Chapter 16

Education for Sustainable Citizenship: an emerging focus for education for sustainability

John Huckle

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In 2013 there is little evidence that British society has developed to become more sustainable or that education is enabling all learners to ' develop the skills, knowledge and value base to be active citizens in creating a more sustainable society' (DfES, 2003, p. 7).The concept of sustainable development is now more widely recognised and debated; some businesses have turned sustainability to their advantage by 'greening' their operations; governments have adopted strategies for sustainable development that involve the 'greening' of policy; educational institutions at all levels have 'greened' their curricula, campuses and links with the wider community; and numerous civil society organisations continue to advocate sustainability in different forms and to demonstrate what it might look like in practice. Much of this activity is welcome and worthwhile, but It does not amount to a breakthrough to sustainability.

Neoliberalism, austerity and a generation in crisis

To support this claim it is necessary to update chapter one of the 1996 text. This modelled social development in terms of the shift from modernity to postmodernity (organised to disorganised capitalism); outlined the origins of material and cultural struggles over the social construction of nature; distinguished between weak and strong sustainability; and examined how sustainability is reflected in ideologies across the political spectrum before sketching the politics of sustainability at that time. The shift to disorganised capitalism is now more commonly labelled the rise of neoliberalism: an economic model and set of ideas grounded in the virtues of possessive individualism and free markets that regard the state as tyrannical and oppressive (Harvey, 2010, Thorsen & Lie, 2013). The New Labour governments that came to power in 1997 sought to temper neoliberalism with social democracy (the third way), but continued deregulation, privatisation, globalisation and financialisation of the economy led to asset bubbles that eventually burst with the banking crisis of 2008 (Elliott & Atkinson, 2007). Once the scale of toxic debt was exposed, credit and inter-bank lending dried up, spending slowed and the resulting recession lasted for five years. From 2010 the coalition government introduced austerity measures to reduce the debt burden but, according to its critics, these served only to lengthen recession and were moderated before signs of growth returned in 2013.

The crisis of 2008 represented a significant opportunity to radically rethink Britain's model of development and its social and political settlement (Gamble, 2009, Hall et al, 2013). Neoliberalism had resulted in mounting economic and ecological debt; widening inequalities; the decline of manufacturing; a shift of power and resources from the public to the private

sector; and a readiness to address the challenge of sustainability only to the extent that it did not damage profitability. Further, the crisis of 2008 and the subsequent austerity were used by politicians and the media to further reinforce the dominance of such neoliberal ideas as the primacy of the competitive individual, the superiority of the private sector, and the unrealistic nature of alternative models of development. Britain remained a low-investment, low-wage, low-productivity economy with falling living standards and high levels of youth unemployment.

The costs of austerity were felt particularly strongly by the young, whose lack of prospects of jobs, housing, and a sustainable future, led many to experience helplessness and some to take to the streets as they did during the student riots of November 2010 and the inner city riots of summer 2011. During the past 30 years politicians, business leaders and the City have become preoccupied with short term gains and have neglected the future. Politicians have bribed the electorate with policies such as the sale of social housing to sitting tenants, and political parties have chased the support of key voters with little regard to the long term costs. Industrialists have failed to invest sufficiently in new products and technologies while bankers have speculated on ever more complex derivatives. The result is a 'jilted generation' (Howker & Malik, 2013) held back by recession and austerity and facing a precarious and impoverished future. Encouraged to think that they have only themselves to blame, young people show less support than their parents or grandparents for the welfare state; are less likely to be members of political parties; and are more likely to think of the journey through life as a solo voyage rather than a group adventure (Ball & Clark, 2013). Lessons and projects around sustainability are a means of challenging individualism, short-termism and helplessness, and allowing young people to envision viable and fulfilling futures.

The contemporary politics of sustainability

Following the banking crisis, the neoliberal right remained committed to lower taxes, a smaller state, less red tape, and the liberalisation of planning, and entertained sustainability only to the extent that it offered new markets and new sources of profit (Green Alliance, 2013). The social-democratic left regarded the crisis as an opportunity to establish a new economic model based on a Green New Deal, a green investment bank, and active regional and industrial policies (Green New Deal Group, 2013). Socialists and anarchists to their left continued to argue for popular planning of the economy linked to sustainability and new forms of democratic citizenship (Campagna & Campiglio, 2012). Ecologism, or ways of thinking that are not based on the assumption that human beings hold a privileged or central position in social and political evaluation (Hopwood et al, 2005, Smith, 1998), continued to shape radical environmental politics. Decentralism and anarchism were reflected in the Transition and Occupy movements (Hopkins, 2013, Graeber, 2013), while Jackson (2009) updated the concept of a steady-state economy to offer ways of socially constructing nature in more sustainable ways. The plight of the young and the 'squeezed middle' rose up the political agenda with Labour promising to lower the voting age to 16. While most young people remained apathetic to mainstream, national politics, many were active in grassroots movements and some embraced the cosmopolitanism of the internet and used social media to

become 'netizens' engaged with global civil society and movements that were 'kicking off' around the world (Mason, 2013).

That radical environmental politics remains marginal to mainstream politics and education is due to neoliberal hegemony, the associated ideas and practices of ecological modernisation (the greening of capitalism), the influence of media which largely support the status-quo, and widespread political apathy and illiteracy. Blüdhdorn (2007) suggests that western neoliberal societies have entered a post-ecological era characterised by the politics of unsustainability. Management of society's inability or unwillingness to become sustainable has taken the centre ground with post-ecological discourse (Figure One) fostering the reassuring belief that neoliberal capitalism and ecological sustainability are compatible and interdependent. Such discourse enables society to deceive itself and cope with the dilemma that while sustainability requires radical change in the basic principles of social organisation, there is a strong consensus on the non-negotiability of consumer capitalism irrespective of mounting evidence of its unsustainability. Educational institutions conspire in such deception to the extent that they fail to engage students in critical analysis of this and other discourses shaping the politics of sustainability. These include the overlapping discourses offered by political parties, social movements, the media, and academics. Amongst them is the emerging discourse of sustainable citizenship which, once they critically reflect and act upon it, may convince students and teachers that it offers realistic prospects of a more sustainable future and the most secure foundations for EfS.

Figure One   Characteristics of post-ecologism

1. General and full acceptance of the in principle relevance of environmental issues combined with the warning that despite all undeniable seriousness, the environmental crisis must not be overstated.
2. Replacement of the emancipatory subject-oriented notion of modernization by an efficiency-oriented, system-centred understanding wherein innovation and change have been adopted as intrinsic values.
3. Prominence of neo-materialist and consumption-oriented patterns of identity formation.
4. Disillusionment about the participatory revolution and increasing reliance on supposedly more efficient market mechanisms with concomitant calls for political leadership.
5. Relegation of environmental issues on the political priority list to a position behind employment, security, economic growth, crime and immigration.
6. Institutionalization of environmental concerns and delegation to 'experts' and 'professionals'.
7. Reformulation of ecological problems as scientific, technological, economic or managerial issues.
8. End of the vision of a radically different ecological society.
9. Rejection of ecological idealism and dogmatic instance towards so-called political realism/pragmatism that asserts that we have no choice but to adapt to the supposedly non-negotiable imperatives of economic growth, technological progress and global competition.

10. Criminalization of radical ecologists and direct eco-political action as a variant of terrorism.
(Zeyer, 2013, adapted from Nikel and Reid,2006)

Education for sustainable citizenship

Following his earlier writing on environmental and ecological citizenship (Dobson, 2003) and subsequent explorations of its implications for citizenship education (Huckle, 2008a, Hayward, 2012), Dobson defined a sustainability (sustainable) citizen as one who displays 'pro-sustainability behaviour, in public and private, driven by a belief in fairness of the distribution of environmental goods, in participation, and in the co-creation of sustainability policy' (Dobson, 2011, p. 10, and Figure Two). Bullen and Whitehead (2005) explain that sustainable citizenship represents a paradigm for post-industrial living that disrupts the spatial parameters and temporal scope of conventional citizenship and raises important questions about the material constitution of the citizen. It requires citizens to exercise responsibilities to distant people and places and past and future generations, and to commit themselves to ecologism to the extent that they are required to exercise care or stewardship for non-human nature.. It enlarges the public sphere in which citizenship is conceived and practiced to include the environment; embraces the private sphere of citizens' lifestyles and consumption patterns; and is relational in the sense that it requires a keen awareness of the connections which exist between social actions, economic practices and environmental processes.

Figure Two   The sustainability (sustainable) citizen:

1. believes that sustainability is a common good that will not be achieved by the pursuit of individual self-interest alone;
2. is moved by other-regarding motivations as well as self interested ones;
3. believes that ethical and moral knowledge is as important as techno-scientific knowledge in the context of pro-sustainability behaviour change;
4. believes that other people's sustainability rights engender environmental responsibilities which the sustainability citizen should redeem;;
5. believes that these responsibilities are due not only to one's neighbours or fellow nationals but also to strangers distant in space and even in time;;
6. has an awareness that private environment-related actions can have public environment related impacts;
7. believes that market-based solutions alone will not bring about sustainability. The sustainability citizen will therefore recommend social and public action.
(Dobson, 2011. p. 10)

Education for sustainable citizenship involves students acquiring relevant knowledge, skills and values through issue-based projects in the classroom and community that open spaces for dialogue that allow consideration of diverse discourses relating to sustainability encountered via media of all kinds (Andreotti & Warwick, 2007). Critical discourse analysis (Wodak & Meyer, 2002) should take account of students' age, ability and experience and should be linked to their current concerns, interests, and knowledge. Both Dewey and Freire recognised the central role of such dialogue in education for democracy with Freire maintaining that it can develop critical consciousness as teachers and students cooperatively reflect on their understandings of the world, recognise ideology and hegemony, and seek ways of validating discourses that appear to offer a more truthful interpretation of reality and the ways in which it might be transformed (Walsh, 2008), .

Critical discourse analysis is a key element of the socially critical pedagogy introduced in chapter seven of this text. It has now been combined with a future orientated ecological politics to create ecopedagogy (Gadotti, 2008, Kahn, 2008, 2010) that draws on the critical theory of Habermas to outline three elements of ecological or sustainability literacy or the ability to 'read' and 'write' one's relations to the rest of human and non-human nature. The technical element draws on empirical and positivist knowledge to explore what is technically possible; the cultural element on the humanities to explore what is culturally appropriate; and the critical on critical social science to explore what is morally and politically right. Bonnett (2004) argues that such literacy requires a frame of mind that values harmony between society and nature and is open to the aesthetic, spiritual and existence values of nature alongside the economic and scientific. The arts and humanities, together with outdoor education (Moss, 2012, Project Wild Thing, 2013), therefore have key roles in EfS, but it is citizenship education that can encourage reflection and action on those forms of political economy, governance and citizenship that encourage and give expression to sustainability as a frame of mind.

Van Poeck, Vandenabeele and Bruyninckx (2013) argue that EfS and ecopedagogy should be strengthened by drawing on contemporary accounts of sustainable citizenship. These employ the concept of ecological footprints to suggest a post-cosmopolitan form of ecological citizenship (Dobson, 2003); extend notions of liberal environmental citizenship by regarding citizenship as a site of struggle where 'the limits of established rights are (re)defined and (re)affirmed' (Gilbert and Phillips, 2003); and draw on civic republican approaches to citizenship to suggest that sustainability citizenship is a form of resistance citizenship existing within and as a corrective to unsustainable development (Barry, 2005). The emerging conceptualization of sustainable citizenship has political, scale, ethical and relational dimensions that are outlined in Figure Three together with their implications for EfS and ecopedagogy.

Figure 3   Sustainable citizenship and its implications for EfS and ecopedagogy (Based on Van Poeck et al, 2013)

Dimensions of EfS suggested by the literature on sustainability citizenship	Implications for EfS and ecopedagogy
A *political* dimension, focusing on justice and on asymmetrical, historical obligations, and giving rise to the questioning of dominant structures and power relations. A political approach makes it possible to challenge the underlying structural causes of unsustainability.	Use ecological footprints as a starting point to encourage students to consider issues of justice and the desirability of ecological citizenship. Explore issues of the environment and development in ways that reveal structural causes and consider radical alternatives. Engage in critical pedagogy that encourages students to break through the false consciousness engendered by ideology and hegemony and so change their relationships to structures of power. Develop the knowledge, skills and values that underpin political literacy in the realm of sustainability through real and simulated

	involvement with sustainability issues.
A **dimension of** *scale*, arising from the acknowledgement that sustainable citizenship requires public/collective as well as private/individual actions. This allows both individual and collective learning and social action.	Focus on how personal decisions affect distant human and non-human others while exploring the interrelatedness between the private and public spheres. Avoid focussing purely on the individual level as this depoliticizes and privatizes a very political and public issue and thereby contributes to the reproduction of the status-quo.
An *ethical* **dimension**, built upon the recognition of sustainability as a normative notion and encouraging space for values and critical reflection in learning processes	Encourage students to assess their behaviour in the light of justice/injustice. Engage in values education in relation to sustainable development and so pace students' moral development and their critical appreciation of issues of justice/injustice, right/wrong, and rights/obligations. Make use of the Earth Charter (ECI, 2013).
A *relational* **dimension**, resulting from the idea that sustainability and citizenship are socially constructed within a continuing social struggle of ideas, interests, discourses, values, etc.	Encourage students to consider how sustainability and citizenship are currently understood in their own and other societies and how such understanding is changing under the influence of social movements. Develop a global dimension in the curriculum that encourages learning from and with other communities elsewhere in the world

New Labour's policy on ESD

The Labour Government introduced citizenship as a new statutory subject in England's schools in 2002 (Kerr et al, 2008). Some regarded this as 'a gift wrapped opportunity to politicize the environment for young people' (Dobson, 2003, p. 208) yet its policy on ESD developed without adequate attention to citizenship education. Whereas citizenship was seen as a means of restoring young people's engagement with politics, opportunities to cultivate such engagement through ecopedagogy were not adequately explored or promoted. Neoliberal elements of New Labour's education policies were designed to open education to business values, interests and methods of management and funding; produce a globally competitive workforce; and cultivate the myth of consumer choice. A more instrumental curriculum gave greater attention to basic skills, creative and critical aspects of learning were eroded, testing and league tables fostered competition between pupils and schools, and parents were encouraged to exercise their choice between a greater diversity of schools. These policies resulted in greater inequality of provision and outcomes and further undermined the comprehensive principle of common schools for all pupils, offering quality with equality, fostering social solidarity, and forging an educated democracy and a common culture that is key to realizing 'our common future' through sustainable development (Huckle, 2008b). Social democratic ideals shaped Labour's policies in such areas as early years education and support for students in further education,, but it was in the devolved

administrations of Wales and Scotland that these ideals and the comprehensive principle continued to dominate. Here ESD was closely linked to global citizenship education (see for example Scottish Government, 2010).

Following a critical report on ESD by the Environmental Audit Committee, a select committee of the House of Commons, the Labour Government published an action plan for ESD (DfES, 2003) that envisaged all schools becoming sustainable schools by 2015. A framework for such schools was subsequently launched (DfES, 2006), prompting schools to approach the greening of their curriculum, campus and community links, through eight 'doorways' (food and drink; energy and water; travel and traffic; purchasing and waste; buildings and grounds; inclusion and participation; local well-being, and the global dimension). The framework placed the principle and practice of care (for oneself, each other, and the environment) at the heart of the sustainable school, yet this principle clashed with the individualism, privatisation, and erosion of the comprehensive principle that neoliberal policies encouraged. Parental choice resulted in longer journeys to school; the private finance initiative meant new schools were not build to the highest environmental standards; privatisation of catering resulted in less healthy meals; and league tables and parental choice encourage competition rather than 'care for each other' between pupils, parents, and schools.

As regards the curriculum, the importance given to core subjects and basic skills, together with a limited diet of subjects, stifled the kind of inter-disciplinary and issue based learning encouraged by ecopedagogy. While elements of such learning survived in primary schools, divisions of knowledge in the secondary school acted against the cultivation of sustainability as a frame of mind while failure to introduce most pupils to key ideas in economics, politics and sociology, prevented them from developing the critical aspects of sustainability literacy. Guidance on ESD from government agencies and NGOs was unhelpful as it failed to acknowledge the contested nature of sustainable development and recommended key concepts such as interdependence, quality of life, and equity and justice, as if these are unproblematic and can be readily translated into the classroom without related considerations of ethics, politics and political economy. Winter's (2007) review of three key policy texts of the time (DfEE & QCA, 1999, QCA, 2002, Ofsted, 2003) reveals concealments, silences, and blocks to critical enquiry, that resulted in them being readily assimilated into dominant neoliberal discourse. They had rhetorical force in that they appeared to offer clear and helpful guidance, but by obscuring ethical and political questions surrounding sustainable development, they prompted teachers to collude in the type of confusion and misunderstanding associated with post-ecological discourse (Figure One) or to reject ESD in the belief that it involves indoctrination. Labour's policy was progressive in that it encouraged the ecological modernisation of English schools and their communities, but it was neither radical or democratic as it failed to encourage them to develop sustainable citizens.

The Welsh Alternative

To find more radical practice we can look to Wales where new guidance on citizenship education (Welsh Assembly Government, 2006) focussed on sustainable citizenship. Bullen and Whitehead (2005) explain that whereas citizenship studies in England were perceived by New Labour as a means of reviving social democracy through local community involvement and participation within the formal realms of national governance, and had little connection to sustainable development, the Government in Wales took a wider view that reflected its statutory responsibility to incorporate sustainable development into all its activities, and its desire for a distinctive brand of citizenship that recognised the place of Wales in the world.

Coupled with the retention of comprehensive schooling, the adoption of sustainable citizenship education sets Wales apart from England, but Bullen and Whitehead warn that 'trans-spatial visions of citizenship have collided with a nascent politics of civic republicanism in Wales' and that 'relationally conceived understandings of the uneven affective socio-ecological capacities of the citizen are competing with standardized curricula designed to teach about the ideal citizen'.

Their research with educational advisers and pupils suggests that there is a danger that ESDGC (education for sustainable development and global citizenship) in Wales becomes a generalised prescribed curriculum rather than a diversity of localised curricula that reflect geographically embedded notions of sustainability and the principles of ecopedagogy. As in England, a crowded curriculum and a stress on examinations, undermines such pedagogy, and even when they adopt a whole school approach to sustainable citizenship, schools find it difficult to offer the broader moral context required to foster more ethically engaged citizens. Bullen and Whitehead argue for sustainable citizenship education to engage learners in a range of different spaces within the state and civil society: 'from the home to the school; from the community garden to the workplace; from the commune to the parliament'.

The Coalition Government and ESD

On coming to power in 2010 the Conservative / Liberal Democrat coalition continued, with new vigour, the neoliberal revolution in education, begun by Margaret Thatcher and sustained by New Labour. Under the banners of choice, diversity and standards, it accelerated the establishment of academy schools; encouraged parents and others to establish new free schools, set about a review to 'slim down' the national curriculum; and transferred the major responsibility for teacher training from universities to schools. Behind these reforms was a desire to dismantle the role of local authorities, give the private sector a greater role in education, transfer scarce resources from the needy to the better off, ensure that curriculum content did not prompt questioning of the prevailing model of development; and further undermine teacher professionalism (Benn, 2011). A democratically accountable public service, nationally directed and locally administered, was fast being replaced by a state-subsidised and centrally controlled quasi-market, with policy rigged in favour of academies and free schools, and the media used to persuade parents that comprehensive community schools were failing due to an irreversible spiral of falling standards and low expectations, and that teachers and their trade unions were barriers to necessary reforms. Academies and free schools are not subject to the democratic oversight of local authorities or to such requirements as teaching the national curriculum, employing qualified teachers, or serving healthy meals.

The Coalition abandoned Labour's action plan for ESD and its sustainable schools policy and would have failed to include any mention of climate change in its revised national curriculum had it not been for the concerted efforts of subject associations and NGOs. In a submission to a conference of the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges in November 2012 it stated: *The Government is fully committed to sustainable development and the importance of preparing young people for the future. Our approach to reform is based on the belief that schools perform better when they take responsibility for their own improvement. We want schools to make their own judgments on how sustainable development should be reflected in their ethos, day to day operations and through education for sustainable development. Those judgments should be based on sound knowledge and local needs* (SEEd, 2013)

The programmes of study for the National Curriculum in Citizenship and Geography, published in September 2013, failed to make any mention of sustainable development. There are opportunities for sustainable citizenship education within them: for example at key stage 4 (14 - 16 years) pupils studying citizenship are to be taught about 'local, regional and international governance and the United Kingdom's relations with the rest of Europe, the Commonwealth, the United Nations and the wider world'; and pupils studying geography at key stage 3 (11 - 14 years) are to 'understand how human and physical processes interact to influence and change landscapes, environments and the climate, and how human activity relies on effective functioning of natural systems'. The publication of these programmes followed a consultation in which 11% of 358 respondents felt that citizenship education should cover 'social responsibility, sustainability and set out how a responsible citizen should behave', and 25% of 302 respondents were unhappy with the lack of reference to sustainability and globalisation in geography (DfE, 2013).

Future prospects for ESD and EfS

The level of support for sustainability revealed by this consultation is somewhat disappointing but 17,000 of England's 24,000 schools are registered with Eco-Schools (2013) and presumably addressing ESD/EfS to some extent. There is evidence that sustainable schools (Hacking et al, 2010) and eco-schools (Keep Britain Tidy, 2013) improve the quality of learning and teaching and a well developed literature on the stages through which such schools might best develop (Webster & Johnson, 2009) and the role that leadership should play in this process (Scott, 2013). Co-operative trust schools (2013), set up as co-operatives with pupils, parents, teachers and others as members, offer a potentially attractive model for sustainable schools and by late 2013, 6000 schools had joined the Co-operative Green School Revolution (2013).

Such schools have a wide range of theory and practice to call on exemplified by journals such as *Environmental Education Research*, *Policy and Practice* (a development education review), and *Green Theory and Praxis,* and by texts such as Hicks (2013), Scott & Gough (2003), and Wals & Corcoran (2012). Teacher educators have played a key role in introducing this theory and practice to teachers and following initiatives by the Teacher Training Agency in the mid 2000s, it is pleasing that TEESNet (2013) continues as a social network facilitating communication on ESD / EfS and global citizenship education between teacher education providers, NGOs and others. The NGO sector continues to provide resources and guidance for teachers but reduced support from government has led to increased reliance on corporate sponsorship and the associated risk of the 'declawing' of environmental and development education (Bryan, 2011, Huckle, 2013, Selby & Kagawa, 2011). The potential of school subjects to promote ESD / EfS continues to be explored with texts relating to English, mathematics, and geography published in the *Teaching Secondary Subjects as if the Planet Matters* series (eg Morgan, 2012) and subject associations also offering some support (eg ASE, 2013).

There has been much progress since 1996 but as this chapter has sought to show, too much that passes as ESD lacks political realism and fails to cultivate sustainable citizenship. As development in Wales begins to suggest, a breakthrough from ESD to EfS in our schools depends on the establishing forms of education that are radical in that they seek to change

basic social structures, processes and thought; democratic in that democratic values and processes pervade the culture and social relations of the school; and comprehensive in that they require common schools for the whole community (Fielding and Moss, 2011, Ball, 2013). Hill & Boxley (2007) provide an eco-socialist manifesto for schooling and teacher education designed to hasten the transition to radical, democratic education and sustainability, and this provides readers with one view of the profound changes that may be needed.

In late 2013 the debt crisis in the UK, USA and Eurozone is not resolved and there are continuing concerns about the sustainability of the capitalist model of development given the need for governments and consumers to pay down debt and the failure of technological change to create sufficient high paid jobs (Shutt, 2010). Post-ecologism continues to delude citizens faced with a double crisis of economy and ecology and many young people fear a bleak future. The pendulum in politics and education has not yet swung back towards regulation, equality and democracy, as predicted at the end of chapter 7, but that should not prevent teachers from educating for sustainable citizenship and so providing their students with sources of hope in troubled times.

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