

A Rounder Sense of Purpose Educator competences in learning for sustainability

In order to work towards a Rounder Sense of Purpose (RSP), the educator ideally needs to have sustainability competences themselves and be able to develop them within their learners. That means that the educator needs to have a critical understanding of sustainable development on the one hand and of the pedagogical approach of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) on the other. The underpinning components for the educator provide guidance for this. In order to implement the RSP model, the educator should be able to practice an action-oriented, transformative pedagogy that engages learners in participative, systemic, creative and innovative thinking and acting processes, as illustrated by the activities on the RSP website. Educators need to adopt a critical stance and be able to assess and evaluate learner development in this area. It is also important to recognise that the RSP competences are mutually supportive and therefore should not be viewed in isolation.

Thinking Holistically	Envisioning Change	Achieving Transformation
Integration:		
<p>Systems The educator helps learners to develop an understanding of the world as an interconnected whole and to look for connections across our social and natural environment and consider the consequences of actions.</p>	<p>Futures The educator helps learners to explore alternative possibilities for the future and to use these to consider how behaviours might need to change.</p>	<p>Participation The educator helps learners to contribute to changes that will support sustainable development.</p>
Involvement:		
<p>Attentiveness The educator helps learners to understand fundamentally unsustainable aspects of our society and the way it is developing and increases their awareness of the urgent need for change.</p>	<p>Empathy The educator helps learners to respond to their feelings and emotions and those of others as well as developing an emotional connection to the natural world.</p>	<p>Values The educator develops an awareness among learners of how beliefs and values underpin actions and how values need to be negotiated and reconciled.</p>
Practice:		
<p>Transdisciplinarity The educator helps learners to act collaboratively both within and outside of their own discipline, role, perspectives and values.</p>	<p>Creativity The educator encourages creative thinking and flexibility within their learners.</p>	<p>Action The educator helps the learners to take action in a proactive and considered manner.</p>
Reflexivity:		
<p>Criticality The educator helps learners to evaluate critically the relevance and reliability of assertions, sources, models and theories.</p>	<p>Responsibility The educator helps learners to reflect on their own actions, act transparently and to accept personal responsibility for their work.</p>	<p>Decisiveness The educator helps the learners to act in a cautious and timely manner even in situations of uncertainty.</p>

Systems

The educator helps learners to develop an understanding of the world as an interconnected whole and to look for connections across our social and natural environment and consider the consequences of actions.

Learning Outcomes: The educator helps learners to...
1.1 Understand the root causes of unsustainable development and that sustainable development is an evolving concept
1.2 Understand key characteristics of complex systems such as living environments, human communities and economic systems, including concepts such as interdependencies, non-linearity, self-organisation and emergence
1.3 Apply different viewpoints and frames when looking at systems, e.g. different scales, boundaries perspectives and connections

Underpinning Components for the educator
In order to achieve the above Learning Outcomes the educator should be able to:
UC1 Identify the level of complexity and abstraction to be tackled with students and use techniques such as concept mapping, systems analysis, games, or structured research-based activities to make complexity accessible to them
UC1.1a Identify and discuss causes of unsustainability, be they environmental, social, cultural, political or economic
UC1.1b Understand and critique different models of sustainability
UC1.2a Explain the difference between systematic and systemic thinking
UC1.2b Understand and apply boundaries and frames to systems, look for interconnections and emergence and recognise feedback and unpredictability
UC1.2c Understand the difference between linear and circular economies
UC1.3a Analyse issues and contexts from different perspectives and from different levels of detail
UC1.3b Use different forms of thinking and logic to aid analysis, e.g. linear vs systemic approaches, scientific method and artistic interpretation

Attentiveness

The educator helps learners to understand fundamentally unsustainable aspects of our society and the way it is developing and increases their awareness of the urgent need for change.

Learning Outcomes: The educator helps learners to...
2.1 Discuss limits and resilience of natural and human-made systems, and describe structural flaws in human-made systems that exceed limits and cause unsustainability
2.2 Recognise and discuss the urgent need to fundamentally change those human-made systems in order to address such flaws
2.3 Identify opportunities to contribute to improvements in quality of life, equity, solidarity, and environmental sustainability

Underpinning Components for the educator
In order to achieve the above Learning Outcomes the educator should be able to:
UC 2 Use different methods to encourage learners to frame current development issues within the context of sustainability, e.g. conceptual change approaches, multi-perspective discussions, including geopolitics, and looking through the lens of social justice and environmental limits.
UC 2.1 Access and analyse current research and reports on a range of sustainability-related issues
UC 2.2 Identify the way in which issues are often multi-dimensional and interrelated
UC 2.3 Keep an open mind in relation to the multiple solutions that might emerge while maintaining the principles of sustainability

Transdisciplinarity

The educator helps learners to act collaboratively both within and outside of their own discipline, role, perspectives and values.

Learning Outcomes: The educator helps learners to...
3.1 Identify and express their own values and perspectives and the strengths and limitations of these within a given context related to sustainability
3.2 Cooperate in the construction of new knowledge and ideas in multi-, inter- and trans-disciplinary contexts
3.3 Cooperate in the construction of new knowledge and ideas in intercultural and intergenerational contexts

Underpinning Components
In order to achieve the above Learning Objectives the educator should be able to:
UC 3 Use methods e.g. role-play, simulations, fieldwork, case studies, projects and interviews to help learners to work in heterogeneous groups and integrate knowledge from different disciplines and origins e.g. academic, local community and business
UC 3.1 Recognise the importance of involving people from different disciplines and other stakeholders to tackle sustainability related issues
UC 3.2a Manage the co-creation of collaborative processes: problem framing, value recognition, consensus building and the integration of different discipline and other stakeholders' knowledge
UC 3.2.b Recognise, and have strategies to deal with, the challenges which might undermine the collaborative process such as lack of trust, legitimacy, or common language
UC 3.3 Recognise the fundamental role that values and contexts play in our decision-making

Criticality

The educator helps learners to evaluate critically the relevance and reliability of assertions, sources, models and theories.

Learning Outcomes: The educator helps learners to ...
4.1 Reflect critically on the framing of sustainability related issues and not just on their solutions
4.2 Distinguish between facts, assumptions and opinions, including their own

4.3 Apply models and theories carefully, considering their limitations and uncertainties

Underpinning Components for the educator

In order to achieve the above Learning Outcomes the educator should be able to:

UC4 Utilise techniques to challenge assumptions such as problem-based learning, debates or dilemma analysis

UC4.1a Guide the discussion and give space and value to diverse opinions and hypotheses while distinguishing facts from assumptions and opinions

UC4.1b Understand the difference between the indoctrination and empowerment of learners

UC4.2a Identify and propose a number of sources with contrasting perspectives for analysis

UC4.2b Encourage the analysis of sources including the identification of different perspectives and underlying values within arguments and set them in the context of sustainability

UC4.3 Identify the theories (and their limitations) behind interpretations of sustainability related issues

Futures

The educator helps learners to explore alternative possibilities for the future and to use these to consider how behaviours might need to change.

Learning Outcomes: The educator helps learners to...

5.1 Envision a range of futures, considering and evaluating likely impacts (potentials and risks) attached to different scenarios

5.2 Identify and analyse the steps that would need to be taken to reach desired and possible future scenarios

5.3 Recognise relations and possible evolutions between the past, present, near future and far future

Underpinning Components for the educator

In order to achieve the above Learning Outcomes the educator should be able to:

UC 5 Utilise future studies techniques such as simulation games, future newspaper, scenario analysis and back casting

UC 5.1a Creatively imagine a number of different future scenarios while sharing worldviews and ideas, and discuss whether they are sustainable

UC5.1b Understand how the world might change as we project into the future and how these changes might be considered from different perspectives

UC5.2 Know about possible ways to make societal change become real through individual and collective actions

UC5.3a See how changes that take place are linked to past actions and evolve over time

UC5.3b Analyse and look for causes of change from different perspectives

Empathy

The educator helps learners to respond to their feelings and emotions and those of others as well as developing an emotional connection to the natural world.

Learning Outcomes: The educator helps learners to...
6.1 Listen to their own emotions and those of others; understand and apply strategies for dealing with fear, conflict or despondency, differentiating between unfounded hope and realistic sources of hope
6.2 Recognise needs and connections within and beyond the human species
6.3 Develop their own and others' coping mechanisms and sources of resilience when confronted with potentially overwhelming sustainability related issues

Underpinning Components for the educator
In order to achieve the above Learning Outcomes the educator should be able to:
UC 6 Employ techniques to help learners develop their empathy within a context of sustainability, e.g. use of images, drama, paired simulation, debate and role-play
UC 6.1a Differentiate between understanding, sympathy and empathy
UC 6.1b Listen actively and authentically to others and build on each other's views
UC 6.2a Identify situations where they have drawn on coping mechanisms themselves and relate them to sustainability issues
UC 6.2b Use their imagination to put themselves in the position of others, including non-humans
UC 6.3 Understand the concept of resilience and identify sources of risk and protection

Creativity

The educator encourages creative thinking and flexibility within their learners.

Learning Outcomes: The educator helps learners to...
7.1 Build on their experience and existing knowledge as a basis for creativity in responding to sustainability related issues
7.2 Use their judgement to recognise when tried and tested approaches are appropriate rather than assuming that new is always better
7.3 Develop ideas and create innovations, based on real-world scenarios/problems and sustainable entrepreneurial skills development.

Underpinning Components for the educator
In order to achieve the above Learning Outcomes the educator should be able to:
UC7 Apply creative and innovative teaching techniques in relation to sustainability issues, positioning the teaching processes in a real-world or simulated context
UC7.1 Facilitate a process of generating new ideas among learners
UC7.2 Encourage learners to critically evaluate existing alternatives developed by sustainability actors
UC7.3 Recognise opportunities for building new value (i.e. social, environmental or economic benefits) in a sustainable way from any given situation

Responsibility

The educator helps the learners to reflect on their own actions, act transparently and to accept personal responsibility for their work.

Learning Outcomes: The educator helps the learners to ...
8.1 Identify the potential social, environmental and economic consequences of their decisions and actions
8.2 Accept personal responsibility and accountability, where appropriate, for their own decisions and actions
8.3 Reflect critically on their own decisions and actions and those of others, looking for opportunities for improvement and development

Underpinning Components for the educator
In order to achieve the above Learning Outcomes the educator should be able to:
UC8.1 Encourage learners to consider the consequences of their decisions and actions by using techniques and approaches such as simulation games, concept mapping, and project-based learning
UC8.2 Help learners to recognise a range of rights, roles and responsibilities and related systems by which people can be held to account
UC8.3 Reflect on their own work and functioning and behave responsibly and transparently themselves

Participation

The educator helps learners to contribute to changes that will support sustainable development.

Learning Outcomes: The educator helps learners to...
9.1 Participate actively, giving them opportunities to share ideas and experiences openly
9.2 Recognise their potential contribution towards societal transformations for sustainable development
9.3 Propose, facilitate and participate in actions that will trigger transformations of systems and unsustainable practices

Underpinning Components for the educator
In order to achieve the above Learning Outcomes the educator should be able to:
UC 9 Use techniques and pedagogies fostering participation of learners within and outside the class, such as project-based pedagogy, leadership games and consensus-building activities
UC 9.1 Identify varying degrees of participation and different ways in which people can participate and provide examples to illustrate this
UC 9.2 Understand the central importance of enabling participants to be heard and the implications of not doing so
UC 9.3 Identify strengths and weaknesses in top down and bottom up approaches and note the advantages of participative solutions

Values

The educator develops an awareness among learners of how beliefs and values underpin actions and how values need to be negotiated and reconciled.

Learning Outcomes: The educator helps the learners to...
10.1 Engage with others in ways that build positive relationships and trust
10.2 Identify and analyse their own values and beliefs in relation to sustainability issues and to recognise how they underpin commitment and action
10.3 Seek out, listen to, understand and reflect upon the values and beliefs of others in the context of sustainability

Underpinning Components for the educator
In order to achieve the above Learning Outcomes the educator should be able to:
UC 10 Use a variety of approaches and methods which stimulate learning in a collaborative and collegiate way
UC 10.1 Facilitate and participate in the learning process with colleagues as well as learners
UC 10.2a Recognise and embrace difference, treating all equally and with respect
UC 10.2b Operate in an open way that engenders trust and empowers others
UC 10.3 Recognise the values and beliefs behind the actions and behaviours of others

Action

The educator helps the learners to take action in a proactive and considered manner.

Learning Outcomes: The educator helps the learners to...
11.1 Explore and critically analyse their local natural, social and built environment, including their own institution, as a context for change
11.2 Engage in democratic processes of decision making within a context of sustainability
11.3 Develop their agency and their awareness of social, political and economic structures

Underpinning Components for the educator
In order to achieve the above Learning Outcomes the educator should:
UC11.1a Be supportive and encouraging towards students, coaching them in order to enhance their sense of agency
UC11.1b Make use of the reflective learning cycle (planning, acting, reflecting, adjusting or the Anticipation-Action-Reflection cycle)
UC11.2a Work in a democratic, open way with students
UC11.2b Utilise project-based learning techniques
UC11.3 Be able to see meaningful educational opportunities in 'real life' and encourage learners to do the same

Decisiveness

The educator helps the learners to act in a cautious and timely manner even in situations of uncertainty.

Learning Outcomes: The educator helps the learners to ...
12.1 Act in a timely manner even when faced with unforeseen events, keeping in mind the precautionary principle
12.2 Take decisions even in a context of sustainability related dilemmas, uncertainties, contradictions and wicked problems in accordance with their values, being aware that postponing decisions and not acting is also a decision
12.3 Gather information and consider various options while being open to alternatives

Underpinning Components for the educator
In order to achieve the above Learning Outcomes the educator should be able to:
UC12 Use techniques such as dilemma-situations, improvisation, problem-solving activities and simulation games to develop quick, yet cautious decision making among learners
UC12.1a Identify a variety of information sources and ensure that these present alternative options
UC12.1b Exercise good judgement and make sound and well-informed solutions based on pre-identified alternatives or known options.
UC12.2a Manage competing priorities and make effective and timely decisions addressing conflicting issues.
UC12.2b Make decisions with significant consequences and perceive the impact and implications of these decisions
UC12.3a Highlight the impact of different time-frames when addressing a problem
UC12.3b Act promptly and with confidence when a situation requires a quick decision, drawing on collective intelligence where possible

Project partners: University of Gloucestershire (UK); Duurzame PABO (NL); Italian Association of Sustainability Science (IT); Frederick University (CY); Hungarian Research Teachers' Association (HU); University of Vechta (DE); HEP Vaud (CH); Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (ES)