute and priorities for development

## Resources

Teaching sustainability Roadmap

## Steps

**A-synchronous**

Reflect and/or discuss with colleagues

* Which sustainability competences do your learners already possess? Which do you think are priorities for development and why?
* OR//Which knowledge, skills and values are already covered in your current teaching/curriculum? What are the gaps?
* Identify/create and describe an activity you could use to support your learners to develop a competence you identify as important.
* Use the roadmap – link to the roadmap

**Synchronous**

Short presentations