

〔論文〕

Higher educating for and as sustainability:*

developing global awareness

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Introduction

As a higher educator working in a sociology faculty at a private Japanese university since 1991 I have, for the past 15 years, been developing, in consultation and negotiation with students, an integrated sociology content and additional English language higher learning. This pedagogical-learning mission has been directed primarily in service to helping to develop students' – and my own as well – local, regional, and international-global civic and citizenship responsibilities. At the same time it has been an attempt to help integrate students' sociology content and additional English higher learning needs and desires within the sociology faculty where there has been and continues to be a rigid divide between almost 100% L1 Japanese language general and specialized academic sociology content study and English language study.

As I approach the end of my full-time teaching and researching career in higher education in Japan, I now wish to actively practice this citizenship development higher learning in service to a higher ideal an educating as and for sustainability (EaS and EfS). There are educational justifications for adopting this approach in applied linguistics and the social sciences as outlined in Brady (2006, 2008, 2009 and 2010). This approach adopts what Forbes (2005) calls a learning that encapsulates *responsibility for and to society*. The latter is a clear recognition of where society now stands and what is or may be difficult, perhaps even undesirable, to (attempt) to change in society. The former is more of an imagination of what society can and ought to be, ways in which individuals and collectivities and groups of caring concerned individuals can better (their) society by first conceptualizing and then practicing new ways of being social, and being in society and the natural world.

I. Higher educators' role and responsibility to sustainability: from uncritical transmission to critical phronetic practice

Cortese (2003) urges us to:

Imagine a society in which all present and future humans are healthy and have their basic needs met. . . . Imagine a society where technology and economic activities sustain rather than degrade the natural environment and enhance human health and well-being. Imagine a future where

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the concept of waste is eliminated because every waste product is a raw material or nutrient for another species or activity or (is) returned into the cycle of nature. Imagine that we are managing human activities that restores and increases the biological diversity and complexity of the ecosystems on which we all depend. (2003: pp.15-16)

Cortese (2003: 17) argues that the mindset required to realize the above vision “must be a sustained long-term effort to transform education at all levels.” Although there are many individuals and groups of people working together towards this effort, Cortese recognizes that an education and educating for a just and sustainable world is not a high priority. To make matters worse, he maintains that those who successfully come out of the world’s best universities are in fact continuing to lead us down the present unhealthy, inequitable, and unsustainable path. Why he asks is this trajectory so? He conjectures that there are a number of structural aspects of education in general, and higher education in particular, contributing to the ongoing problem. He further maintains that a large part of this failure results from higher education stressing individual learning and competition which, he says, results in graduates who are ill-equipped and unprepared for the cooperative efforts that are necessary to change the present trajectory.

Learning in higher education remains fragmented between specialized disciplines such as law and politics, business administration, sociology, history, or economics, and also within the sub-fields of disciplines where faculty are not encouraged, in fact are often discouraged, from extending their academic efforts into (sub)disciplines and content areas other than their own. Much of higher education institutional (HEI) curricula does not, argues Cortese, ask students to challenge the following six assumptions:

1. humans are the dominant species on earth and are separate(d) from nature,
2. the earth’s resources are free and inexhaustible,
3. our world’s ecosystems can assimilate any and all human impacts,
4. technology can and will ultimately solve society’s many problems,
5. most if not all human needs and wants can be met through material means,
6. individual success and progress is independent of the health and well-being of communities, cultures, and life support systems.

Orr (2002: p.5) cited in Cortese (2003) tells us what is at educational stake and states that;

The kind of education we need begins with the recognition that the crisis of global ecology is first and foremost a crisis of values, ideas, perspectives, and knowledge, which makes it a crisis of education, not one *in* education.

Cortese and Orr both maintain that schools and society are reflections of one another, that what any society sees and values as (the) ideal very often gets taught in its schools. They also contend that what and how children and young adults are taught results in their developing certain ideals and values, and I would add also behaviors and practices, as individuals and as members of groups that are then perpetuated in the wider society when they graduate.

Cortese reminds us that formal education is seriously challenged to compete with the larger and more pervasive educational effects of, for example, highways, shopping malls, agribusiness, huge utili-

ties and multinational global corporations, the media, and non-stop advertising all of which imbues in us the values and ideas and behavioral practices extolling dominance, speed, material accumulation, and self-indulgent individualism. Aligning the higher educational experience – and I recognize that this alignment should educationally begin earlier – of students with the principles and practices of sustainability will ultimately require that the content of learning be interdisciplinary systems thinking, dynamics, and critical analysis for all majors, disciplines, and professional degrees.

Both the content of (higher) learning and its process will have to change in order for sustainability to become more than just another convenient and perhaps fragmented topic of study or discussion. Cortese sees this change involving educating to help make human and environmental interdependence, values, and ethics “a seamless and central part of teaching of all the disciplines” (2003: p.20). Furthermore, the process of educating will have to, according to Cortese, emphasize active, experiential, inquiry-based learning and real-world problem solving both on campus and in the wider larger and more global community/communities.

It is not the ability of higher education to take on this challenge (2003: p.19), but the willingness of HEI and higher educators to do so within a very strict time frame. As I write this paper it is now the year 2015, already twelve years since Cortese wrote on higher education’s role and responsibility towards sustainability. I myself have come late, not too late I hope, to this calling, and it is high time that higher education, higher educators, and HEI do likewise.

Klein (2014: 212) in reference to the public’s responsibility to be aware of the climate change crisis and act accordingly states,

It isn’t that there is no role for the public. We are called upon periodically to write letters, sign petitions, turn off our lights for an hour. But most of all we non-celebrity people are called upon to exercise our consumer power not by shopping less but by our discovering new and exciting ways to consume more. These various approaches serve to reinforce the very “extrinsic” values we should know are the greatest psychological barriers to climate action, from the worship of wealth and fame for their own sakes, to the idea that real meaningful change for climate change action can be and is handed down from above by the betters, rather than something we must demand for ourselves. These approaches may even play a role in weakening public belief in the reality of climate change.

There are clear parallels between what Klein says regarding climate change and how education is conducted. In both cases people’s individual and collective agency to effect change is something that is relied on to occur through the efforts of *others*, be they celebrities, politicians, people “in the know,” people who have material power to propose and effect “change,” or teachers who tell us what and how to study and then control both the goals and process of that study. Flyvbjerg (2001) in *Making Social Science Matter* argues that the social sciences, and I would add education in general and as a whole, should be practiced as *phronesis*. Phronesis has at its core four value-rational concerns: (1) where are we going, (2) who gains and loses and by which mechanisms of power in that pursuit, (3) is this direction and development desirable and for whom, and (4) what should we do about it?

Singer and Pezone (2003) believe that the first step to improve education is to clearly recognize that whatever problems may plague our schools, such as unequal power relations between teachers and students, lack of student voice in the content, product or process of their educating, or lack of aware-

ness of our collective agency to change the status quo, are rooted in the way society is organized and operates. An EaS study is grounded on how classrooms and classroom study can be differently conceived, reconfigured, re-organized and practiced to continue to support the status quo, or to create potential new directions for society unencumbered by socio-cultural, socio-political, and socio-economic hegemony.

II. Setting the stage for a sustainability educating: a one-world, three-tiered social study based on valuation and a critical philosophy of thought.

A one-world ontologically experiential citizenship in service to EaS can be the focus of social science-sociology interdisciplinary tertiary level course-class study. This study can be effected through a four-fold framework of what I label 3 Cs cooperative shared learning that emphasizes the economic, the social, and the ecological: (1) caring for self and self sustainable development, (2) caring for others and societies' sustainable development, and (3) most importantly connecting (1) and (2) to caring for the world's ability to sustain life in all its forms on earth. Such study is founded on R. Steiner's social three-folding approach (outlined in Lamb, 2008), B. Flyvbjerg's (2001) *phronetic* value-laden approach, the Bollinger et al (2003) one-world ontology of integrated content and language-communication approach, and (4) Splitter's (1995) Philosophy Of and For Thought approach. I will not go into details on any of these approaches here but instead refer readers to Brady (2006, 2010, 2013) for a more complete description of each approach. Within this four-fold 3 Cs framework is the primary concern of equal power relations and partner participants, teachers with students, in an interdependent individual and collective shared responsibility they together have both to *and* for society, and a shared developing communal concern for the inter-connectedness of the social and the natural worlds.

Of all that is possible and necessary for individuals and collectivities to think, imagine, and then act to protect the earth, awareness of the gravity of our unabated unsustainable trajectory is first and foremost. It is only through an educating as sustainability that an education for sustainability is possible. The first challenge for (higher) educators is to raise our own and our students' awareness of what is involved in the issue of existential experiential sustainability, both on a personal individual-group collectivity level, but also and perhaps more importantly on a systemic institutional structural level. We must begin immediately and comprehensively to seriously raise our knowledge base, our caring levels, and our awareness of how we have come to this crisis point. We must do so without creating, recreating, or perpetuating those habits of mind and behavior that have led us, and continue to lead us, to distance ourselves from active involvement in combating unsustainability and achieving sustainability.

This can not be accomplished if classroom educating continues to condone thought and practices in the wider society that serve as obstacles to our changed mindsets and behavior and our concerted action to avert climate and ecological disaster(s). In short, sustainability education (SE) must, says Medrick (2013) mirror the patterns present in the natural as well as social environment(s), and those human conditions in society that can prepare us for uncertain and rapidly transforming world conditions both social and natural. SE needs to redesign and contrast the present and predominant managerial mechanistic learning paradigm with which we have been accustomed, with a more holistic economic, social and ecological model of learning that, in Medrick's estimation will emphasize the realization of

continued human potential and interdependence of the inter-related social, economic, and ecological well being of all life.

An EaS is the actualizing means through which citizens can be transformatively educated to the ideals, values, opportunities, choices, and decisions which need be made by themselves, and other individuals, collectivities, social institutions, and governments to attack those forces that keep the world on its unsustainable trajectory. On one level people need to be aware of how they personally leave an imprint on nature every day and with every action they take or do not take. But, according to Klein (2014) we need to also be more aware of how our inaction and lack of concern to *effect systemic change(s)* has been controlled by institutional forces that continue to lead us to avoid thinking seriously and (not) acting seriously to combat the continued systemic and systematic degradation of the natural world.

In order to implement an EaS which gives hope of achieving an EfS, higher education social and natural scientists alike need to explore and differently practice their educating so that they and their students come to be much more aware of problems they hitherto did not (sufficiently) notice or simply, like myself, ignored. Some essential dispositions in this changed conceptualization and overall practice of educating would include learning:

- a. to be more inquisitive,
- b. to work for consensus and collective action though respectful dissensus,
- c. to negotiate the course/class content-base and language-communication process of shared knowledge (re)construction,
- d. to be more observant of the world outside oneself and immediate others, to be more attentive to the needs of unseen others and of the wider world,
- e. to be more reflective of what has or has not been accomplished,
- f. to be more prone to inclusive shared decision-making,
- g. to be more prepared for and accepting of ambiguity and precarity
- h. to be more organized and responsible to not only self but others,
- i. to be more prepared for learning that is not pre-determined
- j. to guess and hypothesize when and where necessary

III. A three-fold social educational sphere and philosophy of thought in service to EfS and EaS

Rudolf Steiner's ideas about a threefold social organism (Lamb, 2008;) were born out of a conversation Steiner had with Otto von Lerchenfeld, who had asked Steiner what could be done for our global world to experience lasting peace. Lerchenfeld felt that unless fundamental changes in modern society were made, there would be ongoing social unrest. Steiner's conception of the threefold social organism – rights life, spiritual-cultural life, and economic life all equal but intertwined – was offered as a way to answer Lerchenfeld's question. Referring to the spiritual-cultural sphere in particular, Steiner maintained that a healthy spiritual-cultural life is not interested in merely fostering individualism and self-development which, he says, is the goal of the economic life. A healthy spiritual-cultural life also seeks to foster concern and care for others and the world at large, where people go beyond purely personal development desires to include concern and care for others.

Steiner, however, recognized that humans are of little service to themselves or to others and the

world at large if they do not actively strive to develop their latent capacities and also new capacities. A provider of what Steiner calls any type of cultural service, a teacher for, example, “needs to “compete” for the appreciation of potential families who might (wish to) send their children to the school where said teacher is engaged ” (Lamb, 2008: 42). Those conditions absolutely necessary for healthy competition in the spiritual-cultural sphere – which includes education – are: freedom of thought, free appreciation, and freedom of choice. In short, the spiritual-cultural realm is,

balanced by the cultivation of a sense of responsibility, tolerance, and love that leads to a concern for others, and the development of capacities to be of service to society (Lamb, 2008: 42)

Whereas spiritual-cultural life is based on thought development or thinking, economic or business life is, according to Steiner, closely related to the will element in the soul life of the human being. How business is conducted has direct bearing on the evolution of humanity wherever it is, in its spiritual, ethical, and moral sense. The third part of the threefold social organism is what Steiner calls the rights life. and in this realm the main concern is not so much personal development or efficient production. Rather, the main concern is with human relations, how people relate to one another in all types of situations and activities such as fairness, civility, standards of (personal and group) conduct, proscriptions, agreements, and safety and comfort. In a healthy threefold social organism or society, argues Steiner, equality must prevail in the rights realm.

Steiner concludes that in modern society, whether conceived locally or globally, humanity suffers from the reality that it is economic life which has developed at a far more rapid rate than either the spiritual-cultural life or the rights life. The result, says Steiner, is that not only does the economic life have insufficient ethical and legal guidelines, it (the economic life) needs to accept what the other two realms develop in and offer to humanity. It is economic life, Steiner says, which dominates and directs both the spiritual-cultural life and rights life, and this dominance includes education. As economic interests continue to dominate at an accelerating rate,

the spiritual-cultural life can not be fostered and humans cannot adequately develop the spiritually creative forces and ideas needed to counter the destructive tendencies of the economic life (Lamb, 2008: 44)

Classroom life and study then can be thought of as a threefold social sphere which encompasses the economic, the rights-responsibilities, and the spiritual-cultural. Put another way, social life in the classroom involves power relations and rights-responsibilities (political considerations), caring and sharing and cooperative-collaborative endeavors (spiritual-cultural relations), and competitive individual development (economic considerations). In order that there be a healthy threefold social sphere in the classroom, all three intertwined sub-spheres must be equally developed and work together. What and how children are taught results in their developing certain ideals and values that are perpetuated in the wider society once these students become adults and go into society as local and global citizens. These values may very well include in this modern capitalistic-bent world of ours, a competitive ethos, a conviction that meritocracy is the norm, a view that instrumental-extrinsic motivations are more important, and an excess valuing of academics (i.e. knowledge and skills) over values/ideals and social or emotional development.

Splitter (1995) argues that educational quality must be defined in terms of the thinking and feeling development of students. Schools, in his estimation are and continue to be agents of manipulation as well as preservers and protectors of the status quo rather than facilitators for personal and social enrichment and liberation. Most schools, says Splitter, confuse educating with a far more narrow and primarily economic-oriented view of training, an idea that is supported by people such as McVeigh (2002), and Refsing (1992) in particular. Teachers concerned with developing a deeper more critical thinking and feeling in students must recognize, Splitter says, that “in the real world outside the classroom thinking among ordinary citizens may be more of a threat than a priority” (1995: 1).

Citizenship higher education development in service to sustainability on all levels thus needs to focus on the value-laden moral and civic dimensions of our living in an increasingly connected and globalized, yet fragmented and degraded world. Citizenship higher education can be accomplished in the context of a university language learning that is explicitly connected to and integrated with meaningful EfS life study content, and which together focuses on EaS culture, communication, interaction, negotiation, and responsibility both to and for the immediate and wider societies and the world.

Concluding Thoughts

Our private-individual and more public-collective indifference to and acquiescence in the continued degradation and destruction of the natural world and the power of the capitalistic status quo serves to condone that continued degradation and destruction. This degradation is not solely or primarily by or through our actions or inactions as individuals, but more damagingly and dangerously by the mind-sets and actions and inactions of corporations, governments which purport to serve people’s interests, and by other social institutions and structures which together conspire to keep us on an unsustainable trajectory worshipping economic growth and unfettered profit-prosperity for some at the expense of the many and the world in general. An EaS can not be imposed on teachers and students but encourages them, on their own terms and at their own speed, to develop heightened awareness of the world outside themselves and their associations, outside human technological progress, and to develop skills, thinking, and behavior to seek out practical solutions to combating personal-individual natural world and public-corporate degradation.

Through our educating we higher educators, we sociologists, need to establish a framework of higher learning that celebrates hope and optimism for the present and future vibrancy of the world. As Klein (2014) persuasively argues, social injustice, inequities, widening gaps of inequality, and the degradation of human rights in all its forms are intertwined with a philosophy that celebrates greed, profit, immediate satisfaction, and getting ahead at the expense of others and the world. Higher education, indeed education at all levels, has been and continues to be complicit in this lack of concern by not valuing the potentiality of young people to make a difference. HEI and educators can no longer afford to teach and research compartmentally and top-down. What is needed is a bottom-up educating revolution that empowers those who are “being educated” to reflexively and reflectively become aware and remain more aware of what is at stake concerning sustainability. This is a journey that I have just recently embarked on in my teaching and research as I close out my full-time higher educating career, and it is the direction in which I will proceed with renewed vigor and hope for a better world for all, especially, as I argued in a paper presented at the Social Sciences and Sustainability conference held in Hiroshima in December 2014, and especially for those who will outlive us. Sustainability education

EfS is the best and preferred overall thematic content framework for the what of a world that is in peril. An EaS is the how or process of that shared learning.

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ABSTRACT

As a higher educator working in a sociology faculty at a private Japanese university since 1991 I have, for the past 15 years been developing, in consultation and negotiation with students, an integrated sociology content and additional English language higher learning. This pedagogical-learning mission has been directed primarily in service to helping to develop students'- and my own as well - local, regional, and international-global civic and citizenship responsibilities. At the same time it has been an attempt to help integrate students' sociology content and additional English higher learning needs and desires within the sociology faculty where there has been and continues to be a rigid divide between almost 100% L1 Japanese language general and specialized academic sociology content study, and English language study. As I approach the end of my full-time teaching and researching career in higher education in Japan, I now wish to actively practice this citizenship development higher learning in service to a higher ideal: an educating as and for sustainability (EaS and EfS). There are educational justifications for adopting this approach in applied linguistics and the social science as outlined in Brady (2006, 2008, 2009 and 2010). This approach adopts what Forbes (2005) calls a learning that encapsulates *responsibility for and to society*. The latter is a clear recognition of where society now stands and what is or may be difficult, perhaps even undesirable, to (attempt) to change in society. The former is more of an imagination of what society can and ought to be, ways in which individuals and collectivities and groups of caring concerned individuals can better (their) society by first conceptualizing and then practicing new ways of being social, and being in and part of society and the natural world.

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