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A Teachers Perspective ESD within secondary school context

- Sample ESD projects
- What has helped me
- Challenges
- Recommendations
• New school, Opened in 2016
• Currently 120 x 1\textsuperscript{st} & 2\textsuperscript{nd} Year students
• Art, Ethical Education and ESD

• 2\textsuperscript{nd} year piloting Sustainability as a short course with Jerrieann Sullivan Cork ETSS colleague
• Phase 2: working with NCCA Short Course development guidelines
• 1 hour per week class for all students at Junior Cycle + additional hours
Phenomenon-based Learning

- **PBL + Self-directed learning**
  - Students propose own topics + groups via on-line platform
  - Facilitation Tool Kit: Students given skills to facilitate own groups
  - Place-based learning: using local landscape and local community to help
Meet Our Groups

SCHOOL MURAL
BIO DIVERSITY
UPCYCLE LIBRARY
NO TO BOTTLED WATER
CLOTHES UPCYCLING
SUSTAINABLE FOOD
GREEN CYCLES
PALLET FURNITURE
World Café showcase event addresses community’s resilience to climate change

North Wicklow Educate Together Secondary School in Bray last Wednesday evening put on a ‘market-place’ showcase event of their recent group projects on the theme of Sustainability.

The event was part of the school’s current Phenomenon Based Learning (PBL) project. This aim of this project is to enable students to work in a cross-disciplinary way to research and action a solution to a topic within the broad theme of Sustainability that students themselves had an interest in exploring.

Students, parents, carers, teachers and members of the wider community with an interest in education and Sustainability came together through a World Café event to discuss how we can collaboratively work towards building our community’s resilience to climate change.

- PBL group example: One group grew salad, foraged nettle + garlic pesto, stop food waste soup 110+
- 3 world café questions Why ESD is important, What should student’s learn? How might the wider community support this in our school.
Opportunities: What has helped me to bring ESD into schools

1. **Space on the curriculum** as a stepping stone
   Colasite Chill Mhantain, TY Module - EfS
   NWETSS JC Short Course

2. Creating a Sustainability **Strategy Group**
   pioneering teacher plus 4-5 subjects teachers
‘... a learning environment that is participatory, inclusive and valuing of diversity ...’

Educate Together school communities will endeavour to create a learning environment that is participatory, inclusive and valuing of diversity and will adopt policies and practices to support this.

2.12 Assessment

Educate Together second-level classrooms will be learner-centred, where students are the key initiators and architects of their own learning. Weimer (2002) identifies learner-centred teaching as encompassing a shift in the balance of classroom power from teacher to student, designing content as a means to building knowledge rather than a ‘knowledge end’ in itself, positioning the teacher as facilitator and contributor, rather than the source of knowledge, shifting responsibility for learning from teacher to learner and finally promoting learning through effective assessment.

challenging problems, and hence with the chance to learn in depth and test the limits of their understanding’. Black and William (1998) reviewed 250 research articles relating to the role of classroom assessment in learning and concluded that it ‘typically encourages superficial and rote learning, concentrating on recall of isolated details, usually items of knowledge which pupils soon forget’. The UK Assessment Reform Group research (2002) also identified a number of risks with regard to assessment:

- valuing quantity and presentation rather than the quality of learning;
- lowering the self-esteem of students by over-concentrating on judgements rather than advice for improvement;
- demoralising students by comparing them negatively and repeatedly with more successful learners;

‘... students are the key initiators and architects of their own learning’
Curriculum Opportunities
– Short Course in Sustainability as a stepping stone

The learning outcomes (10 per strand) are organised into four Core Strands and two choice strands:

Strand 1 – Just One Earth
Strand 2 – Picturing a just and sustainable world
Strand 3 – Taking Action
Strand 4 - Skills for a sustainable future
## Curriculum Opportunities
### Short Course in Sustainability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Choice Strands:</th>
<th>Strand 5 – Arts &amp; Sustainability</th>
<th>Strand 6 – Sustainable Design and Technology</th>
<th>Strand 7 – Sustainable Food</th>
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What has helped me to bring ESD into schools

1. **Space on the curriculum** as a stepping stone
   TY Module - EfS
   JC Short Course

2. Creating a Sustainability **Strategy Group**
   pioneering teacher plus 4-5 subjects teachers

3. Incorporating **Outdoor Learning**

4. **Inspiring Training** – NCAD, Forest School, Burren-Beo, inspirational

5. **Financial Support** – for myself and other teachers from Local Agenda 21 and WWGS
The focus on Outdoor Learning

- reduction in stress levels
- helps tackle growing obesity levels
- benefits those who suffer from depression
- increase exam performance in students

Yale University, the University of Minnesota, and the Children & Nature Network, US

- relieves the symptoms of attention difficulties such as ADHD

Outdoor Learning
Architecture as pedagogy

- Irish Architecture Foundation Architect in Schools initiative
  2nd years Art + Technology

- Outdoor Classroom design for their new school 2019

- Access to Department Architectural Planning Drawings + Authentic dialogue with students + Government departments

- Departments Building Specifications + Subject Equipment List
Teacher Training - experiential & inspired by local landscape

Place-based learning
Recommendations to embed ESD into Second Level Education

In addition to what I have just mentioned;
1. Space within the curriculum
2. Support for Outdoor Learning
3. Meaningful Teacher Training, co-created and in consultation with teachers and school management

ESD needs to be;
4. Student-centred, Content-appropriate
   - Risk eco-paralysis if content too climate science heavy
   - Belief in themselves that their action projects can initiate real change in society through authentic dialogue
   - Personal interest in projects as displayed in PBL projects

5. ESD Co-ordinator as a paid Post of Responsibility
   - expectation to apply funding eg WWGS, LA21 / create resources / planning in free time etc not sustainable

6. ESD Teacher Association
   - Like with other subject teachers, Art Teachers Assoc. Ireland ATAI
A shift in focus towards
Digital + Ecological Literacy
Contact: kateminnock@nwetss.ie
or via
Facebook group ‘Secondary Teachers for Sustainability’