

Globalization and environmental education education essay



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The two topics that I have chosen from the sessions are globalisation and sustainable development. I am interested to look at the views from globalisation and environmental education by looking beyond the sustainable development (what is sustainable development, the principles and the importance).

First of all, before discussing further in details on the topic of sustainable development, we should know that globalisation and education are world wide issues that interrelated to each other. There is a significant amount of research involving the study of intertwined worldwide discourses, processes, and institutions affecting local educational practices and policies regarded to globalisation and education. Spring (2008) suggests that there are four major theoretical perspectives relating to globalisation and education. They are; world culture, world systems, postcolonial, and culturalist. Many researchers endorse that the major global educational discussions are about the knowledge economy and technology, lifelong learning, global migration or brain circulation, and neoliberalism.

However, there are critics of current global trends support educational alternatives that will preserve local languages and cultures, ensure progressive educational practices that will protect the poor against the rich, and protect the environment and human rights. I found this is interesting and we should have a view that sustainable development is a global issue as well as the local one (Atkinson, 1999).

Therefore, personally I interested on the theme of sustainable development which is linked with that of the global dimension within the cross-curricular

dimensions of the National Curriculum. I believe as a future teacher, this topic would be interesting to be discussed and analysed. This is because in the future I probably will be addressed by such responsible to educate students with such knowledge.

Definition of globalisation and sustainable development

Definition of globalisation

The term globalisation is used in a variety of contexts, supposedly to indicate economic interdependency and the power exerted by some multinational corporations that no longer have strong links with any particular country, but see themselves as transcending national boundaries (Soubnita, A. T, Sheram. et. 2000).

“ The technological revolution seems to be one of the most powerful engines of the globalisation process” (Friedman, 1995: 341)

I learned that globalisation is a term that has a very wide definition. Different groups will define it differently and will have different views on what globalisation really is. Moreover, I found that there are numbers of the definition for the term globalisation mostly emphasizing its agendas of growing prosperity and development opportunities for all. Green and Bare (2000) have the ideas that globalisation is the terrible triumph of unrestrained capitalism and the resulting cultural homogenization, the domination of the United States, plundering of the environment, and the widening gap between the rich and poor.

Definition of sustainable development

As globalisation is requiring development, therefore I believe that the need to avoid further depletion of the world resources in order to develop this world is a general understanding on the definition of sustainable development term. A conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 by the United Nations manifest the first international attempt to draw up action plans and strategies in order to moving towards a more sustainable development. Dresner (2002) mentions about the discussion made in the Brundtland Commission in the 1987 where sustainable development was appealed as the resolution of the environmental problems.

From the reading on several articles and books, I agree that sustainable development is about ensuring that people can fulfil their basic needs, while preserving the environment so that the future generation can also have the same or even better quality of life. Moreover, I understood that sustainable development recognises that the three 'pillars' - the economy, society and the environment which are all interconnected. I interested with a statement that;

“ Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (IISD, 2012)

1.3 Personal views

My stand is that the concept of sustainable development can be understood in many different ways, but at its most basic is an approach to development

that looks to balance differently, and the needs against the awareness of the environmental, social and economic limitations that we face nowadays.

Therefore, I believe that sustainable development is about improving ways of implementing things, for the benefits of both the future and the present time. For the sake of sustainability, we might face many changes in the way we live but that does not mean that our quality of life will be reduced.

Thus, from the definition of globalisation in relation to sustainable development I could say that sustainable development is a global issue that needs everyone to play their roles in order to ensure it is a success. Of course, there are goods and bad things regarding globalisation and the relation to the context of sustainable development.

Globalisation and sustainable development in environmental aspects

I am interested with one of the dominant principles of sustainable development which states that sustainable development is to live within our environmental limit (Dresner, 2002). To clarify, the principle is respecting the limits of the earth's environment, resources of biodiversity with aims to improve the environment and ensure that our natural world's resources needed for life are not damaged and remain for future generations.

Firstly, Dresner (2002) suggests that one of the principles of sustainable development is any development activity should help to sustain and not endanger our resources. We should have noticed that the Earth's life-support systems are draining that once fertile areas can no longer sustain people (Atkisson, 1999) ; fish resources have been depleted; the atmosphere, water
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courses and our food supplies have been polluted. It is challenging, to predict its effect on the ecosystems. For this reason, I believe that there is a need to apply the preventative principle that we can do to bring back our environments, which in turn opens up with many new development opportunities. Examples include organic farming and replanting trees. There is an idea that suggests if we are to sustain the planet, we must control population growth and change our patterns of consumption (IUCN, UNEP and WWF (1991)).

Moreover, the world's environment has continued to deteriorate (IUCN, UNEP and WWF (1991)). For example, deforestation at a rate of 14 million hectares a year; greenhouse gases are still increasingly pumped into the atmosphere, and there is a big amount of report mentions that the US has rejected the Kyoto Protocol and the present targets for emission reductions are clearly inadequate.

Furthermore, there is a forthcoming crisis of water shortages around the world, and in India the problem is already there where some parts of India the people is still struggling to get enough fresh and clean water supply; and may news reporting that new technologies such as genetic engineering pose new environmental and health threats (IUCN, UNEP and WWF (1991)).

I look all these matters with questions, if all these problems are revolving around the world, what is sustainable development really is? How successful is the idea to sustain the development?

Globalisation and sustainable development in society

To discuss further, I agree that the focus of sustainable development is to look it beyond just the environment. Atkisson (1999) mentions that it is also about to guarantee a strong, healthy and just society. Thus, I believe this means meeting the various needs of all people in existing and future communities,

“ promoting personal well-being, social cohesion and inclusion, and creating equal opportunity “(Orr, 1992).

In addition, Spring (2008) advises that our attitude on development affects everyone. The impacts of decisions made in a society have very real concerns in others' lives. For instance, a poor planning of communities, reduces the quality of life for the people who live in them. Sustainable development proposes a way to making better decisions on the issues that affect all of our lives (Orr, 1992). For example, we can ensure that residents have easy access to healthcare and leisure facilities by uniting health plans into the planning of new communities (Spring, 2008).

As I understood from sessions of the lessons, our world is not always fair. I find out that the majority of the global population does not have access to adequate resources; and these same people also suffering unjustly from pollution, depletion of resources and land degradation. Therefore, there still a question that pop-out in my mind; How do we work towards greater fairness, environmental justice and social sustainability?

A report states that South Africa has taken a massive step forward by eliminating unfair apartheid laws and appointing a democracy that
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recognises equal rights (Cassius Lubisi, 2008). However, inequalities remain in the way people participate in the economy and benefit from it. On the other hand, there are demands for fairness in international trade procedures, which currently benefit the wealthiest nations when the wealthy people becoming wealthier while the poor stay poor or even poorer; and many cases on the discrimination against the less powerful ones.

There are sum of research reporting economic injustices within each country. Therefore, in my view, economic policies and practices need a review in terms of their impacts on people and the world. To discuss further, we should know that social sustainability and well-being also involves education, health and a healthy environment, security, opportunities for relaxation and spiritual renewal, and people's right to participate in decisions that affect them and not only dependent on jobs or income (Orr, 1992). This is also including the right to information about the environmental health impacts of development activities, and the right to legal action if such activities prove to be dangerous.

Globalisation and sustainable development in economics limitation

Speaking through the economics specs, Dreser (2002) suggests that to achieving a sustainable economy is meant to develop a durable, stable and sustainable economic development which provides chances for all, and in which environmental and social costs fall on those who enact them (polluter pays resolution), and efficient resource use is incentivised.

A report from IISD (2012) states that sustainable development can lead to savings; as a result of SDC scrutiny, UK government has saved over £60m by improving efficiency across its estate.

I always have a thought that more development means for environmental protection and reduce poverty. Here a great mess started, because I believe linking the two concepts sustainability and development together opened the door for some to interpret the need for action as a need for more of the same development (Orr, 1992). They argued that where there is people in poverty and suffering, there is simply not sufficient economic growth. Thus, I assumed that the focus on the idea of sustainability shifted from nourishing living resources, to satisfying development.

There are other better ways of thinking about development as a kind of development that would sustain or nourish people, including the poor, and at the same time not overshooting the Earth's capacity to renew ecological resources. The Brundtland Report (1987) mentions about development that meets the needs of the present without conceding the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. These ideas really require us to think in a different way about the needs of the present, especially the dilemma of the most needy people, but also beyond them, about the future. Therefore, I personally think that we need to change our focus from continuously abandoning these parts of world to on how to sustain people and the mother earth and not following the old ambiguous path of economic growth as we concern about it.

My view is that this belief should be about economic activities that endure people and earth and not about maintaining an economy, especially one based on development-as-growth, which is as noted would damage the earth and fails to benefit the majority of South Africans (Cassius Lubisi, 2008).

Sustainable Development calls above all for reforms in the manner that some countries conduct their economic activities (Wackernagel and Rees, 1996). Numerous measures have been proposed including:

Removing unfair trade barriers Economists estimate that this would allow poorer countries to generate a total income three times the sum of official development aid;

Removing Government subsidies that harm the environment and the poor;

Upholding the polluter pays principle that those who do harm, must pay for redress;

Instituting clear paths of responsibility and liability as for example, a CEO should be liable for the accuracy of a company's environmental reporting;

Shifting the tax base from labour to resource use; in other words, rather than taxing us on what we earn through the work we do, tax us on our impacts and what we consume;

Price products not only on what value has been added to them, but also in terms of what value they have deducted from the common natural resource base;

Increase resource productivity ; create wealth with ever fewer resources.”

(Wackernagel and Rees, 1996)

I personally believe that truthful answers will require many companies to change either the nature of their business, or the way in which they go about it.

Education for Sustainable Development

5. 1 How to educate?

In the 1990s, mounting concern over environmental and development problems has meant greater support for an educational approach, which not only considers immediate environmental improvement as an actual goal, but also addresses educating for ‘ sustainability’ in the long term (Wackernagel and Rees, 1996). Although some education literature has embraced this new focus of environmental education for sustainability (EEFS), it has failed to outline the essence of this approach and has neglected questions about how it differs from the environmental education of the 1980s (Billet, 2001). No document exists to date which translates the goals of EEFS into guiding principles for its development in schools (Spring, 2008). Essentially, I think EEFS needs further definition.

5. 2 Business, society, government and educational institutions

“ Education for sustainable development is a life-wide and life-long learning endeavor which challenges individuals, institutions and societies to view tomorrow as a day that belongs to all of us, or it will not belong to anyone.”

(UNESCO, 2004: 9)

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The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005, 2014) was initiated at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. The Decade has achieved an agreement that sustainable development will remain nothing more than an interesting idea without education,. This global initiative has generated inspirational innovations around the world (IUCN, UNEP and WWF (1991)) which I think later bringing a very big impact to the world of education.

5. 3 What is education for sustainable development?

Billet (2001) mentions that the Environmental Education Association of Southern Africa (EEASA) has for years debated that environmental education is about sustaining all life, in socially and economically fairways. EEASA members have also seen environment as the interrelationships between ecological life-support systems and the economic, political and other social systems interrelating within and with the natural world (Billet, 2001).

Thus, in my opinion, there is not much difference between environmental education and education for sustainable development. I would recommend that environmental education be not just for teachers to teach the students in school, but it is meant for everyone, in certain those who have an instant impact on the world as corporate or political decision-makers.

The implementation of sustainable development in education is expected to produce a higher national workforce to enhance economic growth too (Mohd Zanal, 2009). Mohd Zanal views that an economical aspect is one element in Sustainable Development, and through education in which the country expects to produce more students who are more likely trained in field-related

skills. The main question here is what are the elements required in the curriculum at the secondary school level if it would be supportive to the sustainable development of the country?

However, based on my schooling experienced years back then, this idea of concerning and understanding of environmental education is not widely shared, and we used to have this one assumption in our mind that environmental education is only for children to learn about nature and how to preserve it. The Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) provides an opportunity to widen the public understanding of the role of education in moving towards ecological sustainability and social justice. This is good because I certain that it gives chances to bring the awareness the importance of education, apparently to educate people about ecological sustainability.

Besides that, many countries can interpret education for sustainable development differently in ways that suit their certain context as advised by the lead agency for the Decade is UNESCO. This is because, reflecting back on the meaning of development, it is varied according to different groups' views and needs. UNESCO itself has interpreted the idea as ' an umbrella concept for its various initiatives including the ' Education for All' campaign associated with the Millennium Development Goals', as well as gender-sensitive education, rural development, health care, community involvement, literacy, HIV/Aids, human-rights education, peace education, and environmental education. This idea is hoped can be achieved and practised around the world.

For a sense of what education for sustainable development might involve, I agree with the four domains of the Implementation Plan for the Decade:

Creating access to basic education for all

Re-orienting existing education programmes

Raising public awareness and understanding

Vocational and professional training for sustainability. The idea is to have Education for Sustainable Development in thousands of local situations on the ground, involving the integration of the principles of sustainable development in a multitude of different learning situations. (UNESCO)

5. 3. 1. Creating access to basic education for all

Everyone should have a basic education if that particular countries are aiming to develop sustainably. In parts of the world, formal education is not yet universal especially for girls (UNICEF, May 2005). Schooling is compulsory in South Africa (Cassius Lubisi, 2008). On the other hand, report states that many children still do not go to school because of severe poverty, too few schools and poor communications and technology.

There is also insufficient social support. It is reported that many learners stay home to care for babies and sick parents. In the many schools without ablution facilities, teenage girls are involuntary to miss classes each month. There is also a report states that some 40% of South Africa's children are kept out of school to perform domestic duties or work in the fields. Even if a child makes it to school, government's limited capacity to organise existing

resources often results in poor facilities and poor teaching (Cassius Lubisi, 2008).

Thus I understood that these problems resulting to thousands of learners are dispossessed of the education that is not only their right, but the country's key to social and economic development.

5. 4 Teachers' roles : Raising awareness and understanding : How?

Creativity, teaching methods and industrial relations are the important elements of sustainable development efforts in the particular subject. This is consistent with the recommendations of Mohd Zanal (2009) who stated that sustainable development, in particular concerning to the development of teaching methods, interaction, participation, and collaboration in teaching and learning, should focus on hands-on experiences, visits to factories, field-work, laboratory work, and placement in specific industries. Mohd Zanal also ascertained that these methods would provide students with the necessary exposure and strengthen the sustainability of technical and vocational education. Supplementary teaching methods should also incorporate problem-solving skills, creativity, and innovation skills. Mohammad Sani (2001) considers that teachers undergo continuous education. This is prevalent particularly when viewed in a number of contexts such as changes in the educational environment itself, changes in the value of school and personal values, and changes in school management. This view was also supported by Halif (2006).

The state training programs and courses in this service are essential in enhancing the level of teaching professionalism in facing challenges, which stem from outside the profession, such as the changing aspirations of society, and changes in technology. Internal challenges faced by teaching staffs (the teachers, perhaps) would be the situation of educational organisations (governance), such as changes in curriculum, pedagogy and changes in government educational policies. Each student, for a certain period of time, will be placed in an industry related to their field of study. Billet (2001) viewed learning in the workplace as not only being very useful to students, but a matter which could not be avoided. Many students found the experience of working, partaking in conversation and gaining advice and knowledge from experienced employees pivotal in acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary for carrying out actual tasks.

Further studies of learning in the workplace by Billet (1999, 2001) found that day-to-day activities in the work environment were a very important source of learning and experience to work. It was found that students received guidance in both direct forms through interaction with other employees and indirect form through observation and discussion of activities in the workplace. Workplace learning is also important to teachers or trainers and should become an in-service activity as part of their lifelong learning (Mohammad Sani, 2001).

Conclusion

After all, I suggest that any significant efforts to improve the quality of teaching, the facilities at schools, and the health of communities is good

steps to increasing access to basic education, and meeting the development
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requirement, which are fundamental to sustainable development. I believe that the challenge now is to help teachers to meet their responsibilities and do integrity to the exciting possibilities in the curriculum. I hope as a future teacher I would have the opportunity to teach this interesting topic on sustainable development as a global issue and be able to apply my understanding on the topic of globalisation and sustainable development.