Educating for Tomorrow’s Unknowns: Sustainability Front and Centre

Public Lecture Series
Faculty of Education
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The global risk landscape (WEF 2023)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2 years</th>
<th>10 years</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Failure to mitigate climate change</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Failure of climate change adaptation</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Natural disasters and extreme weather events</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Natural resource crises</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Large-scale environmental damage incidents</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Large-scale involuntary migration</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Erosion of social cohesion and societal fragmentation</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Economic, political and cyber insecurity</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Geoeconomic conflict</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Large-scale environmental damage incidents</td>
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Credit: World Economic Forum Global Risks Perceptions Survey 2022-2023
Sustainable development: the current solution

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


**Enough, for all, forever.**

(African Elder, 2002)

**Well-being, for all, forever.**

(Hopkins, 2006)

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Sustainable development: a historical perspective of frameworks

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Founding United Nations</th>
<th>Brundtland Report</th>
<th>Agenda 21</th>
<th>Millenium Development Goals</th>
<th>The World We Want Campaign</th>
<th>2030 Agenda w/ the 17 SDGs Paris Agreement</th>
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UNESCO Chair in Reorienting Education towards Sustainability
The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the 2030 Agenda

SDG 4 on Quality Education
Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

By 2030 all learners will have...

- 4.1 Complete free quality primary and secondary school
- 4.2 Access to early childhood education and care
- 4.3 Equal and affordable quality technical, vocational, tertiary education
- 4.4 Skills for employment and entrepreneurship
- 4.5 Eliminate gender disparities, equal access for vulnerable groups
- 4.6 Ensure youth and adults have numeracy & literacy
- 4.7 Knowledge and skills for sustainable development
ESD: more than vital element of SDG 4

SDG 4 Quality Education
Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

SDG target 4.7
by 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including ...through education for sustainable development ... sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.

ESD is a key enabler of all SDGs.

The four aspects of ESD

Sustainability is a purpose of education.
The original concept of ESD has 4 thrusts (Agenda 21, 1992):

- Access to and retention within quality education
- Reorienting existing education and training systems towards sustainability
- Public awareness and understanding of the concept of addressing sustainability
- Training programs for all sectors

ESD is a holistic learning approach.
Global citizenship is a state of mind.

Global citizenship refers to a sense of **belonging** to a broader **community** and common **humanity**. It emphasises political, economic, social and cultural **interdependency** and the **interconnectedness** between the local, national and the global.

- ... not a challenge to national borders or formal citizenship.
- ... an urging to accept the larger responsibilities.
- ... does not come with legal rights – only a sense of individual and collective responsibilities, also corporate social responsibility.

**ESD** focuses on **knowledge and skills** to manage ambiguity and uncertainty, and solve complexities, in a context of social justice and concern for all life forms.

**ESD** is a **systemic** approach emerging from natural sciences.

**GCED** addresses the social responsibility and skills of the individual to act. It also suggests that the action be to the benefit of all life forms.

**GCED** focuses on the individual within a system emerging from social sciences.
1. Acquisition of knowledge and information → learners come to be aware of the existence of certain realities
2. Critical analysis → understand the complexity of those realities
3. Experiential exposure to the realities → a deeper connection with issues & empathic connection to those affected by realities
4. Compassion when relevance to the learners’ own lives and their sense of identity
5. A knowledgeable compassionate mind is set on the path of empowerment!

Canada and the SDGs

Transferable Skills in the Grade 1-12 Curriculum
- critical thinking and problem solving
- innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship
- self-directed learning
- collaboration
- communication
- global citizenship and sustainability
- digital literacy

“We recognize that our actions as Faculties, Colleges, Schools, and Departments of Education are complicit in this critical trajectory. We have a responsibility and opportunity to make a difference.”

Association of Canadian Deans of Education

Ontario and the SDGs
Are teachers ready to teach ESD/GCED?

UNESCO global survey amongst 58,000 educators (2021)

The crowded curriculum (but is it enough?)

ESD or GCED: in line with PISA or EQAO testing?

ESD and GCED are concepts to enhance content and ways of learning towards transforming lives.

PISA is an testing programme for certain knowledge and skills, such as languages and mathematics etc.

EQAO assesses how well Ontario's public education system is developing students' reading, writing and math skills.

Addressing learning stages and learning frameworks

1996 UNESCO Delors
- To know
- To do
- To be
- To live together

2015 UNESCO in the frameworks of the SDGS
- To know + be aware of unknown
- To do + be ethically engaged
- To be + ensure equity for others to be
- To live together + with “others” sustainably

2021 Futures of Education
- Learning to become
- Transforming education
- Education to transform
Youth leadership: engaging with young voices

School Strike for Climate
Fridays for Future

Pursuing well-being
Global to local communities’ challenges with sustainable development

Understanding sustainability resilience

**Prevention** of issues or potential threats.
- Awareness to assess threat and the need to act
- Determine if threat is already established or newly emerging

**Mitigation** efforts to lower or reduce the impact
- Strategies, scenario planning
- Prepare public and private sectors

**Adaption** measures to cope and eventually thrive in the new context
- Sound natural, social and political sciences to base policy/practice
- Adaptation as opportunity
Simulators and artificial intelligence: adding to the tool belt

Higher education and the SDGs: it is a win-win situation for graduates, research, and serving the global community.

9 SDGs mention the roles of higher education:
York University’s Academic Plan (2020-2025)

Answering the Call: A University-Wide Challenge to Contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

So, what we do as individuals matters. It adds up.

Maurice Strong

Your handprint counts...
Thank you

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