



Call for Papers

Special issue for the Nordic Journal of Comparative and International Education (NJCIE)

Title: Interdisciplinary approaches to Education for Sustainable Development

Guest editors: Robert J. Didham (Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences), Hiroki Fujii (Okayama University), and Gregor Torkar (University of Ljubljana)

Background

Interdisciplinary education for sustainable development is increasingly being referenced as a valuable mechanism in strengthening the overall quality and relevance of education and learning systems. The concept of sustainable development and the field of sustainability science draws upon a wide range of disciplinary perspectives and methods, and their overall value is found in their ability to create holistic, interdisciplinary frameworks for understanding and meaning making. Education for sustainable development (ESD) has gained increasing levels of international attention since the launch of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in 2005. At the end of this decade, the Aichi-Nagoya Declaration affirmed ‘the growing international recognition of ESD as an integral and transformative element of inclusive quality education and lifelong learning and an enabler of sustainable development’ (UNESCO, 2013). Previous research has found that ESD-relevant pedagogies have made a stronger transformative impact on primary and secondary education than the specific sustainability content (Laurie et al., 2016) and that the development of sustainability literacy directly challenges the hidden curriculum of unsustainability that remains prevalent in practice (Wals, 2019; Howlett et al., 2016).

Significant amounts of research on the practice, approaches, and outcomes of ESD have focused on its implementation in higher education. While comparative research on ESD in primary and secondary education has systematically focused on differences between policies and curriculum at national levels. Although, there also remains a lack of empirical studies that find good ways to demonstrate the effectiveness of ESD (Boeve-de Pauw et al., 2015).

While the importance of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches in ESD is often argued, there remains a limited amount of research on how this is being practiced in different schools around the world and on what outcomes and impacts this achieves. A recent review of published research on teacher education for sustainable development identified two lines of further inquiry that could help advance the field, these were “action research orientation toward inducing broader systemic changes” and “inter- and transdisciplinary research modes with their focus on experimentation and utilization of diverse knowledges” (Fischer et al., 2022). Furthermore, this review also finds promising opportunities for research that explore interconnections in ESD between actors, processes and approaches, and outcomes, as well as between explaining changes at individual and structural levels (Fischer et al., 2022).

Interdisciplinary approaches to ESD are seen as an essential way to challenge dominant paradigms and the hidden curriculum that continues to emphasize unsustainable ways of examining and making

meaning of the world around us. They can develop foundational forms of understanding that allow learners to better traverse across the complex challenges and multiple dimensions framed in the concept of sustainable development. Critical insights are urgently needed to advance our knowledge on how to develop, integrate, and implement such approaches into our education systems and to understand how the practice of interdisciplinary ESD can be oriented towards creating transformative learning.

Call for Articles

This special issue aims to explore the transformative potential that interdisciplinary approaches to ESD can achieve and how they can be effectively implemented. The goal of the special issue is to collect and share new research and innovations in the emerging field of interdisciplinary education for sustainable development.

We encourage submissions from teacher educators, educational researchers, and teacher practitioners to share their advances and innovations in this field and to explore the impacts this has on educational practice in general. Articles may be focused within a broad spectrum of interdisciplinary education practices, including multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary approaches, and should be oriented toward a relevant application in education for sustainable development. All articles should have a comparative perspective, for example providing insights from variations of teaching methods used, comparing different aspects of or agents in the education system, multiple case studies, or country comparisons. Articles that draw on diverse perspectives in education, especially those that highlight learning within local and indigenous knowledge systems, will be highly appreciated.

We encourage authors to consider how interdisciplinary education for sustainable development can be applied to strengthen transformative learning processes and actively engage learners as actors for change in the pursuit of sustainable development.

Articles are welcomed from multiple educational levels, including early childhood education, primary and secondary education, teacher education, as well as non-formal and community-based education.

Deadline for Submission

Interested authors are kindly requested to submit full manuscripts of papers for peer review by
15 October 2023

Please ensure compliance with the [NJCIE Author Guidelines](#) in your submitted manuscript.

Useful references for potential authors

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