

EQ316-15 Education for Sustainability

26/27

Department

Education Studies

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Nicholas Lee

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This module introduces and critically examines Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). It addresses ESD both as a global project and as a series of local initiatives.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

Key questions running through the module are:

What is ESD and what change is it intended to make?

What theories and assumptions have informed the development of ESD ?

To what extent can it deliver its key objective of transforming citizens, societies and economies?

What procedures and approaches are involved in the implementation of ESD?

What difference can ESD make to curricula and pedagogy?

What effects has its introduction had in Early Years and Tertiary Education settings?

How can the effectiveness of ESD be evidenced? What evidence is there that ESD is effective?

What new developments in the field are presently under discussion?

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Week 1: Introduction

This session will introduce and examine the concept of sustainability addressing its three intermeshing aspects — economy, society and environment. The need to address each of these three aspects at once is a basic principle of sustainability discourse. The difficulties in doing so will be highlighted through contemporary critiques of 'problem-solution' reasoning which emphasize the tenacity of 'wicked problems' of sustainability. This raises the question of how 'education', broadly understood, might contribute to achieving sustainability goals. A set of principles underlying Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is presented.

Indicative reading:

Lee, N.M. (2013) *Childhood and Biopolitics: Climate change, life processes and human futures*. London. Palgrave Macmillan. Chapters 6 and 7

Week 2: ESD as a Global Project

ESD is a key focus of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). It is also threaded through United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (2017). Through a range of initiatives and interventions, UNESCO seeks to influence and inspire change in the nature and role of education with the aim of transforming global society. In this session we ask:

- to what extent does this global ESD project embody the principles laid out in our introduction?
- what measures of success might be applied to ESD?
- To what extent can it address existing differences between global regions?

Indicative reading:

Lesley LeGrange 'Environmental Education after Sustainability' in Jickling, B. and Sterling, S. (2017) *Post-Sustainability and Environmental Education: Remaking Education for the Future*. London. Palgrave Macmillan.

Week 3: ESD - Critical Voices

ESD as a global project has attracted some criticism. It has been argued that ESD tends to ignore the effects of financial capital in its 'neo-liberal phase', that it has not proved as democratically inclusive as it might have been and that it prepares populations of different global regions for different and unequal futures. In this session we articulate these critiques, assess the evidence for them and consider what, if anything, might be done to address them.

Indicative Reading:

Hellberg, S. and Knutson, B. (2018) *Sustaining the Life Chance Divide: Education for sustainable development and the global biopolitical regime*. *Critical Studies in Education*, 59(1): 93-107

Week 4: ESD and Curricula

It is clear that ESD requires teachers and learners to understand issues in systemic rather than uni-directional causal terms and to appreciate and become skilled in connecting and reframing information from diverse sources and communities. Quite how this is to be achieved remains unclear and is likely to vary with circumstances. This session explores a range of approaches to setting ESD curricula.

Indicative Reading:

Barthes, A. and Lange, J.M. (2018) *Researchers' positions and construction of curricula of*

education for sustainable development in France. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*. 50 (1): 96-112

Week 5: ESD and Pedagogy

If ESD is to meet its objectives, it will need to make considerable changes to standard relationships between teaching and learning activities and roles. In this session we ask how educational institutions might respond to this need and how new pedagogical approaches might link with and embody ESD principles.

Indicative Reading:

Lozano, R., Merrill, M. , Sammalisto, K., Cuelemans, K., and Lozano, F.J. (2017) Connecting Competences and Pedagogical Approaches for Sustainable Development in Higher Education: A Literature Review and Framework Proposal. *Sustainability*, 9 (10): 1889

Week 6: ESD and Early Childhood Education

The younger the child, the longer and more deeply their life will be affected by sustainability issues. But are some children too young to learn about these matters? Early Childhood Education is one of the hotspots of practical ESD development in which these issues are addressed. This session surveys a range of approaches to ESD in the early years. It pays particular attention to the affective and embodied dimensions of such practice.

Indicative reading:

Arlemalm-Hagser, E. and Sandberg, A. (2017) Early Childhood Education for Sustainability: The relation between young people's participation and agency. In Waller et al (eds) *The Sage Handbook of Outdoor Play and Learning*. London. Sage pp. 213-225

Week 7: ESD and the University Sector

Since universities are understood to produce societies' decision-makers, the tertiary education sector has become a hotspot for ESD development. University education and academic careers are often organized around clearly demarcated disciplines, each of which has its own standards and expectations. This raises the question of how universities can fit ESD into their operations. This session critically examines a range of tertiary sector responses to ESD.

Indicative Reading:

Ingrid Muld, Daniella Tilbury, Alexandra Ryan, Marlene Mader, Jana Dlouha, Clemens Mader, Javier Benayas, Jiri Dlouk David Alba, (2017) "Catalysing Change in Higher Education for Sustainable Development: A review of professional development initiatives for university educators", *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, Vol. 18 Issue: 5, pp.798-820

Week 8: ESD International Case Studies

In this session, we examine a range of case studies of UNESCO ESD projects. In each case we ask:

- In what ways does this embody ESD principles?
- How have curriculum and pedagogical challenges been addressed?
- How can outcomes be assessed?
- To what extent does it exemplify critical discourses about ESD?

Indicative Readings:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002328/232888E.pdf>

<https://en.unesco.org/greencitizens/our-stories>

Week 9: Futures of ESD

ESD is a set of responses by a global educational community to changing circumstances

and needs. There is no reason to think that the need to adapt and respond will vanish. In this session we will examine some new ideas and approaches that are currently in development. We ask whether these are responding to new sets of issues and what futures for ESD are likely to come from them. Indicative reading:

Payne, P.G. (2016) What next? Post-critical materialisms in environmental education. *The Journal of Environmental Education*. 47 (2): 169-178

Week 10: Summary and conclusions

This session comprises an overview of the module, student posters on selected topics and preparation for assessment.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a systematic, coherent and detailed knowledge and understanding of well-established and latest concepts and debates surrounding Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)
- Undertake critical analysis of information related to the roles of educational institutions and local/regional/global ESD policies, devising and sustaining arguments that consolidate and may extend knowledge
- Identify a range of appropriate solutions based on a critical evaluation of strategies and approaches in policy and practice for implementing ESD
- Demonstrate an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits to knowledge inherent in ESD policy and practice

Indicative reading list

[Reading lists can be found in Talis](#)

[Specific reading list for the module](#)

International

Module examines UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development strategy and considers international cases.

Subject specific skills

Students should demonstrate a critical understanding of -

- the diversity of learners and the complexities of the education process
- the complexity of the interaction between learning and local and global contexts, and the extent to which participants (including learners and teachers) can influence the learning process
- the societal and organisational structures and purposes of educational systems, and the possible implications for learners and the learning process

- constructively critique theories, practice and research in the area of education.

Transferable skills

Active listening

- Cognitive flexibility
 - Communication skills
 - Complex problem solving
 - Coordinating with others
 - Critical thinking
 - Initiative and also follow instructions
 - Passion
 - Reasoning
 - Team working
 - Using IT effectively
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Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	10 sessions of 1 hour (8%)
Seminars	10 sessions of 2 hours (17%)
Private study	90 hours (75%)
Total	120 hours

Private study description

Independent study hours include background reading, completing reading/other tasks in preparation for timetabled teaching sessions, undertaking research using the library resources, follow-up reading work, working on individual and group projects, the completion of formative and summative assignments, revision.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A3

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
Essay	100%	30 hours	Yes (extension)
3000 word essay chosen from list of titles provided by the module leader.			

Reassessment component is the same

Feedback on assessment

Individual essay feedback

Availability

Courses

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 3 of UEQA-X35B Undergraduate Education Studies
- Year 4 of UPSA-C806 Undergraduate Psychology with Education Studies (with Intercalated Year)

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 3 of UPSA-C804 Undergraduate Psychology with Education Studies

This module is Unusual option for:

- Year 3 of UIPA-XL38 Undergraduate Education Studies and Global Sustainable Development
- Year 4 of UIPA-XL39 Undergraduate Education Studies and Global Sustainable Development (with Intercalated Year)