

“I have also a flower” said the Little Prince.

“We do not record flowers”, said the geographer.

“Why is that? The flower is the most beautiful thing on my planet!”

“We do not record them”, said the geographer, “because they are ephemeral”.

"What does that mean 'ephemeral'?"

"It means, 'which is in danger of speedy disappearance.' "

"Is my flower in danger of speedy disappearance?"

"Certainly it is."

[Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. *The Little Prince*, 1943]



Discord in Staff Perceptions of Sustainability & SD

Ellen Hampson

LECTURE OUTLINE

- Project Overview
- A Focus on Project Design
- Postulating the Theory
- Current “Goings On”
- Queries & Discussion



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PROJECT OVERVIEW

- “First Thoughts”...
- Heard one tutor say ...“hey! Who darn well stole my rubbish bin?”
- I decided to research staff knowledge and awareness of, and attitudes towards sustainability and its derivative SD



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PROJECT OVERVIEW

- What was very apparent right from the start was that researching staff knowledge, attitudes and degree of willingness to build SD content into course design and teaching method was only a small part of the total picture
- No significant movement can occur at any given level without institutional drivers
- There is a wealth of information on “whole institution approaches” towards a sustainable culture
- I justified my attention on staff due to 1) them being at the “coal-face” of education; and 2) the immediacy of the situation



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PROJECT OVERVIEW

- *RQ1.* What are staff perceptions and understanding of sustainable development and sustainability?
- *RQ2.* What are staff attitudes with respect to SD-oriented challenges and issues?
- *RQ3.* What are staff knowledge levels with respect to SD-oriented challenges and issues?
- *RQ4.* What are staff needs in relation to successfully embedding SD principles and current issues into course design and teaching practice?



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PROJECT DESIGN

- Operational Definitions
- Delimitation of Study Area
- Selection of Research Methods
- Survey Questionnaire
- “...non-response” is a problem because of the likelihood – repeatedly confirmed in practice – that people who do not complete surveys differ from those who do” (Moser and Kalton, 1971)
- Simons (1984) “...that however harmonious relationships in a school appear to be, however democratic the organisation, trust does not automatically exist between professionals. It has to be created”.



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KAGAWA (2007)

- “I love cars and motorbikes – well anything that runs on petrol or other highly flammable fuels and would NEVER give up the privilege of owning and enjoying one, two or maybe more if I can afford too. So maybe I'm not so good for the environment after all ... But it's a worthwhile sacrifice”
- Survey found that more than 90 per cent of respondents held a positive attitude towards sustainability, identifying sustainability as a “good thing” or declaring themselves as passionate advocates for sustainability



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DEVELOPMENT OF SURVEY

- A small part of the survey includes open question typology, exploring respondents attitudes, opinions and beliefs (Oppenheim, 1992)
- Electronic Survey Tool will be anonymous
- Closed Questions - Likert Scale drafted (a 20-Item Likert Scale on a 1-5 response-scale)
- DVD clip to be viewed and associated questions - titled “The Convenient Solution”
- Survey design aims to be relevant, succinct, comprehensive, have clarity of language, sensitivity and the ability to sustain interest



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LITERATURE REVIEW

- A scarcity of publications exploring what staff actually know about sustainability
- Darnton (2004) concluded that public awareness of sustainable development “runs at less than 30 %”
- Respondents who expressed familiarity with the term could not give “even partially-accurate answers”
- In another survey almost no one among the 20 % of respondents who claimed to be aware of SD could actually explain the term
- Darnton (2004) also points out that the term SD is a “conversation stopper” or a “turn off” for members of the public.



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LITERATURE REVIEW

- Talloire Declaration (TD) → a 10-point action plan for incorporating sustainability and environmental literacy in teaching, research, operations and outreach at colleges and universities
- TD has been signed by over 375 university/tertiary technology centre's presidents, CEO's and chancellors in over 40 countries
- RMIT suggests that those concerned about education and environment/sustainability need more than conviction and vision
- A strategic approach – based on change management and supported by staff development



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SD IN EDUCATION

- Agenda 21 outlines a wide range of strategies for realizing sustainable development, highlighting the role of education in Chapter 36
- It suggests accessibility to environmental and development education in formal and non-formal education
- In terms of tertiary education, Agenda 21 encourages cross-disciplinary courses “which promote research and common teaching approaches on sustainable development” (WCED, 1987, p. 266)



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SD IN EDUCATION

- Participants in the 2002 Johannesburg Earth Summit vigorously endorsed the proposal that sustainable development needs to be an integral component of all levels of education
- EVERY student will come into contact with this theme in EVERY university [ITP] course
- ...to reach the stage where they can come up with research projects for local and wider communities



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ESD

- ESD currently enjoying significant momentum
- Strong political will and commitment to integrate ESD at all levels of education
- Its importance recognized with the establishment of the United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014)
- ESD is “a process of learning how to make decisions that consider the long-term future of the economy, ecology and equity of all communities” (UNESCO, 2004)



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POSTULATING THE THEORY

- Sustainability is a profound challenge, which requires change to basic structures of society (Dovers, 2001)
- SD as the process of working towards the end goal – that being sustainability
- Sustainability as the end goal of some form of sustainable society or sustainable state
- A useful definition must provide a context (Dovers, 1990)



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POSTULATING THE THEORY

- Australian term 'ecologically sustainable development' (ESD)
- Internationally, the terminology is 'sustainable development',
- SD and ESD should be thought of as a variable process designed to take us closer to the difficult, far-off goal of a sustainable state



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POSTULATING THE THEORY

- “The Firm and Shaky Ground of Education for Sustainable Development” (Selby, 2006)
- “As the heating happens: Education for Sustainable Development or **Education for Sustainable Contraction**”? (Selby, 2007)
- In addition, there is literature espousing the benefits of Emergency Education and calling for greater linkages between ESD and EE



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HARSH WARNINGS

- “Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, as is now evident from observations of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice, and rising global average sea level” (IPCC, 2007, p.1)
- Romm (2007) divides the 21st century into three eras:
 - 2000–2025 ‘reap the whirlwind’
 - 2025–2050 ‘planetary purgatory’
 - 2050–2100 ‘hell and high water’
- In *Six Degrees: Our Future on a Hotter Planet*, Lynas (2007) explores the environmental and human social impacts of rising surface air temperatures



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HARSH WARNINGS...

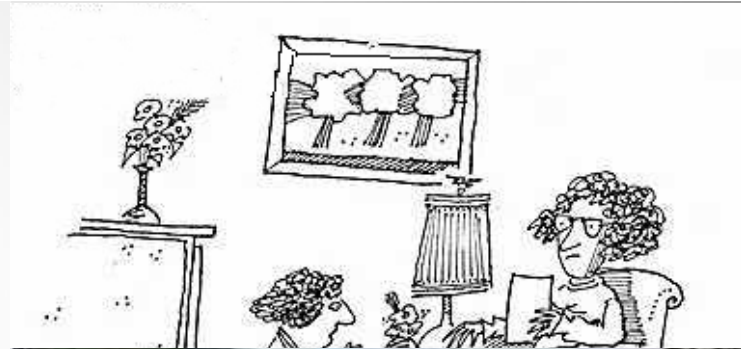
- ‘Our future’, he writes, “is like that of passengers on a small pleasure boat sailing quietly above the Niagara Falls, not knowing that the engines are about to fail” (Lovelock, 2006, p.6)
- ‘The time’, says another leading climate change scientist, Konrad Steffen, “is already five past midnight” (Kolbert, 2007, p.58)
- Avoiding the extremes, though, does not imply safety but merely less danger
- ‘Business as usual’ is an altogether unlikely option (Selby, 2007)



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DENIAL...

- “Psychology as much as science will thus determine the planet’s fate, because action depends on overcoming denial, among the most paralyzing of human responses... denial runs particularly deep among those with heavy stakes in the status quo...” (Postel, 1992, p. 4)
- “...climate-change denial will look as stupid as Holocaust denial, or the insistence that AIDS can be cured with beetroot...they know that we will grumble about their failure to curb climate change... nobody ever rioted for austerity” (Monbiot, 2006, pp 41,42)
- “Children will be put on the front line of the battle to save the planet...”



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DENIAL...

- “today you can leave your windows open while the heating is on, drive and fly without endangering the climate, as long as you give your ducats to one of the companies selling indulgences” (Monbiot, 2006a, p.210)



The sale of indulgences



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CURRENT “GOINGS ON”

- A positive...in the NZ context we see increasing government commitments to build climate change policy into legislation with the Climate Change Response (Emissions Trading) Amendment Act 2008
- A challenge...**Tertiary Sector Needs Major Overhaul Say Sustainability Educators (10 November 2007)**
 - NZ’s leading sustainability education advisers
 - There was wide support for core ESD material being taught to all New Zealand tertiary students
 - essential that all tertiary institutions “walk the talk” by operating their campuses sustainably



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CURRENT “GOINGS ON”

- A positive...on 3rd December 2007, the AU Prime Minister ratified the Kyoto Protocol, and on 11 March 2008 Australia's ratification came into effect
- The Climate Change Adaptation Skills for Professionals Program (\$150,000 grants)
- In the AU context we see demands for more emphasis on climate change education
- “...Australia is too small to make an impact on climate change and should not risk the economy by rushing into implementing new environmental policies”
- “...why would we wait, regardless of our size?” (Garnaut, 2008)



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CURRENT “GOINGS ON”

- In the UK context we see increasing government commitments to mainstreaming sustainable development in both school and higher education sectors
- “Securing the future”, the UK Government's sustainable development strategy emphasizes the importance of equipping people with skills for building a sustainable society, “we need to make ‘sustainability literacy’ a core competency for professional graduates”
- UK HEA is also working to include components of sustainable development in the higher education curriculum



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CURRENT “GOINGS ON” ...

- An Inconvenient Truth and global warming's impact on the Ice - on Tuesday of this week the Antarctic Community & invited guests were treated to a climate change lecture by the former Cambridge scientist – Professor Bryan Storey - & Melissa Clark-Reynolds
- On the 9th October in NYC there is a meeting - “Is Gore's 100% Renewable Energy Challenge Achievable for New York City?”
- So, not only are the prospects for global recession much stronger, the prospects for dealing expeditiously on climate change have diminished...this is a double dose of sadness for our future (Gans, October 1st, 2008)



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PRO-SUSTAINABILITY BEHAVIOUR

- Real change in thinking about sustainability requires creative pedagogy which acknowledges the different ways that people think about sustainability and provides spaces in which their ideas can be developed
- Furthermore, knowledge is one thing but passion is another...
- "If you want to build a ship, don't drum up the men to gather wood, divide the work and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea" (Antoine de Saint-Exupery, 1940)
- Incentivise!



