Chapter 11
Sustainability in Pedagogy Degree Curricula:
The Environmental, Inclusive, and Sociocultural Perspectives

Juan Rodríguez

https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7451-3130

University of La Laguna, Spain

ABSTRACT

Sustainable development means the care and protection of the natural environment and humanity. In educational contexts, sustainability should develop competencies in these two closely related areas of sustainability. This work investigates the presence of descriptors linked to sustainability in the curricula of Spanish State Pedagogy degrees. The results showed the scant presence in these degrees of subjects whose designation reflected a direct link with sustainability. Moreover, the teaching projects of the subjects showed a predominance of professional competencies not explicitly linked to sustainability, while the presence of competencies directly related to sustainability, sociocultural perspectives, environmental, and economic perspectives was scarcer. In the content descriptors, the most frequently used terms were related to the environmental dimension as opposed to more inclusive, social, and professionalising terms. University education and the competencies of the degrees should be explicitly linked to sustainability perspectives.

INTRODUCTION

The idea of sustainable development is not new, nor is it exclusive to the 20th century (Novo, 2006). However, it was during the last century that the need for a change in humanity's relationship with natural resources arose (Caride, 2017). Although scientific work on the negative consequences of human performance was available in the late 20th century (Tegart et al., 1990), it was not until the evidence of environmental degradation and its harmful consequences for human development became apparent that

it was accepted that humans were the cause. It is now widely accepted that human activity has given rise to a new geological era, the Anthropocene (Slaughter, 2012; Longueira et al., 2018). The learned way in which humans have related, relate and, unfortunately, will relate to the natural environment is at the root of the Anthropocene. The relationship is based on a developmentalist economic model that sustains our society through short-term economic objectives, regardless of the environmental and social consequences (Jiménez, 1999; Novo, 2003).

The relationship between humanity and the natural context is a constant in our evolution, so we cannot approach humankind without reference to its natural environment. This evolutionary reality that links social destiny to environmental destiny appears clearly in the attempt by the *United Nations Conference on the Human Environment* 1972 to reconcile fair social development with environmental protection and, more recently, in the Human Development Report (UNDP, 2020). It is in this perspective that the Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on September 25, 2015 makes sense: Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN, 2015), which establishes the critical relevance to humanity and the approach across five spheres: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships.

The need for connection between the human and the natural is consubstantial to sustainability if it is considered as "a never-ending quest to improve the quality of life and the environment for people, and to prosper without destroying the life support systems on which present and future generations depend" (UNESCO, 2010, p.19). From this perspective, sustainable development requires an alternative economy (Aguilera, 2013) that considers nature as a good that can be enjoyed, within the logic of its conservation, but also demands respect for human dignity. Accepting that people are valuable in themselves, have no price or use value and cannot be instrumentalised. To meet both demands, it is necessary to change the current predatory economy for a closed-cycle and sustainable economy (Jiménez, 1999) and this is only possible by transforming the lifestyles on which it depends and, at the same time, which nourish it (Jiménez, 1999).

Thus, sustainable development implies a cultural change that requires a better understanding of reality, a change in values and a transformation of human actions. These are precisely the dimensions that are traditionally linked to the transformative/enriching power of education (UNESCO, 1996). This valuing of education as a tool for the future undoubtedly led the United Nations to proclaim the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, assuming that education alone will not be able to change the future, and calling for reorientation of education towards the achievement of a more sustainable future, stating 'We must urgently learn to live differently' (UNESCO, 2020, p. 6). On the other hand, it will be difficult to achieve effective cultural change in the global scope if it is not inclusive. A perusal of *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (UN, 2015), reveals the repeated and constructive use of the term "inclusive". This comes as no surprise, as sustainable development will not be possible without promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies. In this sense, the third edition of the *Index for Inclusion* (Booth & Ainscow, 2011) proposes that preparing students for the future, a desirable sustainable future, involves the promotion of inclusive values in present and future society.

In addition to including the human dimension, the planetary emergency of climate change clearly shows that we need to act immediately. Climate change is not a forthcoming event, but a reality of the present and also of the past. For this reason, human actions are not located in the distant future but in the present and involve adaptation to new climate scenarios and mitigation aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions (IPCC, 2018). In the educational context, and without disregarding efforts at other educational stages, this entails the need for sustainability to become fully integrated in university education. University students, unlike primary pupils, are on the threshold of their professional practice

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