
Preface

It is widely known among educators and practitioners that among the many challenges to realise the goal of sustainable development, teaching education has been and still is one of the major areas to tackle. Indeed, there is a pressing need to strengthen and adapt the institutional framework of pre-service and in-service teacher training, especially at the regional and national levels. This need has been highlighted for many years now, for instance at the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro and at the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (WCESD) hosted in Aichi-Nagoya in 2014. Paradoxically, despite the number of recommendations and suggestions made outlining the need to pursue sustainable development, many environmental problems have been exacerbated rather than solved. This state of affairs suggests that little progress can be made unless some basic needs are properly addressed.

One of these basic needs is to acknowledge that it is necessary to address the fragmented nature of the handling of sustainability issues at formal education programmes as a whole, and in teacher education in particular. Improvements are needed not only on the ways to cater for sustainability in the curriculum, but also on how to handle and promote issues related to sustainable development at multiple levels (e.g. community and family) with a focus on the interplay and interlinkages. Also, the development of flexible teaching methods capable of incorporating environmental, economic, societal and cultural elements is greatly needed.

But without a proper training of teachers on the principles and practices of sustainability, with which they can educate and raise awareness about sustainable development among schoolchildren and among students, there can be little hope that any of the changes outlined above can be achieved.

Among the various issues which deserve attention is the documentation and the dissemination of good practice in teaching for and about sustainable development at the institutions of higher education. Consistent with the perceived need for action in this field, the book “Teaching Education for Sustainable Development at University Level” has been prepared. It is divided into two parts.

Part I deals with curriculum elements, demonstrating curriculum innovation and new ways to make provisions for sustainable development in teaching practices.

Part II contains contextualised case studies, showing how the goal of making teacher education for sustainable development possible has been achieved.

We thank the authors for their willingness to share their knowledge, know-how and the information they have been able to obtain from their work and from their projects. We hope that the experiences gathered here can be useful to others interested at or working in the field of teacher education for sustainable development, and that they may support current and future efforts towards curriculum innovation on the one hand, and teaching practice on the other.

Enjoy the reading.

Spring 2016

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Teaching Education for Sustainable Development at
University Level

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2016, IX, 355 p. 30 illus., 16 illus. in color., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-32926-0