

Chapter 4

Rethinking Environmental Education: Reflections on AAU UNESCO Center Certificate Course of Problem-Based Learning

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ABSTRACT

This chapter brings a participatory learning experience on PBL at Aalborg University in Denmark. Based on the inherent wholeness of the human-nature ecosystem, interdisciplinary, sustainability-oriented teaching philosophies in environmental education endeavor for the appeal of more concern the value of life, aiming at promoting greater sensitivity to critical thinking, individual happiness, and social responsibility. Problem-based learning may be an effective way to realize the action competence of students by solving real problems and adjusting their behavior and finally to compass transformative learning and lifelong learning.

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INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Education initiated the “Undergraduate Teaching Quality and Teaching Reform Project” to take the construction of Teaching Demonstration Courses as one of the critical measures for the majors of biotechnology, information technology, finance and law in the fields of high and new technology. To meet the needs of informatization, participants should take steps and strive to achieve the global vision of the courses. With the rapid development of the world economy, environmental pollution and environmental safety have gradually moved from locals to regions and the globe. From Japan’s earthquake nuclear safety incidents to the trend of global warming, all countries in the world are faced with the problem of initiative or forced to cooperate to prevent and control environmental pollution. The field of Environment involves not only basic theoretical knowledge but also many international, regional conventions, agreements or treaties between two or more countries. Therefore, China urgently needs to cultivate high-end talents with environmental specialty, who must be familiar with the rules of international activities and try their best to protect China’s international interests and create a favorable environment for the development of the country.

Initiatively, the idea of establishing environmental science and engineering specialty in universities is to meet the needs of the development of environmental protection in China. In order to further broaden the scope of environmental specialty, equip with high and new technology, continuously improve the academic level and the ability to participate in mega projects, China has established branch disciplines such as environmental system engineering, air pollution control, water pollution control, solid waste disposal and management, environmental planning and management, environmental engineering chemistry and monitoring. Scientific research provides the scientific basis for relevant departments’ decision-making, or applicable national laws and regulations. In the other side, it promotes the improvement of teaching quality. Teachers have increased their talents through their practice and compiled high-level textbooks. Higher environmental education in China started late, but it is “borderless” on environmental issues, which requires us to learn from the experiences of developed countries and strengthen international academic exchanges and cooperation.

However, pragmatism-based ideology tends to emphasize skills and professionalism in environmental education in China. In addition to the field of humanities and social sciences, most universities have arranged massive professional and technical courses

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