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Promoting Education for Sustainable Development in Early Childhood Care and Education

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Promoting Education for Sustainable Development in Early Childhood Care and Education

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Presented at Bluecoat EYTC Conference
Tuesday 20th October 2015
Aims of the presentation

- To consider what Early Childhood Education for Sustainability (ECEfS) is
- To recognise the implications for our practice
- To identify the ways that Action Research projects might promote ECEfS
What is Sustainable Development?

- Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”
  - (WCED 1987)
Changes and challenges

Global
- Globalisation - flow of ideas
- Climate change
- Political unrest and conflict
- Movement of peoples
- Technological change
- National lifestyle aspirations

Local
- Consumerism
- Over-consumption
- Widening wealth disparity
- Diverse communities
- Less contact with natural world
What is Education for Sustainable Development?

- Three pillars:
  - Environmental Sustainability
  - Social and Cultural Sustainability (Global Social Justice)
  - Economic Sustainability

- Empowers learners to: “Take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity”.
  - UNESCO, 2014:12

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Transition from Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The World We Want

“There is now a growing international recognition of ESD as an integral element of quality education and a key enabler for sustainable development.”

UNESCO 2014:9
The ESD Butterfly Model

Petersen & Warwick 2015:133; Warwick & Warwick 2015: 6
UNESCO Road map 2014

4 Dimensions of ESD
- Learning content:
- Pedagogy and learning environments
- Learning outcomes
- Societal transformation

5 Priority Action Areas: This project focuses on PAA2: Transforming learning and training environments
PGCE Primary and Early Years ESD research project 2014-2016

- Methodology: Action Research
- Multi-layered Inquiry-based
  - Student teachers as researchers of their own practice and that of others
  - Promoting research-informed teaching
    - By tutors on campus
    - By student teachers in placement

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**Action Research Cycle**

**Reflect**: A self-audit of students’ knowledge and understanding of ESD shared anonymously with the project team at the start of the course.

**Plan**: Self-study about ESD, with tutor support, in the first months.


**Reflect**: Collaborative seminar analysis of their findings on return from placement.

**Plan**: Lectures and online materials to support them in planning and leading activities to promote ESD with young children in the subsequent placement.

**Act**: Plan and lead ESD activities on placement.

**Reflect**: A final self-audit of their perceptions, attitudes and practices to gather comparative data at the end of the course in Summer 2015.
Environmental sustainability
Social and Cultural Sustainability

- From multiculturalism to interculturalism
  - [http://tedcantle.co.uk/publications/about-interculturalism/](http://tedcantle.co.uk/publications/about-interculturalism/)

- Promoting and developing intercultural capabilities

- Making international links
Economic sustainability

- Teaching
  - Eco-efficiency
  - Moderateness
  - Lifecycle of products
  - Critical consumption
  - Advertising and marketing
  - Global economy

- School culture
  - Economic, lifecycle of products, sharing, loaning and re-use of items, fair trade products

- Values
  - Ecological sustainability, global justice, moderation, rights of generations to come
Recommendations: Transformative Project Approach

- Critical thinking
- Problem solving
- Systemic thinking
Evaluation of student engagement in the project

Why the resistance?

- Research was seen as optional
- Knowledge about Education for Sustainable Development not part of assessment for the course
- Education for Sustainable Development not in the Teaching Standards for England therefore lacking status and requirement for evidence to be produced
- Huge workload of PGCE course – students understandably giving priority to what has to be done to meet Standards and pass assignments
- Not wanting to add to placement teachers’ workload
- Reluctant to approach head teachers for permission to conduct research on Education for Sustainable Development and/or information on current practice

Implications???
UNESCO and ‘Project Everyone’

World's Largest Lesson

The Worlds Largest Lesson Introduced by Malala Yousafzai

tes.com/worldslargestlesson/lesson-plans/
• Thank you for listening.
• Any questions?

Contact me on valerie.huggins@plymouth.ac.uk

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References and further reading


References and further reading


