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Integrating Principles of Education for Sustainable Development into Visual Art Education in Teacher Education Programmes



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PART I

Guide for Teacher Training Programmes

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The purpose of Part I is to provide stakeholders, art educators and policy makers with some recommendations about implementing a teacher education programme in Visual Arts Education (VAE) informed by the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of ESD. This Guide is meant as a flexible framework that can be adapted to the social, cultural and environmental realities and curricular structures that exist in different countries.

The first section of the Guide explores significant overlaps between VAE, social issues and ESD. The next section gives an overview of key ESD principles that are relevant to the primary curriculum. This is followed by several examples of contemporary art and artists who work on themes related to different SDGs, divided into categories to facilitate application in teacher training programmes. Different models of art criticism that can be employed in curricula that combine VAE and ESD are also suggested. The fourth section goes into more detail about how the goals of VAE and ESD overlap with each other and can be integrated within the context of Initial Teacher Training (ITE) programmes, presenting objectives for a framework on ESD-enriched VAE. Six big ideas that are considered to be core components of such a programme for teachers are then described, followed by a section that briefly discusses modes and suggested duration of teaching such a framework. The final two sections of the Guide discuss professional learning communities, ways of developing collaborative strategies for VAE and offer some suggestions about assessing training programmes.

1.1 Art Education and Real Life Issues

One of the key 21st century documents on arts education is the Seoul Agenda, developed during UNESCO's Second World Conference on Arts Education held in Seoul in 2010 and endorsed unanimously by UNESCO's General Assembly in 2011. In its preamble, the Seoul Agenda promotes the idea that arts education has an important role to play in the constructive transformation of educational systems that are struggling to meet the needs of learners in a rapidly changing world characterized by remarkable advances in technology on the one hand and intractable social and cultural injustices on the other. Issues that concerned the International Advisory Committee included but were not limited to peace, cultural diversity and intercultural understanding as well as the need for a creative and adaptive workforce in the context of post-industrial economies. Equally, participants agreed that arts education can make a direct contribution to resolving the social and cultural challenges facing the world today (Seoul Agenda, 2010, p. 2).

This preamble echoed "reconstructivist" and multicultural conceptions of art education that were debated during the last fifteen years or so of the 20th century (for example, Efland, 1990). In place of 'art for art's sake', a reconstructivist art education promoted interdisciplinarity, critical thinking and the use of art as a "tool for the analysis of social conditions and values" (Siegesmund, 1998, p. 203). A reconstructivist rationale for art education suggests that an exclusive focus on self-expression is too limited because it explores the individual's imagination at the expense of a solid contextualisation of education in societal needs and aspirations. Similarly, the Seoul Agenda transcends the dichotomy of individual autonomy or social reproduction to explore how the role of arts education in society can be consolidated. The Agenda's third and final aim fosters the use of arts education to "contribute to resolving the social and cultural challenges facing today's world" (p. 8). This aim's strategic actions included the promotion of "the holistic social, cultural and economic development of societies", the recognition of "the restorative dimensions of arts education in post-conflict

and post-disaster situations”, a focus of arts activities on “issues such as the environment, global migration, sustainable development” and the fostering of “global citizenship” (pp. 8-10).

These strategic aims also reflect the ESD model described in section 2 of this Guide: a four-pillar model that promotes the notion of active participation in a process of social, environmental, economic and cultural change that is necessary to ensure a sustainable present and future. It is recommended that teacher education programmes informed by the philosophy of CARE should avoid tokenistic approaches that present sustainable development as yet another ‘theme’ in artistic activities carried out with pupils in primary classrooms. Instead, teacher education programmes are encouraged to present art and sustainable development as interlinked modes of social action, sharing significant concerns with real life issues, goals and contexts. This is evident in some ESD competences that correlate well with practices and pedagogies in art education, such as collaborative and critical thinking skills and self-awareness. Connections between ESD and VAE can also be explored via the work of contemporary artists, especially those involved in participatory practices. The notion of ‘shared ownership’, which runs counter to the idea of ‘self-expression’ referred to earlier as well as the conventional, patriarchal idea of the ‘individual genius’ in art, is based in pedagogical processes of dialogue and negotiation of meanings and experiences. It is also part of a broader strategy leading to the possibility of ‘global citizenship’, facilitating a balance of individual and common goals as well as a deeper understanding of engagement and social justice.

1.2 The place of ESD in the Primary Curriculum

1. ESD enables learners to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values required to become active participants, individually and collectively, in decision-making processes, both at local and global levels that will improve the quality of life of present and future generations. While all curriculum material needs to be age appropriate, the definition is an invitation to move beyond knowledge into action. Such actions are understood to be both at an individual level and at an organisational level, in this case the school.
2. The model of ESD being here promoted is not to include ESD as a slice of the pie of competing curricular subjects, but as a strong foundational structure for all subjects, including the arts. Nevertheless, this framework focuses specifically on the imbrications of VAE and ESD.
3. SD has adopted a four pillar framework that encompasses the economic, social, environmental and cultural pillars. Within such an understanding, the often “privileged” economic pillar in many educational systems needs to shrink, and allow more space for the environmental and social pillars to find their place, within a context that is sensitive to intangible aspects such as values, customs, rituals and life patterns. Here the arts are a fundamental part of the cultural pillar, which when reflected at school level translates into offering all students the opportunity to actively participate in arts practices. According to Hawkes (2001), inevitable outcomes of this cultural pillar are creativity, engagement and wellbeing.
4. Within such an understanding the learner’s environment, both within and outside the school, becomes a fundamental teaching resource that is locally relevant and culturally sensitive.
5. Within such an understanding primary school teachers and others having an educational role within the school are invited to structure learning experiences around the identification and resolution of environmental and social issues that equip and empower learners with problem solving and decision making skills.
6. The challenge is to promote a system based approach within an often compartmentalised system, yet the primary school, with less rigid boundaries than most secondary schools, is in a privileged position to blur such boundaries, and invites learners to develop a holistic view of

their surroundings, i.e. an interaction of aesthetic, environmental, economic, political, technological, cultural and societal perspectives.

7. ESD, intercultural education, and innovation and creativity can effectively be woven into arts education, with the right support structures and training.
8. It is acknowledged that ESD deals with complex issues that threaten sustainability. Here VAE can be an important tool in dealing with complexity, as well as expressing the contradictions of the current dominant paradigm, beyond the technological fixes. Visual and participatory arts in particular have the power to transmit and express such complexity and contradictions in a way that arrives at the heart, that liberates the voice, expression and creativity of students, inviting them to reflect critically and act accordingly (Illeris, 2017).

The next section will study how contemporary artistic practices and art criticism can address different Sustainable Development Goals, focusing on examples that can be integrated into teacher education programmes.

1.3 Contemporary art, art criticism and sustainable development

1.3.1 Contemporary art and sustainable development

While the relationship between sustainability and art goes back several centuries, contemporary artistic practices tend to focus more explicitly on topical concerns related to social justice and ecological issues. Many of the 17 SDGs listed by UNESCO are frequently alluded to in the work of artists around the world today. It is crucial that VAE moves with the times and reflects the kinds of ideas that are expressed in contemporary debates about art in the social realm. Unfortunately, this social and political dimension of contemporary art is not always echoed sufficiently in actual art classrooms; hence, CARE recommends that the teaching of art in the primary sector engages with artistic practices that promote a concern with environmental issues, social injustices and cross-cultural understanding.

There exists a wealth of research in the field of art education that points us in this direction: literature about global civic engagement, change and arts education (Shin 2017; Mateus-Berr & Reitstätter 2017); community, local heritage and identity, landscape and education (Coutts & Jokela 2008); arts education and social justice (Quinn, Ploof & Hochtritt, 2012; Stone Hanley, Noblit, Barone & Sheppard, 2013); arts education and sustainability education (Hunter, Aprill, Hill, & Emery, 2018).

Art and Activism

It is important for educators in the primary sector to be informed about the political activism of many contemporary artists. This can be seen as a first step towards appreciating the significance of UNESCO's 2030 Agenda, which requires us to act not only at national policy and budget levels but also at grassroots levels. From a pedagogical perspective, such artistic strategies serve as models of social justice as well as decision-making skills leading to the improvement of the quality of life.

Example 1: Chinese artist Ai Weiwei's *Sunflower Seeds*, made of millions of tiny porcelain seeds spread around Tate Modern's Turbine Hall in 2010-11, combines the simple beauty of handicraft with a focus on the significance of each individual in bringing about change. About this installation, curator Juliet Bingham wrote: "Each piece is a part of the whole, a commentary on the relationship between the individual and the masses. The work continues to pose challenging questions: What does it mean to be an individual in today's society? Are we insignificant or powerless unless we act together? What do our increasing desires, materialism and number mean for society, the environment and the future?" (Tate 2010) *Related to 2030 SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions*

Example 2: Banksy is a British graffiti artist who often creates images on

walls in public spaces. Like other street art based in cities and other urban environments, many of Banksy's striking images draw attention to political and environmental issues. His piece in the Welsh steel town of Port Talbot, for instance, shows a boy being showered by ash emanating from a fire. Street art like Banksy's can be used with pupils to demonstrate the use of art as a form of advocacy as well as techniques like stencilling. *Related to SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being and 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities.*

Art and ecology

Many contemporary artists address ecological issues very directly in their work, and primary teachers can use such works as cross-disciplinary bridges that connect a variety of themes and integrate different fields of study. Apart from any aesthetic benefits that are reaped through the conservation of landscapes (evident in the work of landscape painters for a number of centuries), contemporary artists, photographers and many others also frequently portray other dangers associated with environmental degradation: negative effects on community life, loss of indigenous knowledge, land grabbing, anthropocentric instrumentalisation of nonhuman life, and so on.

Example 1: The Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson produces installations that encourage people to reflect about environmental and other related issues. In 2018, he installed several large blocks of glacial ice from Greenland in London, where they were left to melt. Called *Ice Watch*, the installation raised awareness about climate change amongst many members of the public. In the Venice Biennale of 2017, Eliasson's *Green Light – An Artistic Workshop* encouraged visitors to assist asylum seekers and migrants to work on the production of sustainable LED lights made of recycled materials to promote an understanding of links between sustainability, civic engagement, education and inclusion. *Related to 2030 SDG 13: Climate Action and 10: Reduced Inequalities*

Example 2: Nyaba Leon Ouedraogo is a documentary photographer from Burkina Faso whose images reveal the poverty and serious ecological issues that he experiences in different parts of the African continent. His *The Hell of Copper* series, produced in 2008, depicts a computer cemetery in Accra, Ghana, where old imported computers are disassembled and burned to extract copper in an environment that is made very dangerous by the toxic substances emitted during the burning process. *Related to 2030 SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth and 1: No Poverty*

Sustainable and recycled materials in art

Many contemporary artists critique global consumerism and waste in their artworks, often recycling discarded materials to turn them into art. Recycled or sustainable art projects for children are a popular way of producing unusual creative pieces and simultaneously disseminating knowledge about the importance of changing lifestyles in order to reduce global consumption rates.

Example 1: Born in Italy, Bettina Werner works in a colorized salt technique she developed, producing colourful textural works that avoid the use of more conventional art materials like paper. Known as the 'Queen of Salt', Werner has helped to popularise an unusual medium that was historically important for other reasons: as a form of currency. *Related to 2030 SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production*

Example 2: El Anatsui is a Ghanaian artist who produces large-scale installations made of waste materials like nails and bottle caps. His works often resemble vast, hanging fabrics and make reference to different African traditions, such as Ghanaian woven 'kente' cloth and Nigerian 'adinkra' dyed cloth. *Related to 2030 SDG: Responsible Consumption and Production*

Gender Equality

Women around the world face several challenges related to poor or unfair employment conditions, limited participation in decision-making, difficulties associated with child care and career advancement and inequity in pay. Works by contemporary artists often challenge prejudices and structural limitations related to gender and work, promoting gender equality, diversity

and women's empowerment.

Example 1: Mónica Mayer is a Mexican artist who is associated with feminism in Latin America and internationally. Her collages, drawings, interactive installations and performances often engage the audience with issues of female identity and gender-related problems like domestic violence. Produced in 1978, her early performance *El Tendedero* (The Clothesline) gave women in Mexico City a voice by asking them to write a statement on a little pink sheet of paper in response to: "As a woman, what I dislike most about my city is..." The small notes were then hung on a clothesline for all to read. *Related to 2030 SDG 5: Gender Equality*

Example 2: Japanese artist Tomoko Sawada produces photographic self-portraits to engage with local traditions related to female identity, matchmaking and the relationship between clothes and public perceptions about individuals. In her 2001 series *OMIAI* she was photographed in different women's clothes to highlight the ways women's physical appearance is judged in her (their native country). *Related to 2030 SDG 5: Gender Equality*

1.3.2 Broad approaches to artistic and visual practices

A broadening of the parameters of VAE has been evident for several years, at least since the field of 'visual culture' began to incorporate media studies, digital technologies and their relations with class, gender, consumer and other identities in analyses of the visual field (Mirzoeff, 1999) and in the teaching and learning of art. Artists associated with earlier movements like Fluxus also sought to link art with the everyday, blurring differences between art and life. This move away from the notion of 'high art' has not only been evident in recent contemporary artistic practices but is also particularly relevant in an approach to VAE informed by the principles of ESD, for these reasons (amongst others):

Linking art to other visual fields

The work of contemporary artists often cuts across disciplinary boundaries. CARE should aim to broaden children's understanding of art by linking the subject to related fields like fashion, urban planning, architecture, new technologies, and so on. These areas have artistic, social as well as SD dimensions.

- For example, the creative dimension of fashion (related to design possibilities, textures, uses of different materials, colours, etc.) can be counterbalanced by issues of sustainability (ecologically friendly and recycled materials, sustainable and equitable methods of production, cheap labour, consumerism and waste, etc.).
- There are many educational benefits involved in VAE lessons that revolve around urban planning. Learners understand the history and changing meanings of public spaces such as squares in towns and cities, the impact of the visual arts in urban environments, or the possibility of re-imagining (and improving) city centres through the integration of green or more accessible areas and other creative ideas in drawings and three-dimensional designs or constructions. At the same time, learners are introduced to challenges to the sustainability of communities due to uncontrolled expansion or gentrification, issues of land use, CO2 emissions, and so on.
- While architecture has been associated with other visual arts and design for a long time, its links with SD have become more significant in recent times. Learners appreciate the importance of visual harmony, natural forms in architecture, the beauty of geometric forms, the impact of climate on types of buildings, the relationship between public and private buildings, the use of sustainable building materials, etc. VAE can make learners aware of their spatial environment and the efficient use of resources.
- The widespread use of new media and social networks in contemporary art, such as digital media and the internet, bear witness to the fact that art tends to reflect technological developments that are taking place in the world. While learners in VAE need to be introduced to the use of digital

photography, video and other possibilities in artistic outcomes such as digital storytelling (Pavlou, 2020), they also need to learn to appreciate the long-term environmental consequences of the manufacture and disposal of electronic goods, particularly in developing countries.

The relevance of place

Teachers involved in VAE can develop collaborative projects like installations that focus on site-specific thinking and the reuse of objects and sustainable materials. Such projects can focus on the democratisation of culture in community settings and help learners to appreciate relationships between local, regional and global dimensions of the environment and art. Site-specificity in contemporary art draws attention to connections between creative work and social, environmental and political contexts, while participatory processes in art education underline the value of egalitarian dialogue in the promotion of more equitable societies (Coutts & Jokela, 2008). Instead of presenting art as a universalising endeavour that can be located in any neutral space such as a museum, VAE should inspire learners to explore the local and cultural significance of place and the changing meanings of artefacts as they are shown in different places and communities.

1.3.3 Art Criticism and Sustainable Development

Teachers act like art critics when they discuss and evaluate the qualities of works of art in class, and pupils also communicate their (or others') ideas about art when they respond to artworks they are shown. Criticism carried out in class may often focus on aesthetic values related to formal qualities such as colour, composition, texture and so on, but a broader grasp of art and its social significance can be achieved if one takes into account interpretive, evaluative and even ethical dimensions of an experience of art. Exchanges about artworks conducted in primary classrooms can help to develop an awareness of personal, structural or community-based perspectives on meaning-making. In *Art as Experience* (2005), for instance, John Dewey discussed art and criticism as being reflective of social and environmental contexts relative to a work's making, rather than a priori meanings and standards. More recently, various models or ideas about the possibilities of art criticism have been employed in VAE contexts. Below are a handful of examples:

The Feldman model

The work of Edmund Burke Feldman (1994) on art criticism has been influential in educational environments, given the relative simplicity of the Feldman model. This model of criticism revolves around four stages of description, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation, based respectively on a work's visual qualities, design principles, possible meanings and comparative evaluation of merits. From a verbal description and analysis of facts aided by questions about colour, light, shape, and so on, we move to deeper, more open-ended questions focused on interpreting and comparing the kinds of evidence an artwork confronts us with. While it is clearly possible for educators and learners to explore and ask questions about the works referenced earlier in 3.1 through the lens of this four-stage model, it has been described as a subject-centred response to works of art. (Hickman, 1994) and it is important to highlight more socially-driven forms of criticism that can contribute more effectively to a project like CARE.

Combining form and context

Pavlou (2015) has provided a re-interpretation of Feldman's model. Factual inquiries include the description and analysis steps of Feldman's model and Interpretive inquiries include the interpretation step of Feldman's model but with a 'twist'. Interpretive inquiries also include contextual research/information and this is a way to bring formalism and contextualism together. This method is not actually presented as a two-step model but as a process; viewers can start with factual inquiries, move on to interpretive ones, come back for more factual inquiries and then perform again interpretive inquiries. The process concludes when viewers are satisfied with their interpretation.

Criticism for Artful and Critical Thinking

While we know that talking about art helps learners to think, thinking is not simply an ability. Rather, according to Tishman & Palmer (2007), educators

need to engage their learners with thinking dispositions, such as when they encourage the young to be open-minded in their attitudes towards others, or curious about various things in life. This “artful thinking” combines an ability to look at different points of view with an inclination to use this ability regularly and in different contexts. In an ESD-informed approach to VAE, this combination of different thinking dispositions like ‘exploring viewpoints’ and ‘comparing and connecting’ is especially useful, for instance, when one discusses holistic processes like systems thinking.

Broome, Pereira & Anderson (2018), on the other hand, refer to critical thinking as the main justification for considering art criticism as a crucial component of the entire art education curriculum. Given that criticism serves to improve learners’ critical thinking skills, it can benefit all aspects of the curriculum and simultaneously form the basis of a socially reconstructive approach to VAE. Learners are taught “to engage in affectively informed immersion, reaction and response, description, formal analysis, characterisation, interpretation and evaluation, as strategies to support their critical thinking” (pp. 273-74). From an ESD perspective, the challenge for teachers is to explore works like those by Olafur Eliasson in order to promote critical thinking about relevant sustainable development goals, and simultaneously avoid a prescriptive pedagogy that potentially restricts learners’ interpretations. Art criticism that revolves around ESD topics should not be about finding the correct interpretation but about providing learners with opportunities to analyse things carefully, make connections and take informed decisions.

Stimulating Caring Attitudes through Art Criticism

How does a teacher inspire a sense of empathy and care in relation to photographs like Nyaba Leon Ouedraogo’s *The Hell of Copper* (2008) described earlier? How can art help to cultivate a more ethical approach to sustainability goals? Inspired by the work of Nel Noddings on care in schools (Noddings, 2005, for instance), Broome, Bobick, Ruggiero & Jesup (2019) support an art curriculum that focuses on themes that engage with big ideas related to care and acceptance of otherness. Apart from thematic instruction and dialogue, they support cooperative work in art classes as well as the modelling of caring behaviour by teachers.

In Vella (2018), learners’ caring attitude towards artworks and their themes is also transferred to the field of art curating. By collaborating on and discussing works of art (their own as well as those produced by artists), learners develop different dialogic skills: the ability to think of dialogues or connections between works of art and other objects, dialogues between various curatorial strategies and dialogues with publics who encounter displays. These skills lead to the etymological meaning of the word ‘curate’ (meaning ‘care’), whereby learners develop a sense of empathy towards others’ perspectives on art and society.

Art criticism helps learners to articulate their ideas and feelings about things they observe and themes or big ideas brought up by teachers in class. Ideally, it should reflect principles of sustainability in the kinds of knowledge that are generated through art as well as learner-centred and transformative pedagogies such as collaborative strategies and the use of real-world contexts. For instance, questions about works of art that facilitate ESD teaching can:

- Connect works of art from other cultures to the value of respect for cultural diversity
- Connect landscapes to the importance of conservation and natural resource management
- Connect artistic harmony and balance in art to ecological perspectives
- Connect community art projects to the value of collaboration and peace
- Connect urban scenes to issues of democracy, social justice and poverty alleviation
- Connect themes of conflict and tension to responsibility, gender equality and future thinking
- Connect specific artistic media (like paper) to sustainability and care for the environment

It is clear from these examples that teachers' competences also need to combine VAE dispositions with ESD dispositions and values. The following are examples of considerations and guiding questions that can be used to develop ideas about the use of art criticism amongst educators:

- Consider the use of natural materials in a contemporary artwork (for example, a work by Andy Goldsworthy). Do you think the artwork's meaning would change if a more conventional medium like paint on canvas were employed by the artist?
- Study the work of a contemporary artist who makes ample use of trash as an artistic medium (for example, the Australian artist Marina DeBris' garments made of rubbish). How can we reconcile beautiful artefacts with the ugliness of land and marine pollution? How would you connect a description or analysis of the work's formal qualities with an interpretation of the work's more critical side?
- Look at an example of 'green architecture', for instance, Renzo Piano's California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, which has a 'living roof' that captures rain water and provides insulation. How has the architect combined the multiple functions of the site with the requirements of sustainability and aesthetics? How would you suggest changing your school architecture to make it 'greener'?
- Study some illustrations by Irish artist Laura Callaghan, who draws very detailed and vibrant images of contemporary women of different ethnicities surrounded by modern paraphernalia. Look at a single character in one of Callaghan's illustrations and describe her appearance and clothing in detail. How would you describe this woman's character? Can you imagine a day in this woman's life?
- How can we interpret the meanings of community art in different contexts? Consider the painted Las Palmitas neighbourhood in Pachuca, Mexico. In 2015, the walls of the homes in this neighbourhood were re-decorated by a street artists' collective called the German Crew, who worked with residents to change a poor, working-class area into a colourful place. Look at photos of the town before and after the work carried out by the muralists. How do you think projects like these can help to change residents' lives? Can colour and community art help to reduce social problems like crime and bring people closer together?

In the next section, we will look more closely at objectives and competences that can be used to develop a general framework for implementing ESD-enriched VAE programmes in teacher education or continuous professional development courses.

1.4 Teacher Education Programme Framework

National contexts and institutional providers of teacher education programmes present a variety of philosophies, practical experiences and approaches to effective teaching and learning strategies. More specifically, different contexts may also present a diversity of considerations and philosophies about effective teaching of art at primary, secondary and post-secondary levels (for instance, the reconstructionist trend referenced earlier). Such considerations may also be governed by the relative status of the subject in national curricula as well as perspectives about the identity of effective teachers of art. The factors that shape an art teacher's identity can be both external (professional image, role and identity) and internal (individual personality, creative and pedagogical skills, self-reflexivity) (Määttä & Uusiauuti, 2013). The infusion of ESD in the field of VAE can contribute positively to both external and internal factors, creating bridges with the goals of other teaching staff within the same institution and beyond by linking art with non-arts subjects. In a study concerning teachers' perspectives of sustainability education and their views about connecting VAE and ESD (Emery, 2013), teachers highlighted the arts as a pedagogical 'way in' for children to connect with inclusive thinking and sustainability. By connecting ESD and VAE themes through activities in the school yard or through the use of recycled materials, children are involved in decision-making, problem-solving and creative thinking skills. Another study referring to the Eco-schools

programme (Özsoy, 2016) engaged students in choosing objects or images they valued such as animals, plants or a memory to create small artworks, promoting critical thinking and the value of different points of view, embracing multiple thoughts and experiences. These examples show how the goals of ESD and VAE can be interrelated.

While primary generalist school teachers and visual art educators/specialised art teachers are encouraged to use visuals and images as part of their lesson planning and implementation, not enough training is given to teachers in selecting images that are coherent with the paradigm of development that they want to transmit. The Oxfam (2019) guide for teachers on the sustainable development goals, in suggesting practical ideas for embedding the SDGs across the curriculum, highlights the role of art and design to “investigate how global issues and themes linked to the SDGs such as peace, conflict and justice are represented in art. (SDG 16). Furthermore, it suggests using art as a “means to express opinions, ideas and wishes about the future of our environment – taking inspiration from artists such as Banksy, Mathilde Roussel, Moses Ochieng and Marina DeBris”, adding that learners “could send their ideas and plans to their local government representative or planning department. (SDGs 7, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15)”. Others such as Reid (2017) give concrete examples of how arts, including visual arts, can be linked with each SDG one by one. One suggestion includes linking the SDGs with Fair Trade and Arts. Fair trade is a topic that is increasingly taken upon by Maltese primary schools, both through past projects such as Global Action Schools, as well as through the successful Eko Skola programme. Fair Trade is included as a case study within teacher training courses at the University of Malta, while various partnerships between schools and NGOs promote fair trade. However, the interweaving of the cultural and artistic aspects with the social justice aspects of fair trade requires more emphasis in such programmes.

1.4.1 Framework Objectives

Below, some general objectives for linking VAE with ESD for educators are expanded upon.

Becoming sensitive to the visual, tactile and spatial world

A key objective for in-service and pre-service teachers involved in VAE is related to the importance of making learners sensitive to the visual, tactile and spatial world. Sensitivity refers to a form of perception that is essential as a first step before we can analyse, respond artistically to or interpret various sensory and conceptual stimuli. Sensory observation helps pupils to engage with the physical world by holding natural and human-made objects, recognising colours, exploring sounds in urban and natural environments, discriminating between various aspects of the visible world and visiting places outside one’s home or school such as heritage sites and parks or gardens. On a broader level, this perceptive ability is relevant in the child’s education as a whole and is applicable to other primary curricular areas, such as language development, geography, science and so on.

ESD can contribute to pupils’ sensitivity and analytic skills through its emphasis on systems thinking, which is about understanding how different elements in the world are linked and interact with one another. ESD teaches pupils to develop a systemic way of thinking, understanding patterns and connections between different things. Systems thinking links the local with the global, teaching pupils about how each individual participates in the world and can take crucial decisions on the basis of one’s sensitivity towards the way each person forms part of a larger whole. Teachers also need to develop teaching strategies for creativity in order to help pupils imagine solutions to specific challenges and to perceive particular situations from different angles. VAE helps to develop pupils’ creativity, cognitive skills and curiosity by exploring the environment’s visual characteristics and developing sensitivity to different qualities of line, shape, colour, tone, texture, pattern and form. Pupils use sketch books to record their visual and other observations.

Artistic production and communication in different media

Art courses in teacher training programmes generally include practical workshops in different media, which are then adapted to pedagogical scenarios with pupils of different ages. Teachers reflect critically on artistic techniques and specialist knowledge, gaining deeper insights into creative processes. Working in different media, understanding art-making processes in early childhood and planning various teaching approaches to the use of various media is important for generalist primary teachers as well as more specialised individuals who plan to become curriculum experts in primary visual arts. Through purposeful and spontaneous activities, pupils develop psychomotor skills by exploring and experimenting in different art materials, including pencils, paints, crayons, clay, fabric, papier mâché and digital media. They also learn to identify different visual arts media. The use of artistic materials in the making of artefacts follows on perception; through various media, pupils communicate to others their sensitivity to the world around them. Drawing, for example, communicates an understanding of the textural qualities of different things. Communication occurs in an active mode; working with different materials involves pupils in hands-on tasks in which they learn how to take responsibility for their decisions.

ESD and other subjects like history, science and geography can offer a starting point for the teaching of different art materials by identifying the natural or synthetic origins, uses and sustainability of specific materials. This is especially the case with media such as clay, papier mâché, collage, textiles and recycled or craft materials. Basic safety standards associated with the use of tools and artistic media and the avoidance of waste (through assemblages for instance) develop caring values in pupils. VAE therefore supports various ESD competencies, promoting normative considerations related to acting responsibly to avoid harm to oneself and others, conservation and sustainability assessment. It also promotes anticipatory thinking skills, requiring pupils to forecast how the use, reuse or excessive use of certain materials will affect the environment they inhabit. Like VAE, ESD emphasises the role of active participation in change.

Cultivating emotional learning and empathy

Through the arts (drama, VAE, dance, music, poetry, and so on), teachers recognise the role that the affective domain plays in the education of the young. VAE, for example, activates emotional learning through the presentation of feelings and experiences in images and other artefacts. Colour and other artistic elements can be used to express feelings based on personal experiences, one's surroundings and pupils' imagination. Perception and visual analysis lead to experiences that are often felt intuitively and in non-verbal ways. Preservice teachers become aware of the impact of emotions on perception, decision-taking and relations with others, and learn to encourage others to express their emotions openly and empathise with others' emotions. Empathy allows pupils to understand verbal narratives and images by being able to recognise the emotional states of others. The cultivation of empathy in art also helps to stimulate aesthetic responses through movement, role-play, image-making, sound, and so on.

Emotions also play an essential role in our environmental behaviour and judgements. Feelings of responsibility, anger as well as positive feelings are crucial in the process of sustainable development. The positive effects and combination of pupils' experiences, emotions and use of all the senses in natural environments is relevant to VAE and ESD, along with other curricular subjects. This affective process is a crucial component in pupils' perceptions about the public spaces that citizens share. It is therefore crucial on a personal and also interpersonal level, and is linked to the competency of self-awareness in ESD, which focuses on the ability to reflect on one's own role in the local community and society. In VAE tasks, pupils can work individually and also in pairs or small groups to produce collaborative outcomes and discuss emotional responses amongst themselves. This is also related to the collaboration competency in ESD: a person's ability to learn, understand and respect the needs of others, their perceptions, their way of thinking and actions (empathy), to understand, feel and express sensitivity towards others.

Critical thinking

Through hands-on VAE exercises, beginning teachers grasp the relevance of critical thinking, i.e. the ability to reflect about one's observations, ideas and feelings and make decisions independently. Through art, people question assumptions and disseminate messages to a wider audience. As we have seen earlier, art encourages people to look at the world and visual culture from different perspectives and to present one's own views about events and developments. It therefore boosts reflection and dialogue with others, stressing an approach to learning that does not rely on the consumption of factual knowledge but the production of experimental and independent thought that is essential components of general education. Inquiry-based pedagogies and a reconstructivist emphasis in art education play a crucial role in the development of critical thinking skills.

Critical thinking is considered to be one of the key competencies in ESD and is particularly related to SDG 4: Quality Education. Critical thinking skills encourage participation, the examination of various structures that govern the world today, and promote action. Teachers can help students to take action by learning to choose between alternative positions or solutions. With the teacher's guidance, pupils can reflect on consequences of their actions and goals. Artistic exercises given during VAE activities can foster critical thinking about sustainable development as well as strategic and integrated problem-solving competencies in ESD.

Responding and interpreting

Teachers of VAE usually expose their pupils to two broad branches of the subject: production (described in 4.1.2) and response or appreciation. Response involves pupils in encounters with art objects and other artefacts in society as well as natural environments. This is also related to a distinct body of knowledge associated with the work and lives of artists, architects, designers, filmmakers, and so on. Response is also associated with art criticism, which, as we saw earlier, is connected with processes of critical thinking and promotes the ability to make connections between different images and objects around us. By looking at and interpreting works of art, individuals can analyse or imagine intended meanings and discuss themes developed by artists in similar or dissimilar ways, using appropriate language in responding to aesthetic experiences.

Exercises that make use of stimulating questions in order to generate feedback, share feelings and ideas are especially suitable for the interpretation of contemporary art with ESD values. Environmental quality, climate change, barriers to sustainable living and many other topics included in the seventeen SDGs are also found in the work of many contemporary and socially engaged artists. The description, interpretation and evaluation of these works thus also benefits various ESD competencies like normative, critical thinking and self-awareness competencies.

Transcultural understanding

In the primary curriculum VAE (along with other subjects like history, science, religious knowledge and geography) plays an important role in the forming of children's ideas about different cultures and cultural heritage. This links with the cultivation of emotional learning and empathy described earlier. Through VAE, teachers help pupils to appreciate the contexts and cultures in which different artistic traditions grow as well as connections between artefacts produced in different contexts. In this way, pupils can learn to enjoy and describe things and ideas with which they are not yet very familiar. They appreciate different ways of representing the world, different narratives rooted in other cultures, techniques used elsewhere with two- and three-dimensional media, and also develop specialist vocabulary related to different traditions. Projects by community or socially engaged artists are very suitable in the promotion of an intercultural approach to art education and the appreciation of special needs in education.

Teachers can address transcultural understanding through the arts and ESD. Culture (and its material, spiritual, linguistic dimensions) is one of the four pillars of ESD and helps to sustain a values-based approach to education, promoting respect for cultural diversity and paving the way to

an understanding of social issues associated with poverty, democracy and quality of life. Appreciating indigenous art, artistic themes that are relevant to people living in different cultures and community goals that social practice artists achieve through their work with co-creators stress the importance of living with others peacefully and sustainably. Lack of respect and understanding of other cultures and ways of life occasionally leads to conflict, which is associated with injustice, the disruption of social infrastructures, the loss of linguistic diversity, the destruction of heritage sites and other cultural artefacts and the degradation of the natural environment. Teaching for empathetic understanding and solidarity reinforces the collaboration (interpersonal) competency in ESD.

Interdisciplinary education

Teachers can integrate multiple dimensions or disciplines in VAE, for example, by employing a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics) perspective that recognizes the intersection of different areas in the curriculum. Within the field of VAE, design-based and problem-solving tasks are often used to access other curricular areas such as engineering or mathematics. Through a project-based approach in art, teachers demonstrate relationships between different domains and between school subjects and the real world. Spheres of knowledge that are often kept separate from each other are shown to be connected and shared with other members of society. Artistic research often crosses disciplinary boundaries. Artists typically investigate subjects that belong to non-artistic spheres of knowledge: from politics and social issues to biology, medicine and other art forms like literature or music. In primary education, multimodal approaches to teaching VAE help to create creative bridges between different subjects like art and technology, or art and music. Such approaches also help to promote a recognition of the multiple roles of art in our lives. In addition, ESD addresses global issues and hence encourages educators to think of SDGs within as well as beyond the confines of formal education.

VAE-ESD Assessment

Assessment methods based on a balance between artistic (VAE) and non-artistic (ESD) criteria can be reached through formative rather than summative assessment. Feedback can be provided by the teacher, by the students themselves (self-evaluation) or by classmates (peer-evaluation). Assessing a valuable effort depends on observed students' learning processes as they think critically, communicate feelings, take initiative, collaborate and create. A VAE-ESD assessment strategy that enhances learning could be carried out by means of conversations either held as a class, or as a group, or one to one providing feedback through ongoing processes of reflection and evaluation. Flipping through their drawings/annotations/attached pictures in their sketch-books' contents, serves students both to self-evaluate and also to share their self-evaluations with the rest, stimulating feedback and generating further ideas to plan the way forward.

Formative portfolios are also used in VAE to present learners' work in progress, by bringing together sketches, magazine cuttings, photographs and pupils' reflective notes and content knowledge. the development of their work. In an approach to VAE enriched by ESD, the content knowledge, selected images and reflective writing can also refer to key sustainability themes discussed with the teacher. Assessment should be driven by specific learning objectives based on core ideas or themes, which are expanded upon in the next section.

1.4.2 *Developing Resources for ESD-enriched VAE: An example*

Here, an example of how this framework can be used in developing resources for teacher education, demonstrates the possibilities of building art units around VAE and ESD goals. The template shows an art unit called 'War memorials', referring to public monuments, their histories and varied interpretations and hopes for the future. The 'palette' metaphor in the last row shows that competences overlap and educators do not need to exhibit all of them at a given time.

War Memorials Template, provided by Frederick University.

SDGs: SDG16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Big Ideas: Remembrance. Remembrance of loved ones, pay homage/honour to a person/event from the past, tradition to homage/honour of a person /event from the past, planning the future in a way that respects/ pay homage/honour to a person/event from the past

Art Unit: War memorials

Rationale: The unit aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development through VAE. It aims to strengthen understanding and relationships between learners (pre-/in-service teachers) with the aim of being able to live together in peace. Subsequently, it aims to develop their competences in promoting similar knowledge, skills and dispositions to their pupils later on.

Each war memorial is unique. Each represents a community's way of remembrance. Each links the past to present, enabling people to remember, honour and respect people and events from the past. War memorials offer opportunities to critically evaluate memorialization as a historical artefact, understand social, political and economic factors/customs of a community, and promote active and proactive citizens. War memorials have personal and collective significance and provide opportunities to deal with emotions related to grief, loss, remembrance, respect, and honour, with knowledge of local context, personal and collective history, with skills of critically evaluating, reflecting and with dispositions related to empathy, value of human life, etc.

Core VAE competences: Learners (pre-/in-service teachers) should be able to:

1. Respond to images/artworks
 - 1.1 visit and have an aesthetic experience of a war memorial and critically analyse and interpret it as well as other (images and/or videos of war memorials)
 - 1.2 create questions and activities for children for responding to war memorials using different methodological models for teachers
2. Create images /artworks
 - 2.1 research the big ideas to create an artwork that pays homage/honour to a person/event from the past ('war/past memorial')
 - 2.2 research the big ideas to collaboratively create an artwork that shows aspirations for the future ('peace/future memorial')
 - 2.3 refine ideas, demonstrate unity in their design and execute it by showing craftsmanship
3. Reflect on the process of responding and producing images/artworks
 - 3.1 reflect on the aesthetic experience of visiting/ understanding a war memorial and on the links between the past and the present.
 - 3.2 Reflect on the role of tradition in honouring the loss of life
 - 3.3 Reflect on their creations/ artworks ('memorials')
 - 3.4 Transform their experiences in a plan of an art unit for children

Key ESD competences: Learners (pre-/in-service teachers) should be able to:

1. Think holistically:
 - 1.1 Understand the interrelated facts (political, economic, social, environmental), world views and cultural assumptions concerning the historic event of the depicted war memorial, that lead to the conflict and its systemic consequences.
 - 1.2 Identify and actively engage appropriate groups or individuals (across generations, cultures, places and disciplines) that can share experiences and enhance learning about the specific events.
2. Envision change:
 - 2.1 Envision alternative peaceful outcomes resulting from alternative responses to the conflict-event represented by the war memorial studied
 - 2.2 Acknowledge the urgent need for change from hostile conflict practices towards advancing quality of life, equity, solidarity, and sustainability
3. Achieve Transformation:
 - 3.1 Engage pupils in real-world issues connected to the ideas represented by the memorial to enhance learning outcomes and helps learners make a difference (e.g. suggest action to address refugees' issues)
 - 3.2 Engage with pupils in ways that build positive relationships

Learning pillars

Learning to know: knowledge of history, past events in local community, conflicts/wars, personal stories, collective stories, social, political and economic factors, knowledge of methodological approaches of engaging with images/artworks/artefacts with children, knowledge of materials, techniques and means.

Learning to do: be able to respond to a war memorial, to use materials, to experiment, to produce artworks with craftsmanship and to plan art activities for children that include all core VAE competences.

Learning to be: to honour and show respect, to value human life, to critically reflect on the learning process, to critically reflect on past assumptions and habits, to be motivated to make a positive contribution to their local social context,

Learning to live together: to actively engage with other learners, to understand others' viewpoints, to negotiate alternative futures, to collaboratively create an art work ('future memorial').

The palette

Indicative competences are given below (these depend largely on learning outcomes that are not included in this table)

At the end of the art unit, pre-/in-service teachers should be able to

- critically respond to war memorials (criticality competence)
- experiment and communicate messages about honour and remembrance, war and peace (creativity competence)
- actively participate in aesthetic experiences, in researching about local context and personal stories, in sharing ideas and experiences, in recognizing potentials for living in peace, together (participation competence)
- exhibit images/artworks to celebrate remembrance, understanding and honour of loss (action competence)
- understand emotions of grief, loss, respect and honour of their own and those of others, recognize needs and connections within people (empathy competence).

1. 5 Curricular Development around Big Ideas

Art units like the one outlined in Fig. 1 may be integrated within programmes revolving around 'big ideas'. This section recommends developing a teacher education framework programme through six big ideas, namely 'The Public'; 'Ecological Literacy'; 'Compassion'; 'Diversity'; 'Conservation and Change'; 'Regeneration'. These ideas are meant to 'uncover' rather than 'cover' ESD and VAE content knowledge and practice. Each sub-section introduces a big idea by providing background notes for tutors and includes references and suggested readings for further research. Following the stages of "backward design" (McTighe and Wiggins, 2011), the suggested core goals, essential questions and assessment methods may guide the teacher-participants to reflect on, share, debate and create, inspired by their experience of what they consider effective teaching and learning at primary school level. References that are useful in relation to each of these six big ideas are included in separate sections at the end.

1.5.1 The Public

Background Notes

What is 'the public'? The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines the adjective "public" as "concerning the people as a whole" and the noun as "the [members of the] community in general"; the public space par excellence being the "pub" - the abbreviated form of public house (Lexico Dictionaries English, 2020). The gap between adjective and noun separates the people from the unclear and formless entity. The different ways of thinking about "public" inevitably lead to several ideas of public space, which needs to be defined before being able to determine the possible role of art in it (Matossian, 2005).

The term 'public art' is often used as an umbrella term covering any art that is not displayed in art galleries or museums and ranges from a reference to government commissioned monumental sculpture to subway graffiti (Hunting, 2005). Bach (1992) defines public art as "...a manifestation of how we see the world-the artist's reflection of our social, cultural, and physical environment." Selwood describes 'public art' as "...art intended for the public, created by the public or sited in spaces, which although not publicly owned are nevertheless intended for public use"(1995, p. 8). Similarly, Norman & Norman (2000) refer to public art as sited in a public space and often permanently fixed. Traditionally, the purpose of such public art was either to commemorate a certain famous figure or simply decorative to enhance the physical environment. Today, its purpose is linked with urban issues regarding politics and policies, economy, the use of public money, urban regeneration and improvement of the city image (Norman & Norman, 2000). The participatory public art is created with the public, involving community members in the creative process. Conventional roles of artists and audience are now re-defined, as artists play the role of facilitators who lead the community as an active creative contributor (Stephens, 2006).

Public art can be displayed wherever people live, work or repose. This involves public spaces such as parks and gardens, libraries, hospitals, streets, housing estates, shopping centres. It can take different forms such as small or big sculptures, murals, paintings, street furniture, buildings, buses, fountains, bridges and arches, communication towers, signalling systems and digital displays. At times, these artistic forms can be considered monuments (Ramesar, 2005). Art displayed on the internet or other virtual media shows that it is not the spatial boundaries that define whether an art is for public or private audience, but its accessibility to public (Özsoy & Bayram, 2007).

The role of public art can vary. Its purpose or function can be to commemorate, to enhance the environment visually, to help economic regeneration through tourism, to benefit artistic and cultural regeneration, to identify a community and to help people manage public space (Ramesar, 2005). Public art can serve the socio-political purpose of transmitting a false sense of compromise in a society deeply divided about art. Yet, given that the public includes many different sub-spheres, civil services, and institutions, each with several voices in terms of race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and class, "discussions of public art might rather start from the recognition that complete consensus is impossible" (Kelly, 1996, pp. 15). Consequently, since the public is a series of representations, rather than compromise, public art should stimulate debate and dialogue about these representations.

Teaching and Learning Ideas

Core Goals and Essential Questions

- What is 'the public'?
- What is public art?
- What is the impact of public art in the physical, social and cultural realms?

Identification of acceptable evidence of learning (assessment methods)

- Participants speak and/write about what is public/ public art/ impact of public art
- Participants sketch and take photos from observations of chosen surroundings which they feel need to change.
- Participants talk about how the surroundings and public art they observed made them feel and what they would change.
- Participants draw/ paint/ sculpt/ attach shapes (using recycled materials- magazines, newspapers, cardboard boxes) to express their imaginings of how they would change their chosen surroundings.
- The participants' artworks could be set up as an exhibition in a public venue/streets or online.
- The participants talk about their artwork with reference to the changes they would make in the surroundings. Their talks could be recorded and made accessible online via social-media.
- Participants explain ways of how they would use VAE for students' development of advocacy skills and active citizenship

Learning Experiences

Think Questions

1. Imagine “an economy that lives within the planet’s natural limits but that actually emphasises human wellbeing and the wellbeing of our life support systems”. How will it look like? How will public spaces look like? What will the role of the artist be in such a society?
2. Imagine a society that reverses the current “common sense” view of society. A society built on “private sufficiency and public luxury”. How will it look like? What will be the role of the artist in such a society?

Useful Links

George Monbiot: From coronavirus to public luxury < <https://theecologist.org/2020/jun/11/george-monbiot-coronavirus-public-luxury>>

Public luxury for all or private luxury for some: this is the choice we face < <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/may/31/private-wealth-labour-common-space>>

Think Questions

3. What do you understand by the “uglification of society”? What concrete examples can you give of such public spaces? What is the role of art in reversing the “uglification of society”? Imagine “an economy that lives within the planet’s natural limits but that actually emphasises human wellbeing and the wellbeing of our life support systems”. How will it look like? How will public spaces look like? What will be the role of the artist in such a society?
4. Is the “uglification of society” linked to greed? Something else? What is the role of values clarification? What is the role of ESD?
5. A settlement is not just a habitat, but a place that is claimed as “ours.” What is the role of the artist in co-creating the roots of a community?

Useful Links

The uglification of Malta... the sequel <<https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/the-uglification-of-malta-the-sequel.543865>>

Beauty and belonging: Against the uglification of the world <<https://www.abc.net.au/religion/beauty-and-belonging/10356248>>

Think Questions

6. To what extent do you feel prepared to teach about “controversial” issues?
7. Can you think of a controversial issue linked to public spaces? What is it? Does the school have a role in creating a “safe space” to discuss this issue? How can it go about doing it? What is the role of ESD?
8. What relationship do you see between the public spaces of a city and its monuments? To what extent does this relationship reflect the values of the city? To what extent does this relationship reflect the power structures of that city?

Useful Links

Teaching Controversial Issues. < <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/teaching-controversial-issues>>

Daphne Caruana Galizia’s Contested Memorial: the Battle of Two Nationalisms <<https://www.islesoftheleft.org/daphne-caruana-galizias-contested-memorial-the-battle-of-two-nationalisms/>>

Think Questions

9. What potential do the school ground offer in terms of attaining Visual Art Education objectives? In terms of ESD objectives?
10. What is the role of “art” in designing and implementing new, exciting outdoor learning spaces? Any related best practice to share?
11. What is the role of participatory drawing to help envision and create the future we want?

Useful Links

Learning through landscapes <<https://www.ltl.org.uk/>>

Learning from Landscapes <https://www.iucn.org/downloads/a_avspecial_learning_from_landscapes_1.pdf>

Discussions raised by questions that generate participants' awareness and appreciation of "Public art" (art in public spaces, including architecture, landscape, and urban design), such as the following:

1. When we refer to public art, is it the same as referring to art in public spaces?
2. Are governments and institutions spending public money decently when commissioning public art?
3. How do citizens perceive art in public spaces?
4. In what ways can the citizen's perception of public art affect the development of art curricula?
5. How does the political design of a public space affect the development of public art and the role of the artist?
6. In what ways can public art serve for community art participation?
7. How can public art benefit public environment as well as the citizens?
8. In what ways does learning about public art can develop students' advocacy skills and foster their sense of active citizenship?

Suggested Hands-on Activities

- Engaging participants in observing any chosen surrounding environment and noticing what needs to be changed/ removed/ added vis-à-vis the impact of public art in the physical, social and cultural realms.
- Encouraging participants to imagine alternative observed surroundings, by drawing on printed images of the surroundings they chose to deal with.
- Guiding participants to express their imagination and feelings about their chosen surroundings through art-making (using recycled materials as much as possible and any techniques they find suitable for their purpose).
- Encouraging participants to show their sketches/ artworks and listen to each other's ways of seeing/feeling about the physical, social and cultural impact that their art would make.
- Eventually they can collaborate to create a mural/ a sculpture, made \ of reused materials as an intervention for the chosen surroundings or an exhibition showing their artworks in a public venue and/ or online via social media.
- Engaging participants to create schemes of work/ lesson plans/ activities, using VAE to raise awareness of public art, development of advocacy skills and fostering active citizenship

1.5.2 Ecological Literacy

Background Notes

Coined by American educator David W. Orr and physicist Fritjof Capra in the 1990s, ecological literacy is the ability to understand the natural systems that make life on earth possible (Sterling, 2003). An ecologically literate society would be a sustainable society that avoids destroying the natural environment on which they depend. Since the survival of humanity depends on nature, ecological literacy must become a critical skill for all and included as part of education at all levels from primary to professional development (Capra, 2008). Ecological literacy is based on the science of ecology but also embodies the traditional knowledge of many Indigenous cultures and the school of philosophy known as deep ecology (Capra, 2012).

Eco-art education: When students are encouraged to use content and transfer skills, they not only explore relationships between different subject areas but also reflect on topics through diverse viewpoints (Chiarotto, 2011). At primary school level, VAE can be used as a cross-curricular tool to help students express their understanding of the world around them (Graham, 2007). Through observation, students learn to make sense of, and shape the world around them. This could be either done by involving them in creating a community garden, setting up a dinner-table, arranging tools in a garage, or commenting on the architecture in their home towns. That way students can understand that artistic thinking "can inform and enrich every aspect of one's life" (Gude, 2007, p. 5).

Environmental writer, Suzi Gablik (1991), argues that art can be used as an agent of social change by engaging the audience's consideration through creative approaches to society's problems. She claims that 20th

century Art is the root of the problem, failing to address the conditions of society and environmental issues. Rooted in VAE, eco-art education can be defined as education that addresses the heart, mind, and soul (Gablik, 1991) as it integrates environmental education, referring to concepts such as sustainability. Apart from art – making, students’ appreciation of works of environmental artists such as land artists Robert Smithson and Andy Goldsworthy and a graffiti artist encourages their understanding of ways in which artists have addressed aspects of environmental awareness and issues (Inwood, 2007).

Educators who plan a curriculum that stimulates students to deal with the world’s environmental issues and reintroduce them to the outdoor world, are the ones who intuitively understand the impact that the experiencing of nature can have on education (Louv, 2012). In fact, *David Orr* (2004) maintains that what is included or excluded in curricula determines whether students are taught that they are part or apart from the natural world. He suggests that due to separate subject areas, most students end up graduating “without any broad, integrated sense of unity of things” (Orr, 2004, p. 11). In view of this, the “ecological crisis is in every way a crisis of education” (Orr, 2005, p. x). His statement reflects today’s increasingly urbanized and technologically plugged-in world, which disengages children from the natural world.

Think Question

“While social and emotional intelligence extend students’ abilities to see from another’s perspective, empathize, and show concern, ecological intelligence applies these capacities to an understanding of natural systems and melds cognitive skills with empathy for all of life. By weaving these forms of intelligence together, ecoliteracy builds on the successes—from reduced behavioural problems to increased academic achievement—of the movement in education to foster social and emotional learning. And it cultivates the knowledge, empathy, and action required for practicing sustainable living” (Goleman, Bennett & Barlow, 2013).

It has long been accepted that a person’s cognitive capacity cannot be represented through a single measurement such as an IQ score, and the concept of multiple intelligences has been put forward as a way to give a better representation of a person’s strengths and weaknesses. To what extent do you think that we need to talk about ecological intelligence? What is the role of ESD in cultivating ecoliteracy? What is the role of VAE in cultivating ecoliteracy?

Teaching and Learning Ideas

Core Goals and Essential Questions

- What is Ecological Literacy?
- What is Eco-Art Education?
- How can VAE be used to raise awareness of and engagement with environmental concepts and issues?

Identification of acceptable evidence of learning (assessment methods)

- Participants speak and/write about what is ecology literacy and eco-art education
- Participants sketch and take photos from observations of everyday objects found in nature
- Participants talk about ways in which humans threaten the natural world and reasons for doing so
- Participants collaborate to draw/ paint/ sculpt/ attach reused/recycled materials to create environmentally-themed art or garden installations.
- Participants explain ways of how they would use VAE to raise awareness of and engagement with environmental concepts and issues (whether they would involve only students or parents or other school stakeholders)
- Participants seek inspiration from indigenous cultures.
- Participants are committed to develop the abilities of the head, heart, hands, and spirit.
- Participants are prepared to be effective members of a sustainable and regenerative society.

Learning Experiences

Discussions raised by questions that generate participants' awareness and appreciation of Eco-art for nurturing Ecological literacy:

1. Do you feel you are ecologically literate?
2. What can you, as an individual or with others, begin to do about ecological issues?
3. In what ways does learning in natural surroundings impact students' mental and physical health, and their collaborative skills?
4. What are the pedagogical effects of a curriculum grounded in environmentally-themed art projects to promote ecological literacy?
5. How can parents be involved in environmentally-themed art projects?
6. What could be the experiences of students, parents and teachers as they co-create environmentally-themed art projects such as a community art garden?
7. What environmentally friendly materials (natural and human-made) can be used to create art?
8. Can you mention any artists have addressed aspects of environmental awareness and issues?
9. How can the study of indigenous cultures and art help you develop ecological literacy?

- Engaging participants to observe, draw, and create prints and stencils of everyday objects found in nature offers an opportunity to appreciate nature's beauty.
- Encouraging participants to observe and map streets around their hometowns.
- Stimulating participants' comments about their responses to the architecture of nearby surroundings/ their hometowns.
- Facilitating discussions concerning ways in which humans threaten the natural world and reasons for doing so.
- Guide the participants to create environmentally-themed art or garden installations by using a range of environmentally friendly materials, from ones found in nature to consumer products that are reusable and recyclable. Exploring techniques with these materials, such as drawing, painting, papermaking, collage, assemblage and basket-weaving. Taking photos/ videos of the creative process.
- Encourage participants to create schemes of work/ lesson plans/ activities, using VAE to raise awareness of and engagement with environmental concepts and issues (... whether they would involve only students or parents or other school stakeholders)
- Encourage the study of indigenous cultures and art.
- Invite guest speakers from traditional societies, in particular of societies that view themselves as intimately connected to plants, animals, the land, and the cycles of life. Where not possible consider other formats, such as a film forum.
- Examine whether daily practices such as food provision or energy provision value the common good. This can be done both at school and community level.

1.5.3 Compassion

Background Notes

Definitions of compassion vary. Some researchers define it to be an emotion (Batson, 1991), a biologically based characteristic (Gilbert, 2014), or a multidimensional construct (Jazaieri et al., 2013). Jazaieri et al., (2013) define compassion as consisting of a combination of affective (awareness of suffering), cognitive (sympathetic concern), and motivational (desire to ease or remove suffering) components.

Essentially, compassion means "to suffer together." It is defined as the feeling that arises when one is confronted with other people's suffering and feels motivated to relieve that suffering. Though related to the concept of 'empathy', the feelings of compassion go beyond the ability of simply feeling the emotions of another person. When one feels compassion one desires to help. Eventually, altruism arises, when prompted by feelings of compassion one displays selfless behaviour. However, when one feels compassion

without acting on it, then no sense of altruism takes place (Greater Good, 2020).

According to scientific research, preliminary findings suggest that compassion may be vital to the survival of human species, as it can improve health, well-being, and relationships. Furthermore, scientists found that more compassionate societies are happier ones. They take care of their most vulnerable members, help other nations in need, and have children who accomplish more acts of kindness (Greater Good, 2020).

Often, children are considered to be less incapable of understanding the emotional complexities of their world. Meanwhile, research indicates that from an early age children's attachment to animals is connected with compassionate alignments. For instance, Hawkins et al. (2017) found that children as young as 7 years old show a desire to help when an animal is hurt or troubled. Learning about compassion and ways to demonstrate it at an early age inspires more positive social behaviours, emotional coping strategies, inclusivity and a healthy learning environment. An effective strategy for nurturing compassion is through story-telling and comic art as the need to tell stories through visual art helps children to understand each other's feelings better.

There is evidence that we need both science and compassion to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals. According to the Global Health Academy (2020):

'At its most fundamental, compassion is rooted in a desire for everyone's flourishing. Compassion involves noticing suffering, and taking action to prevent or alleviate it. With this understanding of compassion, it is clear that the SDGs are bound by compassion. They are concerned with reducing suffering caused by inequity, injustices, inequalities and the degradation of the earth's resources. As the preamble to the SDGs states, "if we realize our ambitions across the full extent of the Agenda, the lives of all will be profoundly improved and our world will be transformed for the better'.

Compassion can be cultivated with training, leading to greater altruistic behaviour emerging from an increased understanding of other people's suffering (Weng et al., 2013) Compassion training programmes, as those offered by Emory University and Stanford University (Greater Good, 2020) show that one can enhance feelings of compassion through the following practices:

- Finding commonalities by seeing oneself as similar to others. Tapping one's fingers at the same rhythm with a stranger, it gives a sense of commonality which eventually increases compassion.
- Promoting cooperation rather than competition. Playing games in teams and carrying out duties through teamwork where team-members share a reward/ responsibility evenly encourages collaboration.
- Seeing people as individuals, not abstractions. People are often more likely to donate after reading about someone starving than after reading statistics on starvation.
- Leading by example because compassion is contagious. To cultivate compassion in others, start by modelling kindness with them.

Think Question 1

"Nature is imagination itself" (William Blake), and when we are in nature, nature's imagination stimulates our imagination.

Where do you draw your inspiration from? Are you inspired by nature? Are you inspired by people? Are you inspired by art? Go into the specifics. Describe the nature that inspires you? Who are the people that inspire you? Why? What art inspires you? Who are your "heroes"? Does "inspiration" increase your compassion?

Think Question 2

"There is also growing evidence that self-compassion is an important predictor of well-being and resilience" (MacBeth & Gumley, 2012).

Do you practice self-compassion? Do you respond to yourself in the same way you would respond to a friend in a similar situation that you find yourself in? Did you ever explore self-compassion through art?

Think Question 3

Have you as a teacher ever suffered from compassion fatigue? How can you support each other to in examining your professional life and build practices to restore compassion?

Teaching and Learning Ideas

Core Goals and Essential Questions

- What is Compassion?
- Is Compassion natural or learned?
- In what ways can one and society benefit from Compassion?

Identification of acceptable evidence of learning (assessment methods)

- Participants speak and/write about the definition of compassion.
- Participants draw facial expressions, body gestures and use colour schemes that indicate mood and emotions.
- Participants talk about the life experiences/ difficult moments in life of people they interview, eg. migrants, residents at a drug rehab or at other addiction rehab
- Participants draw/ paint/ sculpt/ collage, focusing on facial expressions/ body gestures to express their understandings of happy/ challenging moments in life of the people they chose to interview.
- Participants explain ways of how they would use VAE for students' cultivation of compassion
- Participants extend their compassion through practical choices such as opting for fair trade food and products.
- Participants extend their compassion to other species through practical choices such as avoiding factory farm products or joining in campaigns to end factory farming.

Learning Experiences

- Discussions raised by questions that generate participants' awareness of 'compassion', such as:
 1. When we refer to 'compassion', is it the same as referring to empathy and altruism?
 2. Is 'compassion' an instinct or a learned behaviour?
 3. In what ways do people display 'compassion'?
 4. Why is the cultivation of 'compassion' required for a healthy society?
 5. How can educators cultivate compassion using VAE?
 6. Why do people still organise and take part in art competitions when compassion is the nurtured through collaboration rather than competition?
 7. Which themes, art and artists can be referred to, as examples of traits of compassion?
 8. What stories or tales can we use in our lessons that explore and cultivate compassion?
 9. What images can we use in our lessons that explore and cultivate compassion?
- Engaging participants to interview vulnerable members of society (eg. residents at a drug rehab or migrants), focusing on their expressions of feelings emerging from sharing their life experiences
- Encourage participants to create story-boards/comics to communicate feelings stemming from interviews concerning life experiences of others
- Encourage participants to explore and evaluate each other's feelings while observing their comic art/ story-boards by focusing on the characters' facial expressions, body language and colour schemes.
- Engage participants to collaborate on the creation of a large artwork/ mural, involving several facial expressions/ moods through colour schemes/ hand and/or foot prints, camouflaged with written narratives/ poetry emerging from interviews.
- The participants' artworks, including creative process could be set up as an exhibition of visual narratives in a public venue/streets or online.
- Encourage participants to opt for fair trade products as a way of extending compassion to others, including those far away. Organise a fair trade breakfast once a month. Consider the inclusion of fair trade products at the canteen.

1.5.4 Diversity

Background Notes

Diversity is defined as “the condition or quality of being diverse, different, or varied” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2003). Today, this concept has evolved to include elements of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic backgrounds and mental and physical disabilities. According to Banks (2001), diversity is regarded as a desirable characteristic for any society, since the ethnic, cultural, and language diversity of its citizens enrich the nation.

Important human rights instruments relevant to Diversity include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Furthermore, members of the European Union, Malta are legally bound by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Such instruments should act as a guarantee for all people to enjoy such rights without discrimination.

Why is Diversity so important? According to the Council of Europe (n.d.): the intercultural aspect of school education constitutes a space where children can come together, make contact and interact with difference and otherness. It also contributes to their preparation for community life, their development as democratic citizens and their ability to engage.

According to the Maltese National Curricular Framework:

Education for Diversity promotes an inclusive educational culture and challenges various educational processes such as decision making within schools, languages of instruction, methodologies used, learner interaction and learning resources. Education for Diversity ensures the inclusion of multiple perspectives and voices within the learning environment, provides spaces for learning about the languages, histories, traditions and cultures of non-dominant groups in a society, encourages team work and cooperative learning in multicultural, multi-ethnic and other diverse contexts, combines traditional and local knowledge and know-how with advanced science and technology and values the practice of multilingualism. In doing so, it encourages an understanding of global issues and the need for living together with different cultures and values (Ministry for Education and Employment, n.d.).

On the other hand, intercultural education emphasises the interaction between people, religions, cultures, speakers of different languages, people who have different opinions and views and so on, rather than a tolerance or passive acceptance of cultural diversity. In fact, the use of “intercultural” is to stress the process of interaction competencies (Zilliacus & Holm, 2009). Furthermore, intercultural education “seeks to explore, examine and challenge all forms of “isms” and xenophobia, while promoting equal opportunity for all (MSU, n.d.).

Education for Diversity and Intercultural Education are often presented as transdisciplinary topics. As such they are a continuous process rather than linked to a one off activity, and they are best situated in a whole school approach rather than limited to the formal curriculum. VAE is well positioned to address diversity and intercultural issues, having a strong track record in “challenging hierarchical paradigms which reinforce prejudice and stereotyping ... (and encouraging) reflexive processes and critical engagement with diversity and pluralist perspectives” (Bianchi, 2001, p.1).

Think Question 1

“Dewey’s ideal direction was that societies should change towards a situation where all individuals and groups interact with each other in a full and free expression, sharing some common values even if they maintain some values and ideas which are specific to them”(Byram, 2003, p.10).

Do you agree with Dewey's ideal direction? Why? What is the role of education in promoting a vision of a combination of common and specific values? Is there a specific comparative advantage of VAE in furthering such a vision?

Think Question 2

"Artist and writer Rasheed Araeen notes that Western perceptions of difference, of 'the Others', can be 'based on the notion that the Others need help rather than an understanding on the basis of what they creatively do as equal citizens of the modern world' (Araeen, 2004); such condescension may be regarded as part of a continuum of demonising or fetishising difference" (Bianchi, 2001, p.3).

Do you observe the condescending behaviour described by Araeen in your context? Which "others" are often the target of such condescending behaviour? How do you feel when you observe such behaviour? What educational strategies can address such behaviour? In what ways can the role of VAE raise awareness and promote appreciation of diversity?

Teaching and Learning Ideas

Core Goals and Essential Questions

- What is diversity?
- What is Education for Diversity?
- What is Intercultural Education?
- Why is intercultural dialogue important?
- In what ways can art act as an intercultural mediator for dialogue?
- How can VAE challenge hierarchical paradigms which reinforce prejudice and stereotyping?

Identification of acceptable evidence of learning (assessment methods)

- Participants speak and/ draw and/ write about diversity as a desirable characteristic of society.
- Participants are committed to democracy and understand that this means ensuring people of different views and cultures have their say and work together for a better society*.
- Participants strive to strike a balance between their rights and duties and those of others*.
- Participants uphold fundamental democratic values and work to promote social justice*.
- Participants respect the different religious and humanist convictions, morals and beliefs that inform people's conceptions of right and wrong*.
- Participants recognise unfairness, injustice and preferential treatment in daily life situations including racist, sexist and homophobic language and behaviour*.
- Participants challenge expressions of prejudice and intolerance towards minorities such as racist, sexist and homophobic names, anecdotes and comments.
- Participants claim their rights and act on their duties knowing that other learners and teachers have equal entitlement to their rights*.
- Participants appreciate that the notion of 'identity' is complex and changing and limited as a concept in capturing who one is and that the idea of 'identities' is a more powerful way of understanding who one is and who others are*.
- Participants communicate with, work with and respect all their fellow learners and teachers*.
- Participants communicate with people who are different to understand how they are the same and to understand themselves better*.
- Participants strive to communicate effectively with others in a constructive, supportive and self-determined way*.
- Participants can use effective language to challenge injustices and inequalities*.
- Participants approach differences of opinion and conflicts of interest through dialogue, non-violent communication and consensus; where this fails, they are willing and able to use mediation*.

** Adapted from Education for Diversity (Ministry for Education and Employment, n.d.*

Learning Experiences

- Discussions raised by questions that generate participants' awareness of diversity, such as follows:

1. How can ESD help develop intercultural competences?
2. How can VAE help develop intercultural competences?
3. Which themes, art and artists can be referred to when developing intercultural competences?
4. How can VAE engage diverse participants in reflection on their own and others' experiences across a range of socio-cultural contexts?
5. Examine the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2002). How can it be helpful to our work?

- Engage participants to interview diverse members of society
- Encourage participants to create story-boards/comics to communicate feelings stemming from interviews concerning life experiences of others
- Encourage participants to explore personal and socio-cultural identity through setting-up and/ visiting exhibitions.
- Explore diverse images and narratives to investigate sociocultural identity
- Consider transnational art projects (with overseas schools)
- Consider art projects with diverse local cultural organisations
- Create collaborative art that involves critical reflection on issues of cultural identity.
- Create collaborative installation on specific topics (e.g. the scarf was used successfully as one such topic (Bianchi, 2001) that explore identity, beliefs and cultural values while celebrating diversity.

1.5.5 Conservation and Change

Background Notes

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, conservation is the "careful preservation and protection of something especially: planned management of a natural resource to prevent exploitation, destruction, or neglect". On the other hand, change is defined as: "to make different in some particular, to make radically different; to give a different position, course, or direction to".

This module helps us to position ourselves when caught up between the need to appreciate our heritage (tangible and intangible), to preserve and conserve our natural and built environment, and at the same time to be progressive, to innovate, and to radically change.

We are often caught up between the need to conserve and preserve ecological systems and natural and built environments and the need for "progress", "innovation" and new projects? Are these necessarily contradictory? We are often presented with a choice to conserve nature and to create new jobs? Are these necessarily contradictory? We often lobby and advocate for new policies and strategies but we have been so slow in implementing those that we already signed up to? Do we need new policies or a real commitment to implement the existing policies, in particular as pertaining to sustainable development? How can art contribute to such a debate? What is the comparative advantage that art can bring into the debate?

One perspective that helps us in such a dilemma has been put forward by Buscher and Fletcher (2019), who argue that the "emergence of the Anthropocene has made the choices that conservation faces even more difficult than they already were" (p. 293), adding that the "idea that we can incorporate all manners of different interests in finding a way forward (through 'integrated conservation and development projects', 'peace parks', or the like) or simply see 'what works' regardless of political context or commitment is over" (p.293). Instead, they propose a convivial conservation, that moves from protection to connection.

Convivial (literally: 'living with') conservation offers a new and integrated approach to understanding and practicing environmental conservation. It is a Whole Earth vision that responds to the major ecological, social and political-economic challenges facing people and biodiversity in the 21st century

(Convivial Conservation, n.d.).

Massarella (2019) argues for the need to move beyond sustainable development towards a transformation that challenges the status quo, adding that the specificity of such an approach is that rather than focusing on affirmative actions, it “requires a questioning (and alteration) of the existing systems, processes and dominant discourses that are driving the problems and causing harmful and unjust outcomes” (para.3).

Gioia (2008) argues against the loss of recognition of artists, thinkers and scientists, pointing out that most of the celebrated figures are in sports or entertainment, thus limiting the role models offered to the young. She posits that there are multiple ways of leading a successful and meaningful life beyond that dominated by money or fame but we’ve relinquished a child’s imagination to the marketplace. While insisting that culture needs to go beyond economics, she sees hope in education, as the only social force able to potentially counterbalance the profit-driven commercialization of cultural values.

Saunters (2014) maintains that people define object meanings. Similarly, identities of individuals, groups and communities can be understood in their relationships with particular objects. The changing quality of the museum environment and display layouts, with regard to objects and object relationships, is important to the socio-cultural responsibilities of these institutions and their ability to affect social issues. She argues that to understand the potential utility of heritage conservation, one needs to explore the complexity of the relationships that can form between objects and people. This leads to the setting up of some key issues and consequences of conservation activities.

Think Question 1

It seems, therefore, that transformation risks becoming an empty signifier, whose ‘meaning is temporarily fixed, and continuously contested and rearticulated’. It may lose its emphasis on the radical, on social justice, on grassroots movements, and on challenging deep-rooted structural and systemic dynamics; instead becoming an ineffectual buzzword that allows business as usual to continue. (Massarella, 2019, para.10)

Can you think of examples of products or initiatives (whether by government or civil society) that were presented as ecological, bio, sustainable but you felt were really about allowing a business as usual scenario?

Can you think of an example that was presented as being for the environment but was insensitive to the needs of the poorer or more vulnerable members of society?

Think Question 2

The real purpose of arts education is to create complete human beings who are capable of leading successful and productive lives in a free society (Gioia, 2008).

Do you agree with this statement? In the context you know best (your school, your region, your country), is this happening? What are the challenges you see? How can you go about responding to such challenges?

Think Question 3

Public art collections in museums and other heritage objects can represent personal and collective values that affect self-perceptions and ideas about others. Thus, museum and heritage conservation management is highly important, particularly concerning ownership through access and control of their interpretation. Meanwhile, cultural change is inevitable! A dilemma is presented through feelings of a nostalgia for past identity and fears of consequences of contemporary heritage use to meet the demands of ever-changing immediate contexts (Saunders, 2014).

In what ways can museums diminish hierarchical cultural communications and foster public wellbeing and inclusion without losing direction and purpose?

Teaching and Learning Ideas

Core Goals and Essential Questions

- What is conservation? What do we need to conserve?
- What is change? What is radical change? What do we need to change?
- How does art help us navigate across the conservation-change spectrum?

Identification of acceptable evidence of learning (assessment methods)

- Participants move beyond affirmative action and ask questions about the underlying causes of poverty and environmental destruction.
- Participants create art to make visible that which is invisible, whether the voices of the poorer members of society, or the underlying causes of environmental destruction.
- Participants refer to art museum collections as a unique way of understanding and expressing the world.
- Participants use research to support and enable authentic transformative change.

Learning Experiences

Discussions raised by questions that generate participants' awareness of conservation and change, such as:

1. What is your theory of change?
2. What transformation is needed to address global ecological and social crises and bring about fundamental, socially just change? What is the role of ESD? What is the role of VAE?
3. How do we get to convivial conservation? From preservation to connection? Can art museum collections act as a catalyst?
4. Can VAE help us better understand how transformation happens?
5. Can you think of a case study or movement that challenges the global economic system that drives environmental destruction, rather than emphasising affirmative action within this existing system?
6. Can you think of an artwork from your national art collection that challenges the global economic system that drives environmental destruction, rather than emphasising affirmative action within this existing system?
7. What is the role of political cartoons in transformation?
8. Consider a school visit to an organisation that focuses on the underlying global forces that drive biodiversity loss, while sensitive to the needs of the poor, forest-dwelling and/or indigenous communities.

1.5.6 Regeneration

Background Notes

What is Regeneration? This module aims to help teachers confront their ideas on sustainability with those of regeneration, in order to critically analyse their current work and reframe it according to their new understandings of the concepts.

According to Rhodes (2015) the “the word ‘regenerative’ means ‘the capacity to bring into existence again’; hence, if an item or system is regenerative, it has the inherent capacity to bring itself into existence once more.”

Why do we need to consider Regeneration?

That which is sustainable maintains what already exists, but does not restore (eco)systems that have been lost. The word “sustainable” strictly means “self-sustaining” but is often understood, particularly in the media and by the general public, to merely mean “able to last” or “the capacity to endure.” (Rhodes, 2015, para. 3)

We live in a fragmented world where the destruction of our eco-systems goes on unabated. We have all read of deforestation, the threats to further extinction of species, and the threats to coral reefs. According to The World Counts (2020), “In the past 60 years, 60% of the Earth’s ecosystem has been degraded”. We need to consider our role not only in learning new more sustainable practices but restoring and regenerating what we have already destroyed.

Wahl (2018) argues that sustainability alone is not “an adequate goal” and we need to move towards a regenerative human culture that is healthy, resilient and adaptable. In fact, according to Reed (2007), “instead of doing less damage to the environment, it is necessary to learn how we can participate with the environment—using the health of ecological systems as a basis for design”. This requires a shift in our mental modes from a fragmented approach to a systemic approach, something education and ESD is well positioned to catalyse.



Adapted from Reed, as reproduced in Wahl, 2018.

Think Question 1

Thus, a product containing 80% recycled material might be described as “sustainable”, whereas in reality, it is only relatively more sustainable than a version fabricated with no recycled material at all. To be actually sustainable, a product must be made from 100% recycled (and recyclable) material, so that it can, in its entirety, be further recycled. This is seldom the case, and when the energy costs of the processing are also included, there is an inevitable overall “loss”, even if “renewable” energy is used, since such energy sources are usually constructed from materials that must themselves be extracted and processed, all with their own attendant energy demands. (Rhodes, 2015, para. 4)

Consider the above quote by Rhodes. Is it relevant to your work as a teacher of Art? Is it possible to move from a relatively more sustainable action towards an actually sustainable action? Brainstorm some ideas.

Think Question 2

According to Wahl (2018), resilience is “closely related to health, as it describes the ability to recover basic vital functions and bounce back from any kind of temporary breakdown or crisis”. Make a list of crises we need to bounce back from? What is the role of ESD in restoring such imbalances and creating a thriving future for all of humanity? What is the role of VAE?

Teaching and Learning Ideas

Core Goals and Essential Questions

- What is regenerative?
- What is the difference between regenerative and sustainable?
- What does it mean to design for regeneration?
- What is the role of the school in designing for regeneration?

Identification of acceptable evidence of learning (assessment methods)

- Participants include restoration and regeneration (rather than just sustainability) when they speak or write.
- Participants consider the principles of people care, earth care and fair

- shares.
- Participants design/sketch/use photos as tools to restore a degraded system/environment.
- Participants advocate for the restoration and regeneration of derelict/dirty areas within the school grounds.
- Participants advocate for the restoration and regeneration of derelict/dirty areas within the community.
- Participants gradually move from relative to actual sustainability in the production of their artwork.
- The participants' artworks are integrated with regenerative initiatives.

Learning Experiences

1. Consider a visit to a local permaculture farm. Observe forms and move from the particular to the general and back again.
2. Consider sketching/ drawing/ painting sessions at a permaculture farm.
3. Design a product made from 100% recycled and recyclable material. \ Consider minimising the energy costs related to its production.
4. Do you have an abandoned plot in your school? In your community? How can you restore it? What is the role of community gardens? What inspiration do you take from a visit to a permaculture farm?
5. Consider a clean-up that seeks to restore a derelict or abandoned area in the community? Consider regenerative principles when using the waste collected.
6. Help create beautiful garden spaces. Consider wood carvings, fences, raised beds and carpentry. Make annotated sketches and present them to the stakeholders concerned, e.g. head of school or college principal. Your plans could also consist of 3-D models, using recycled material.

1.6 Teaching modes and course duration

1.6.1 Different teaching modes

In this section, some modes of teaching VAE which are conducive to raising awareness and engaging pupils to inquire and be critical about ESD issues will be suggested for sessions with educators. Each session should be flexible to address the needs of the group participants. The idea is to find ways of inviting students to engage in discussions about themes, values and attitudes that lead to a more sustainable and just society for all while using art as a medium of learning as well as a means of expression. The 'Teaching and Learning Ideas' in each section of section 5 give several examples of how such discussions can develop – asking open-ended questions, sketching ideas about specific themes, organisation of school visits, consideration of artworks in national collections, and so on. It is key to ensure from the start of the sessions all educators are on the same page as to their understanding of the concept of teaching ESD through VAE and the subsequent benefits and challenges. Icebreakers and teambuilding exercises which lead to such a discussion would be good strategies to start off the sessions.

The multiple variables to be considered when choosing modes of teaching that will result in effective learning are another aspect that warrants discussion at the start of the training. The target age group at primary level, the class pupil number, the persons with a physical/emotional/ learning disability, different learning styles, different learning pace and the area of teaching and the desired learning outcomes all have a bearing on the mode to be chosen. Modes of teaching should encourage creativity, exploration/ experiencing, inquiry, risk-taking, communication and teamwork. Teachers who experience these modes during continuous professional development sessions can then develop pedagogies in class that reflect similar strategies. Teaching modes should address cognitive, psychomotor as well as affective development methods. Teaching through VAE creates the space to allow connections between understanding and feeling, between the imagination and seeing; a space to deconstruct critically that which we observe, to see critically that which we think we know.

Cognitive modes of teaching tend to be didactic and mostly teacher-centred but teaching ESD through VAE naturally connects to the psychomotor and the affective areas. The 'big ideas' described in section 5 as well as other topics such as contemporary art, SDGs and art criticism discussed earlier

can be introduced through the following approaches:

1. team teaching including artists and activists,
2. videos and power points to stimulate discussions
3. excursions/ field/ art gallery trips.

An alternative to the latter could be the use of the internet. In 2020, throughout the Covid-19 pandemic period, museums offered new opportunities through their websites for children who could view the artworks at the museum and were offered fun and learning activities (games, quizzes, crafts, etc). Tate Kids, <https://www.tate.org.uk/kids>, for example, is part of the Tate Museum London, <https://www.tate.org.uk/> website. The museum has curated activities, games, and educational resources to help parents and teachers spark their kids' imaginations through information and the artwork tour, as well as activities such as making Pop Art like #AndyWarhol. The website, like that of other museums, also provides easy to understand insights into the world of art. The likelihood is that such sites created specifically during the pandemic will continue to exist and teachers can continue to make use of these resources in class.

Psychomotor Development modes of teaching, involving inquiry and discovery methods of learning, are intrinsically more student-centred and can be done in modified ways, offering ways of alternating styles to suit the class with a mix of social or solitary learners. Modes of teaching could include:

- The Inquiry Method which invites the learner to be curious, to come up with the question to be researched, maybe sparked off by a news item, storytelling, a film, photos, visual images, works of art. The choice of the "trigger" could be discussed. If it is an artwork, the type of image could be such that it provides a framework for understanding the world as others see it. Using artworks helps people realise how diverse artists use artwork to communicate personal or social situations. Guided by the trainer, participants can brainstorm common themes and relevant SDGs or they can research the topic of their choice and then communicate their findings to the class, individually or in a group. The communication could be through an artwork of their own or a group artistic piece, a drawing, a painting, a collage, a sculpture. Google Slides is a simple tool for adding text and images, presenting to others, who can also edit presentations they share.
- Discovery Method - "learning by doing" – learners wrestle with the big ideas by exploring and manipulating objects or performing experiments to discover the possibilities of the different art resources available. In doing so, they are not only thinking about colour, design, structure and the environment but are encouraged to think, ask questions, hypothesize, interpret in a personal way, cooperate and collaborate with others. The Discovery Learning Method sets the right environment for students to construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences.
- Project Method ultimately results in a collective work such as the publication of a book, an event, a report, an exhibition, etc. In courses dealing with VAE and ESD, the project method could be based on social or environmental issues that are related to the cultural or geographical context in which the course is taking place (for example, 5.5 Conservation and Change). Participants think critically about a specific issue and work collaboratively on a social goal or problem they feel strongly about. Photography can contribute to discussions by indicating problem areas (for example, polluted and other hazardous areas), leading to ideas about goals and possible solutions.

Affective Development Modes of teaching work on changing interest, attitudes and values working through feelings and opinions. An affective development mode ensures that the learning environment includes interpersonal teacher-student relationships in which learners feel appreciated, acknowledged, respected and validated (Alexander & Murphy, 1998; Lambert & McCombs, 1998).

An example of an affective teaching method is:

Role-Playing Method- two pioneers of drama education, Bolton and

Heathcote (1999) state that the main criterion in role-play is the “as if” fiction, posing a unique challenge as the participant embraces knowledge, embodying it with truths and attitudes and exploring the dynamics between affect and cognition. Role-play engages students in democratic participation as the process challenges gender, class and racial stereotypes besides diminishing hierarchical relationship. (Madrell, 1994).

The teaching methods listed above can also be adapted to individual or collaborative online strategies, where intended learning outcomes lead to the specific technology possibilities for supporting those methods. A cluster of Google tools or a social media platform, such as a FB group, a wiki space, or a blog, can work in this context, but much depends on the learning design itself, not the actual digital technologies.

1.6.2 Course Duration

Given the different circumstances and possibilities related to continuous professional development events for teachers in different countries, recommended course duration cannot be prescriptive. The number of hours spent in single meetings and possible number of meetings in a course as well as differences between courses for in-service and pre-service teachers need to be taken into account. Grounded in the material provided in previous sections, it is being suggested here that such a programme could last between 15 and 30 hours. The following should be considered as components of an VAE-ESD course, while suggestions about numbers of hours should be considered as indicative:

1. Basic principles of ESD and SDGs: 1.5-3 hours (section 2)
2. Contemporary art, sustainability and art criticism: 2.5-5 hours (section 3)
3. VAE-ESD links, objectives and resources: 2-4 hours (section 4)
4. 6 Big Ideas: 9-15 hours (section 5)
5. Onsite visit to museum or permaculture site: 3 hours

Components 1-4 should be considered as core components, while the onsite visit is optional, depending on availability of time and venue. The amount of time dedicated to the first four components can be varied. For example, more or less examples of contemporary art can be selected and discussed or critiqued, while teaching strategies planned for sessions on the 6 Big Ideas can be presented with fewer or more ‘Think Questions’ and ‘Learning Experiences’. The many examples of such ‘Think Questions’ and ‘Learning Experiences’ given in section 4 are meant to offer users a selection based on local possibilities, needs and sustainability challenges.

1.7 Professional Learning Communities, mentoring and collaborative lesson study

A course on VAE-ESD can serve to develop teachers’ personal growth, communication skills, and peer mentoring relationships. Mentoring can foster collaborative relations that help individuals to understand relationships between basic ESD principles and real-life situations, both inside and outside schools. Mentoring and Peer Mentoring are increasingly being acknowledged as crucial tools for teachers and school leaders. Mentoring helps to develop teachers’ potential, and this is beneficial both to individual teachers and the schools they teach in. In a project like CARE, mentoring can be a very effective way of providing support, for example in areas of content that some participants are not very confident with. Ideally, mentees set the agenda by indicating areas that they need to work on, while mentors provide guidance for mentees’ professional development. Amongst the advantages of peer mentoring in CARE, one may mention the possibility of improving teaching strategies related to ESD, the collaborative analysis of lesson plans and outcomes, dialogues about relationships between specific artistic examples used in class and issues of sustainability encountered, and the possibility of expanding upon one’s own reflections about topics like public art or diversity through peer observations. It is therefore recommended that any VAE programme enriched with ESD makes the most of peer mentoring and mentoring possibilities. Below, two possible professional learning models are discussed.

1.7.1 PEERMENT

The Centre for Environmental Education and Research at the University of Malta is involved in a three-year ERASMUS + project with the acronym PEERMENT (ending in 2020), aimed at the development of the Mentoring and Peer Mentoring approach.

One of PEERMENT's objectives is to help to preserve teachers' enthusiasm for putting into practice ideas about SD picked up from continuous professional development programmes through peer mentoring. Another objective is to buttress our response to current challenges related to sustainability on a global scale by developing teachers' ESD competences. By using knowledge that is rooted in other curricular subjects, teachers can promote principles of SD like peace and solidarity. PEERMENT aims to reach these objectives by developing and disseminating a new model of Mentoring and Peer-Mentoring for ESD, involving direct target-groups at all stages of the project. Specifically, it aimed to do this through action research, that directly involved about 20 Education Specialists as teachers' trainer and senior mentors and about 50 teachers as mentors.

The effectiveness of a project like PEERMENT relies on the transformation of a school environment into a community of practice. Communities of Practice create a space for two or more people to learn from their interaction. Communities of Practice have three main features: a domain, a community and a practice. As far as the Peer Mentoring groups of the PEERMENT Model were concerned, these features were:

- 'ESD', Education for Sustainable Development, was the project's domain
- Local Teachers' PEERMENT Groups were the project's Communities of Practice
- The development of the competences needed to create and use the WebQuest tool and the design and testing of a new WebQuest was a main "practice"

Education Specialists were a core part of the PEERMENT project. Their role included providing support to the local teachers' PEERMENT group members and being involved in the testing of and seminars related to the project guidelines. The PEERMENT teachers were responsible for (co)-developing the didactic activities, (re-)launching the didactic activities on ESD, working closely with their mentors, providing feedback for the Guidelines for Teachers and discussing their experiences during multiplier events.

1.7.2 Collaborative Lesson Study

Collaborative Lesson Study brings together a team of stakeholders (teachers, academics in the field of education, heads of school) to collaborate on the development of lessons. It was developed as a research tool in Japan and is considered to contribute positively to school reform (Saito & Sato, 2012). Collaborations develop in different phases:

1. a development phase (collaborating to develop new pedagogies around a specific focus, big ideas and so on) – Developing Lesson Plans
2. a class enactment or implementation phase during which lessons are conducted and observed – Lesson Observations
3. an evaluation phase during which learning is assessed, summarised and then shared with others – Lesson Study reports

The Faculty of Education at the University of Malta is in charge of a CPD project called CLeStuM (<https://www.clestum.eu/>). In this project, university academics come together with school leadership teams and teachers in face-to-face meetings and observations. CLeStuM provides continuous professional development for teachers and school leadership teams, facilitates lesson study meetings with teachers and conducts research on lesson studies, amongst other initiatives. Areas for improved student learning are indicated by participating teachers, who also plan lessons to address the issue. During the delivery of the lesson, other teachers and stakeholders observe the lesson and gather evidence about the desired objectives.

Following this feedback, teachers may also amend lessons and another teacher can then use the revised lesson plan with another class.

1.8 Assessing and Evaluating Teacher Training Programmes

The last section in this Guide considers the assessment and evaluation of teacher training programmes. When planning any training activity, it is important to also plan for the evaluation of the effectiveness of this activity. This is actually in line with the backward design for curriculum development. A comprehensive assessment design or assessment program starts with clear statements of what are the learning outcomes to be assessed and why; what evidence is to be collected and how is it to be analysed. The methods required for evaluating the effectiveness of the training ought to be informed by well-established assessment methods that have evolved in the science of pedagogy and psychology (Warell et al. 2014).

Based on the time of the evaluation, there can be three types of assessment:

- Pre-assessment or diagnostic assessment. Before the training, it is necessary to assess initial knowledge, attitudes and competences of the trainees as well as expectations from the training.
- Formative assessment. It is the assessment conducted during the training and it aims to provide feedback that will identify any gaps between instruction and trainees' learning.
- Summative assessment. This type of assessment takes place at the end of the training and it aims to evaluate the extent to which the most important learning outcomes have been reached.

Based on the scope of the evaluation, there are also other types of assessment:

- Individual / authentic assessment (also known with the latin word ipsative). Its focus is on the individual achievements during the learning process over a period of time.
- Normative assessment. Its focus is on the comparison of the individual's performance with the group's performance. That is, it compares a learner's performance against an average norm.
- Criterion-referenced assessment. Its focus is on the comparison of individual performance against a fixed set of predefined criteria or learning standards

The above types of assessment focus principally on learners' performance. CARE project considers other information of equal importance: the trainees' assessment of the training, and the pupils' achievement (Goldhaber et al. 2013) as a result of their teachers' training.

Therefore, in the context of the CARE project, the following methods for assessing teacher education/ training effectiveness are proposed:

Phase A: Delivery of teacher education courses

- a) Participants' academic growth (value-added assessment of participants' achievement) with the use of reflective visual journals (Pavlou, 2021, forthcoming) and interviews. Reflective visual journals will provide evidence on teachers' progress during their training (beginning- during- end). They will also act as an individual/authentic method of assessment. Pre-/post-training interviews will provide further evidence on initial knowledge, attitudes, perceptions of self-competence and expectations as well as on perceptions of growth or change in these areas. Thus, all types of assessment based on the time of the evaluation will be addressed.
- b) Participants/trainers' performance assessed by criterion-referenced assessment that will focus on participants' abilities to plan visual art units based on the focus of the CARE project (assignment to be delivered during first phase of training). And
- c) Trainers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the training with the use of reflective visual journals.

Phase B: Implementation of visual arts units in school

- a) Participants/teachers' performance assessed by criterion-referenced assessment that will focus on participants' abilities to organize and implement the art unit (observation instrument)
- b) Participants' professional growth assessed with the use of interviews at the end of phase B of the training.
- c) Evidence of primary school pupils' learning that will show the impact (or not) of the training of their teachers (interviews and questionnaires)

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