Proceeding Paper

Education for Environmental Citizenship: A Master's Course Incorporating International Collaboration [†]

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Abstract: Education for environmental citizenship (EEC) is a crucial component of the effort to promote societies that are aware of sustainable lifestyles and able and motivated to adopt them, and such education is acknowledged as a key component within the discourse around 21st-century global processes. A global trend calling for the incorporation of environmental and sustainability education in formal and nonformal educational systems is becoming increasingly prevalent. In line with this global trend, the present paper presents a course that will be conducted within the framework of the Master's programs at Beit Berl College in cooperation with international partners (lecturers, students). The course incorporates the ENEC's (COST action) conceptualization of EC and EEC, including the pedagogical model developed within ENEC. The course has the potential to have a wide impact on educational practice and curriculum in the field (both formal and non-formal).

Keywords: education for environmental citizenship; higher education; transformative change; social change agents

1. Introduction

Education for environmental citizenship (EEC) is a crucial component of the effort to promote societies that are aware of aware of sustainable lifestyles and able and motivated to adopt them, and such education is acknowledged as a key component within the discourse around 21st-century global processes. A global trend calling for the incorporation of environmental and sustainability education in formal and non-formal educational systems is becoming increasingly prevalent [1–3]. EEC is identified as an integral component of citizenship/civic education. Cao claims that education for citizenship and education on the environment are on a gradual path of convergence [4]. The ability to incorporate locally and culturally adapted EEC is essential for educators leading collaborative and participatory local or international initiatives.

The course we shall be presenting will be conducted within the framework of the Master's programs at Beit Berl College in cooperation with international partners (lecturers, students), utilizing partnerships created in ENEC [5] and beyond, thus realizing ENEC's goal to broaden its impact and apply the knowledge produced within the network.

2. Course Aims and Structure

The course incorporates the ENEC's (COST action) conceptualization of EC and EEC, including the pedagogical model developed within ENEC [6]. It focuses on EEC as part of the contemporary perspective on citizenship, including its role in advocating transformative change (at the individual, community, and social-system levels) by developing agents of social change.

The course aims to

- Develop a broad understanding of the crucial role of EEC in today's risk society.
- Acquire a broad, basic understanding of EC from theoretical and practical perspectives.
- Connect EC to education in general and to contemporary pedagogies.
- Develop educational interventions for cultivating EC in different educational and cultural contexts. By incorporating opportunities for cooperation and joint learning among different groups of students from different (cultural and educational) backgrounds, the course facilitates a deeper understanding of what it means to act as an educational agent of social change.

These aims are realized in the five units composing the course structure (see Table 1). Each unit concentrates on a different dimension of EEC, from understanding the importance of EEC in today's reality, through the examination of pedagogies accommodating EC, to the development of educational interventions that cultivate what it means to act as an educational agent of social change [7].

Learning and Teaching Methods

The course applies various teaching–learning methods that reflect pedagogical developments in Higher Education since the COVID-19 pandemic. Table 1 outlines the course contents and selected activities. The course will emphasize the active role of learners in the learning process, apply collaborative learning methods, and utilize digital technologies to ensure meaningful connections between learners coming from different socio-cultural backgrounds and academic disciplines. The use of ICTs in learning will also enable learners to learn from and engage with international scholars and experts, thus forming an international community of learners dedicated to the understanding and meaningful internalization of EC in educational contexts. The final assignment of the course, preparing an EC educational intervention, focuses on student collaboration, teamwork, and comparative assessments by also engaging with different socio-cultural perspectives. This will allow students to develop practical toolkits and know-how for promoting and apply EEC in different social contexts.

Table 1. EEC Course structure.

Topic of Unit/Module	Teaching Methods	Example of Activity/Student Tasks
Course presentation and expectations Acquaintance	Face-to-face	Preparatory task: Intuitive perceptions of citizenship. What is your definition of civic/citizenship education? What does being a citizen mean for me today?
Framing the discourse: - Overview of the sustainability crisis (environmental–social); COVID-19 as a case study; VUCA world and wicked problems. - Sustainable development; viewing SD goals through the lenses of EC and sustainability. Citizenship for a VUCA world: EC/EEC from the perspective of key competences for lifelong learning (case: climate change)	Asynchronous	Readings: UN, 2015; UNESCO 2017; Capra and Luigi Luisi, 2014, OECD, 2018 (key competences) Create concept map of selected sustainability issue; map newspaper article of local/global sustainability issue.
Ecological footprint: Connecting lifestyles to sustainability issues	Asynchronous; collaboration with intl. students	Calculate personal/family/etc. EF using EF calculator and using a critical, comparative perspective of barriers and enablers for making change in relation to different cultural and social-institutional contexts.

Table 1. *Cont.*

Topic of Unit/Module	Teaching Methods	Example of Activity/Student Tasks
Environmental/Sustainability Citizenship: Theories of EC—how citizenship theoreticians frame sustainability in the context of citizenship (i.e., greening the concept of citizenship).	Asynchronous	Online interview with citizenship theoretician on EC in the context of citizenship theories Team task: Readings of citizenship theories and peer teaching Recorded lecture on EC—sustainability change agent framework (Sarid and Goldman, 2021), and EEC conceptualized within the ENEC.
The ENEC framework for EC; connecting EC and change agency as developmental constructs.	Asynchronous	
Situating EEC in contemporary educational theory: Competences for lifelong learning (OECD, Israeli Ministry of Education)	Asynchronous	Movie: OECD—Education 2030 (Compass clip) Israeli Ministry of Education (2020) framework for K-12 graduates' learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, and values) Team Task: Select pedagogy from a list as an example of a pedagogy conducive for promoting EC and prepare presentation for peer learning. Meet the experts: online recordings of lectures by international pedagogical experts together with MA students in international university
Selected progressive pedagogies associated with EEC (e.g., emancipatory learning, place-based, critical pedagogy, transformative learning, inquiry-based).	Collaboration with international lecturers	
Educational change agents toward EC: Workshops for developing educational interventions devoted to incorporating EEC in different educational contexts.	Face-to-face workshops (after the semester ends)	Final Product: Develop (in teams) work-plan for an educational intervention for incorporating EEC in specific cultural and educational context. International cooperation through either (a) mini-conference (long-distance) presenting interventions; (b) joint development in international teams via mobility.

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