

SOME CONCEPTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND VALUES

Some concepts of environmental education and values

Helena Maria Sabo

Faculty of Psychology and Science of Education, Department of Teacher's Education, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, E-mail: helena-maria.sabo@gmx.net

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Abstract

In this article, I will try to make the analysis and to exemplify educational as well as teaching theories of the specific and more difficult issues of scientific education concerning ecological aspects. I will point out similarities, differences as well as different positions in detail.

The role of schools would be to acknowledge the importance of studying environmental education. This is a process comprising several factors: political, social, economic. Moreover, school must implement this Environmental Awareness.

Key words: cooperation, quality instead of quantity, awareness,

Zusammenfassung

In diesem Artikel wir versuchen zu präsentieren eine Analyse zur die schwierige Frage zwischen Bildung und Lehr-Theorien in Bezug auf Ökologische Aspekte. Ich werde darauf hinweisen, Ähnlichkeiten, Unterschiede sowie unterschiedliche Positionen in Detail.

Die Rolle der Schule wäre es die Bedeutung des Studium der Umwelterziehung zu Bestätigen. Dies ist ein Prozess auf mehreren Faktoren: politisch, sozial und wirtschaftlich.

Darüber hinaus muss Schule implementieren diese Umweltbewusstsein.

Schlüsselworte: Bildung, Zusammenarbeit, Umweltbewusstsein, Studium, Ökologische Aspekte

SOME CONCEPTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND VALUES

Some concepts of environmental education and values**Introduction**

In the period following the 2nd World War, in Europe, there have been set up a big number of universities. Therefore, we can notice not only a great number of universities but also a great number of students.

Between the years 1938-1939 a number of 56.000 women and men attended to the academic studies, which represent less than a half of the people studying at the Universities of Berlin or Munich, Cluj, Bucharest. In many European countries, more than half of young people are university graduates, and the number of female graduates is higher than of male graduates. A symposium was organized at Berlin on this topic with the participation of various university teaching staff. This symposium was aimed at making clearer the future of European universities as well as their future responsibilities and attributions. I decided to participate in the symposium as I was convinced that the issues of environmental education in the European Universities would become a hot topic for debates in the future.

I tried to exemplify this discourse in 7 theses.

First, I will try to outline environmental community, the changes that occurred in the course of time as well as the role of university. The other 2 theses refer to the essence of university. These 5 and 6 outline university modernization by means of the line of reasoning imposed by Humboldts, while the 7th thesis refers to own experience and opinions about this symposium.

Material and method

In Germany, starting from 1979, when KMK¹ has produced the policy document on environment and teaching, the preservation of the man - nature relationship became imperative. In this relation, man will be responsible for existential problems. Man should regard environment as something that is endangered by the man itself. These aspects will be outlined in ecology and criticized. The environment is exploited by human thinking because of its resources and will be regarded as an “array” of possible materials, which can be

¹ The Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK) is a joint coordinating body between Federal States in matters of education and culture (that are regulated by the Federal States). In the German implementation of the Bologna process it is the central body for national policy development.

SOME CONCEPTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND VALUES

exploited. Therefore, eco-pedagogy should regard this issue as a field of conflict of man against nature. It acknowledges the danger when nature will be regarded as an object to meet the needs of human survival (Frenz, 1997).

Therefore, the integration of these relations becomes essential.

As part of this ecological study, the relationship between man and nature will be explained from ecological perspectives.

The ecology must be understood as a complex science covering all the changing relationships between man and environment.

In the description of man – nature – environment relationship, we must start from the way each particular man understand nature. Thus, nature appears as a result of a process over years of human influences, that is the result of various historical processes. In the different aspects of life, new concepts on nature will be discovered, various perspectives in different periods.

This is why, many times, in special literature, the ecological study, the system in which the ideal on nature corresponds to several forms of alternative life, will be criticized.

If we consider this man – nature – environment relationship from the point of view of professional environmental education, it should be also analyzed from the aesthetic, symbolic point of view during a certain period of time. The more we find various points of reference in our own field (ego) the easier will be for us to establish the relationship between various components, specializations or environment.

Sustainability will be regarded, in scientific education, as a reflection point, as a flexible instrument in the environmental policy. A point of view will be this strong interdependence between nature, economy, and community. This is why the role of sustainability becomes here a decisive factor in explaining the man – nature – environment relationship.

A debate on general and professional education focuses on making clear the relationship between man and environment. Remarkable in this respect should be the exemplification of the model (A, B, C) of Nitschke:

A – Organization of professional work

Should we analyse the integrant relation, the various topics, issues, questions concerning the nature of environment in professional education - we shall see that environmental topics which not be seen as auxiliary to the educational process, but evident, as a prevailing component.

SOME CONCEPTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND VALUES

From the point of view of socio-ecological study, we encountered a strict rejection of industrial structures. As professional training requires sometimes these structures, the person who makes the study will take into consideration a great number of requirements, which are necessary in the living system and to fight against them accordingly.

The central aim for the reform of professional environmental education will be that to discover and impose subjective elements in the work, which is required for environmental protection.

The three elements: reason, aesthetics and symbolization shall be those by means of which the man will put into motion the new trends in the field. Through work, man shall automatically make a material exchange with nature. Work will be regarded as an environment in which the three elements could be found on a regular basis. Therefore, profession becomes, more or less, a good or bad type of work organization - being regarded as an engine for stimulation of work.

This is why a control over this engine is very important in order to decide as far as specialization rhythm and direction are concerned.

As far as A-B-C according to Nitschke is concerned, the key for success will be the use of traditional methods, of protection of relationships between various specializations, problems, professions, or between man, organizations and environment. This is why the personality of each particular man becomes and holds a central role in educational system.

Therefore, sustainability becomes necessary in manifestation of current structures, especially those of professional training. Due to the certainty of division in Sustainability Development of living opportunities, the development model, the man – nature, economy – community interdependence, this whole system will be regarded as a reflection over professional specialization.

It will bring about the need to change certain aspects such as work, life, consumption, spare time and it will bring about adaptation, discoveries regarding the relevant environmental issues (Nitschke, 1998).

B – Scientific orientation

Should we refer to the discussion to understand community, in practical terms, in the educational system according to the criterion of Truth, the questions should be put as follows: what is the significance of science in making clear the ecological questions and which are the consequences of working together with these. The new orientation should point out that only by means of an exchange between economy and ecology, individual and general, what is

SOME CONCEPTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND VALUES

necessary and what is required to be used as a basic element of life – as guidelines of environmental education in schools!

As part of the position taken by educational science concerning environmental education we should notice that the differentiation between the causes and the measures taken in environmental issues plays a major role.

Bolscho's theories (1980) are remarkable in the special literature – it is shown here, on the first level, the need to create some life (living) spaces – the so-called ecological perspectives. Secondly, it is shown the possibility that results obtained from various disciplines be reunited. Thirdly, environmental education shall research which are the intentions and the results, which can define man's position in environment (past, present, future). This interdisciplinary relationship will be used together with sociological, naturalist knowledge.

On the other hand, we shall come across discussions outlining that environmental education needs globalization as a rational side of human kind, in finding a proper and real solution.

Finding common parts between various subjects should be relevant at the same time. Instead of trying an absolute domination, man will probably try, in a last giant experiment, a total domination of nature and future (according to Haan, 1984).

Building a (high qualified) profession becomes the basis of relevant environmental protections elements.

Ecological study, in opposition to environmental education, may bring about an integrant side – a decisive role in economy, technology and professional training – that can be achieved by means of a conscious policy in the field, in order to reach certain economic interests conscientiously!

This strict neutralization in ecological study should bring about the removal of dependency in all forms of life created in order to be responsible for our own state of health, to be able to build our home by ourselves, to be able to plant ourselves the necessary amount of green plants.

Within nature and with nature we should cooperate in a natural manner!

Therefore, in the educational system, the new orientation will focus on the description of scientific subjects and we will focus more on the practical side of life: man – nature, consumption, clothes, space, dwelling place ... The new professional training will focus on the general and the basic elements as well as on their functioning.

SOME CONCEPTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND VALUES

Both the ecological as well as the social study, the role of each individual shall become relevant for the changed occurred in industrial behaviour.

The main critics become also the main problem. It is not only about technical elements but also about the fact that natural life must also allow a natural study. If we accept that nature is the outcome of a long-term process of human interventions, this field must be carefully criticized.

In the subsequent cultural concepts of eco-pedagogy, we will notice that empirical studies will show that environmental risks depend on scientific (research) study. Men will be those who shall establish the contents, the mode of co-operation with science according to their cultural context.

Therefore, culture is not the idea of something immortal, eternal and general, but described as a phenomenon, within which certain groups of people impose their way of thinking, what they feel and their orientation in the field.

Economy could not take into account certain privileged situations or a position between past – future in which everything can be understood, everything can be explained.

The way in which the inner part of a culture can be understood, various aspects of science is: emotion, speculations, needs, time shall also play an important part.

Time becomes the point of reference in the cultural, eco-pedagogical side and the settlement of environmental issues.

As far as sustainability is concerned, it brings about new perspectives as compared to the traditional ones. The paradigm to create a long-term environmental education must comprise the following three starting points:

- environmental disturbances, natural disasters and hazards
- equity between the poor and the rich countries
- natural development, prosperity

Therefore, several basic concepts, basic sustainability -based guidelines could be expressed:

- constructivism in scientific orientation;
- analysis of proper tools
- establishing of all basic cultural and economic orientations
- inter-regional equity as cultural maxim
- individualization of cultural processes as trend;
- participation as trend (Nitschke, 1995).

SOME CONCEPTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND VALUES

C – Possibilities in the field of environment

Here we should analyse what are the existing possibilities in environmental organization, from a theoretical perspective at the least. For environmental education we will find teaching modes in the completely educational system.

Economic growth and the development of techniques as well as a great differentiation of scientific system will not be taken into consideration.

Economy and technology should be regarded as a supplementation of an ecological crisis for the proper use of nature.

Similarly, in the case of integrant side of educational profession, this process will be regarded as a supplementation in order to be able to react to the existentialist questions of man as far as environmental issues are concerned

From the structural point of view, no change will be required, yet it should be used proper professional training (Ausbildung).

As part of environmental education – as an integrant aspect – there will be little possibilities to react against the ecological side.

The development of community in economy, science, technology as well as the institutionalization of education will be just accepted “external frameworks” in order to establish this system and supplement this curriculum.

In this respect, we could talk about a real catalogue of studies between teaching staff and students. Some teaching methods will become principles in this respect, to which the following should be added: a clear orientation of negotiations, sorting of experiences, creation of a network of connections....

The bases of educational organization should remain stable, unchanged.

In the desire to bring about a change in the field and obtain a success requiring that element of participation! – but also the possibility to take part in these changes. Some concepts such as “autonomous study” shall remain further unchanged in the special literature.

Man is not only a recipient of that something from exterior, but it is more about internal contents of the mode of cooperation, collaboration with nature in a given cultural context. Therefore, the behaviour of each individual becomes very important, of the way in which it is accomplished, of the way in which the individual behaves conscientiously on environmental issues.

As part of environmental professional education, besides the basic principles such as: orientation, negotiations, experiences, orientation of the people concerned, as well as the

SOME CONCEPTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND VALUES

creation of relations – the principle of getting own person involved in the debate of a natural conflict will also be required, for instance, fight against, cooperation.

The contact with own environment will become very important. This principle should not act solitarily but in cooperation with other principles.

The possibility to study, to learn through the method of Edu – Kinesiology, that is by means of an internal image in the form of some views of the image of own profession shall bring about a success in the field, it may bring about a balance of needs (internal image) with the external one by means of which study potential will remain strongly motivated.

According to Nitschke, there will be two bivalent sides: on the one hand, traditional line in environmental education is preserved; on the other hand, new, open, discursive methods are proposed which no longer focus on internal, professional structures (Nitschke, 1991).

On the other hand, in the polarization of the pedagogical system by Heiden (1992), we shall notice that we cannot assert that certain direction, a certain purpose is correct or not as a model.

Therefore, those who are interested should participate themselves in discourses, to involve themselves politically in order to be able to take ecological decisions and thus obtain, in practice, a recognition from the part of community.

Individualization and participation become, in practice, necessary items for the general teaching methods of educational system.

Values are conceptualized as guiding principles important in a person's life. Similar values are referred to as value types. Value orientations are defined as clusters of compatible values or value types. For example, the value type's benevolence and social justice are related to social-altruistic value orientation while the value types achievement and power are associated to a pro-self, egoistic value orientation.

The development of values is primarily a socialization process (UNESCO, 1987). The influence of society upon the individual determines the proliferation of values. Thus, it is not surprising that the modes of life deemed desirable by individuals are the modes of life approved in the culture to which they belong.

An individual's socialization has a strong influence on how his or hers values form, being derived from experiences at home, school, religion and others. Society does not, however, imbue each of us with identical values. We are all individuals and each of our personal experiences is unique. Values are dynamic through life. Social support is a crucial determiner of a person's commitment to values and modes of conduct.

SOME CONCEPTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND VALUES

Abraham Maslow (1964) identifies the human bent towards a preference for "grown-values" and behaviors – those that help us to become the best that we are capable at becoming. Depending upon whether their most basic needs are met, people will move up the hierarchy of growth values, from physiological to safety needs – then seeking love, esteem, and self-actualization. People tend toward a self-actualization, making full use of their own talents, potentials and capabilities (Heid, 1999).

Maslow's ideas are crucial in considering values education and he points out that it is the task of education to ally them to being conducive to individual growth.

Results

- *Universities are wonderful examples* of an urbanization process and reality, which resemble an open process and the desire to preserve it, on a long-term. They provide in Europe a community mirror. The expansion of university study cannot be prevented.

Universities appear where cultural, political and community's problems as well as the whole complex issue of knowledge and practice can no longer be controlled and which require a scientific solution.

Just one example – the problem of transports, we could notice the diversity and complexity of methods, relations which go beyond boundaries and which shall bring about the communication as well as getting acquainted with several problems. Gradually, various Cities should come together for this purpose (political, economic, and cultural) and shall bring about a number of cultural and family standards. Political, economic, structural, regional, family, elements of differentiation between East and West will be added to these. ...

All these problems, questions, critics should bring about the need for specialists which should be well trained both theoretically and practically. Therefore, the teaching staff in 1200 different cities developed cooperation relations intended to certify a certain university study and their study certificates should be recognized all over Europe.

Opening the negotiations, broadening of experience horizon intensified both historically, physically and biologically but it also went deeper.

The "literacy" as well as "money" item, which, in the middle Ages, were mainly owned only by wealthy people, becomes gradually a social and a generally valid need.

The process of urbanization in the whole world shall extend into Europe the issue of ecological and cultural differentiation from town to village. Rationality, communication,

SOME CONCEPTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND VALUES

information, techniques shall determine the basic modern community elements. Being opened to other cultural forms shall become a hot issue in the coming future. And this is how I get to *-Europe needs education*, as the greatest part of the community, to participate in scientific knowledge not only for its use as a profession but also for a better understanding of scientific world”.

Until the 2nd World War we could encounter specializations in agriculture, industry, trade ...Currently, modern community requires more (e.g. master's degree).

Therefore, after 1950 the number of universities has greatly increased. It means that the spectrum of theoretical knowledge of some problems has increased, specialists are born, teaching staff is provided support for their research, and they further acquire the status of “universities”.

The expansion of universities after the second World War should bring about not only the increase in the number of study offers but also of places of study.

Some of them have immediately become universities, other have started as vocational, technical and poly-technical schools providing with a higher level of knowledge.

E.g., see Turkey after 1982, Great Britain, 1992 ...

- Research-type education shall have not only the role to bring light over these unknown and unfamiliar aspects (through research), but also to allow making a decision for the public interest. This shall depend on the personal education of every individual, on relations, situations, consequences which make a research a useful one (Sinn) and which will increase the degree of responsibility for mankind and environment”).

This thesis is a real synthesis of this article!

I would like to bring into light these aspects through my own experienced feelings.

I acquired the basic element of an Environmental Education from parents. To throw away a piece of bread was regarded as a sin in my family. Waste (such as paper, plastic) was to be reused.

Packages of various objects were used for other purposes. Then the compost (household waste) elements will be separated from those of a different nature. Even the words used, I was not allow to make them “dirty”, to use dirty words.

This type of Environmental Education is to be found and is clearly mirrored in Germany!

The fact that water, light, heat could not be maintained and surveyed without the help of man is now a certain fact. This is why, the fact that environmental education must start from family shall not be regarded as a naïve attitude and it shall be the basis for a future trade!

SOME CONCEPTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND VALUES

Environmental Education is, first of all, a Social Duty which, by and through the family or by playing (which, at the beginning, has nothing to do with school, study, research – turns subsequently into a serious thing!

Conclusions

This is what we should do with Environmental Education too!

From this example, the following 5 necessary elements can be distinguished for a successful environmental education.

- 1- uncertainty, anxiety of the people who are directly involved become a critical issue.
- 2- research (which has not been yet acknowledged in public) will be regarded as a problem
- 3- the ethos of the members of the teaching staff will be important, that is the way they will convey and impose this respective knowledge;
- 4- the ethos of the members of the teaching staff – the way they get and pass on knowledge and inform on facts;
- 5- the quintessence of study: to help students acquire knowledge and negotiate in a correct manner, based on this knowledge, and thus become responsible towards people, getting also citizens involved in this process.

The representatives of environmental education argue the need of conscious, responsible cooperation with nature in the relation man – nature-environment.

Special literature mentions a case of a case of constellation of debates.

The purpose to make the environment become compatible with human world will be not described here.

This idea of an “enclosed autonomy” must disappear, environmental education must be reformed and the starting point will be not a certain professional work but the man itself within his possibilities to cooperate with nature and, at the same time, man’s needs and desires as against what is strictly in a professional environment.

It is here where sustainability occurs. Besides the traditional form allowing the observation of the “endangered” environment, a number of supplementations are required in the field. For instance the way to understand the problems in a given period of time, by a certain group, organizations, individuals – which depend most of times on emotional state, speculations.

This is why Haan’s view (1987) on environmental education in the field (even though we do not possess much knowledge) is more important than prevarication with no perspectives at all

SOME CONCEPTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND VALUES

of some trials of this “unawareness”. To discuss, to debate, this is the key-element! Each individual must be given equal chances in order to overcome these differences between poor, rich (in various countries) in imposing certain priorities concerning natural disasters, hazards and damages.

The key for development in economy must consist of the following: man must provide himself with an environment, which could allow him to develop in a healthy manner to the extent to which man needs it. Economic, ecologic negotiations must be created in this respect in pedagogy; sustainability itself will contain critics concerning the reflection of the relation between man and education. To study, to learn ecologically should bring about the political organization, within its own environment, be tightly connected to the purpose to the goal, proposed where participation, as a rule, should be developed and necessary changes be imposed.

In eco-pedagogy, it was decided that the functioning between education and learning for political work should be argued on an individual basis. Differences between negotiations will be pointed out here.

People should not be regarded as simple recipients of something external but also of the way to behave with knowledge and science in the cultural context.

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SOME CONCEPTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND VALUES

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