

Sustainable Education Video Library (SEVIL)

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Video Library

The Circle U. Interview Library is a dynamic collection of video interviews that explores diverse perspectives on sustainable education. These insightful conversations are a valuable learning resource for Circle U. partners and contribute to Circle U's Think and Do Tank's mission of transforming pedagogical curricula and teaching practices in higher education, with a strong focus on pedagogical innovation. The library showcases some of the visionaries and innovators driving sustainable education within and beyond the alliance.

The Circle U. Interview Library is a testament to the alliance's commitment of sharing knowledge and fostering collaborative learning in the field of sustainable education. Below, we invite you to explore the diverse array of insights and expertise, contributing to Circle U.'s mission and vision for a more sustainable future.

Objectives

The primary objective is to create an accessible, searchable library of video interviews that can be used for educational and research purposes. These interviews have been conducted with experts across various fields, shedding light on their ideas and practices in sustainable education. By offering these interviews as a resource, the Circle U. Interview Library seeks to support innovative teaching within the Circle U. alliance.

The Circle U. Interview Library will be made available on the Think and Do Tank's website. Each video interview will come with concise summaries and keywords, making it easy to find specific topics and discussions. This collection builds on the Think and Do Tank's white paper and furthers its priority for the development of sustainable education.

How to Navigate the Interview Library

Our Interview Library is a treasure of insights into sustainable education, carefully condensed into 5 to 7 minute videos from original hour-long interviews. To help you make the most of this resource, here's how you can efficiently explore and extract valuable knowledge:

1. Search by Keywords: You can search for specific topics by using our curated keywords. Enter a keyword in the search bar, and you'll find interviews related to that subject. This makes it easy to focus on your areas of interest.

2. Discover Summaries: Each video comes with a brief summary highlighting key points discussed. These summaries offer a snapshot of the interview, as well as highlights from the full interviews, making it easy to decide which videos to explore further.

3. For a comprehensive understanding of the context and objectives of our Interview Library, we recommend starting with the Circle U. Project Report on the [Conceptualising and Operationalising 'Sustainable Education' \(COSE\)](#). This report provides a solid foundation for exploring the interviews.

4. Further explore discussions and examples on sustainable education: To dive deeper into each discussion, please visit the Circle U. website to access the video summaries.

Searchable keywords

(in alphabetic order)

Action competencies

Action plan

Activism

Aesthetic learning

Alternative approaches to education

Bildung

Bottom-up approach

Circle U

Curriculum Mapping

Decolonizing education

Destigmatization

Digitisation

Disembodied Education

Ecological learning

Education for sustainable development

Eurocentrism

Fragmentation

Holistic understanding of education

Higher education as more interdisciplinary

Holistic training programs

Human contact

Interdisciplinarity

Life-long learning

Participatory methods

Redefining sustainability

Student responsibility.

Systems thinking

Transformative learning

Viability

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Name of interviewee: Sally Anderson

Date of interview: 02/06/2022

Position: Associate professor in educational anthropology at Aarhus university, and member of the steering committee for the Danish Center of Children and Nature (KU Center for Børn og Natur)

Institution: Aarhus University

Discipline/employment focus: Anthropologies of children, sports, religion, sociality and environment, indigeneity and struggles of decolonization in Scandinavia, education and implicit knowledge, commonality and community

Definition and Critique of Sustainability: The discussion with Anderson starts by questioning the concept of sustainability, criticising it for implying a static equilibrium, which does not account for ongoing, evolving processes. Instead of "sustainability", the term "viability" is suggested to emphasise the need for constant, processual thinking in education. The aim is to move away from mere balance and an equilibrium approach.

Incorporating the Human Condition and Environment: The importance of grounding education in the human condition and recognizing that humans are inherently connected to their natural environment is highlighted. There is a critique of education that neglects the natural environment, and Anderson argues for a more holistic approach that acknowledges this connection.

Challenges of Disembodied Education: The discussion points out the challenges of formal schooling that primarily focuses on cognitive learning, leading to what is described as "disembodied education". This disembodiment creates difficulties when students attempt to connect with the real world and nature, as well as when communicating across different fields and disciplines within universities and beyond.

Digitalization and Holistic Learning: There is skepticism about complete digitisation in education. Instead, Anderson suggests a balance between digital and analog tools to promote a holistic learning experience. Examples of projects involving both digital and analog approaches are provided.

Students' Lack of Curiosity and Knowledge: The discussion identifies a lack of curiosity and knowledge among students. An example is given where students show interest in sustainability buzzwords but often fail to conduct in-depth research on local environments. It is emphasised that many systemic issues are "invisible" and need to be made visible in the education system. The commodification of nature is also critiqued.

Institutional Opportunities and Challenges: The conversation also explores how institutions heavily rely on theory-based learning, which is described as learning "from the shoulders up". Historical and social perspectives are invoked to explain current educational practices and stereotypes associated with manual labour versus higher education.

Key words: Redefining sustainability, Viability, Disembodied Education

Name of interviewee: Raphael Costambeys-Kempczynski

Position: Director of teaching

Institution: Learning Planet Institute.

Discipline/employment focus: Culture and media studies

Mental Cultural Shift to Destigmatise Life-Long Learning: Life-long learning is an important element of sustainable education. Costambeys-Kempczynski emphasises that we need to re-address the subject of life-long learning in order to destigmatize it. The Director of teaching at the Learning Planet Institute, Paris, also explains that at present, if an individual is faced with the necessity to re-train or re-engage in vocational training and continuous education, it is primarily because the individual has encountered some form of break in their expected career trajectory. Today, it is a point of crisis that is pushing individuals to re-engage with life-long learning. However, what has become clear to us is that the upcoming generation will not have a single, linear career trajectory; they will have a portfolio of careers. Therefore, we have to make sure that life-long learning structures are in place to accommodate them.

Mental and Cultural Shift in Life-Long Learning: Costambeys-Kempczynski firmly believes that a mental and cultural shift towards learning is the requirement of our times. That is to say, we need a mental and cultural shift to understand that learning does not end when we finish school or university. Costambeys-Kempczynski shares that the act of learning should be continuous, circular and all throughout the career. Academic institutions therefore need to accommodate this paradigm shift as the requirements are in a constant state of evolution.

Translating the 17 SDGs into Academic Disciplines : Costambeys-Kempczynski shares that he has been in the process of developing analogies, metaphors and imagaries to explain big strategic ideas relating to sustainability. He had earlier asked himself what academic programs would look like if the academic disciplines were the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs). Costambeys-Kempczynski suggests such a shift in perspective would require us to switch our focus away from

history, english and chemistry. It would instead require us to concentrate on combining our academic heritage in order to reach the sustainable development goals.

Keywords : Destigmatisation, Life-Long Learning, Interdisciplinarity

Name of interviewee: Jean-Michel Rigo

Position: Professor of Physiology and Neurosciences

Institution: Hasselt University

Discipline/employment focus: Biology, University Development Cooperation Projects, Education/Research and Internationalisation

Replacing a top-down approach with a bottom-up approach for sustainable education : Professor Rigo shares his past experience in which the adoption of a top-down approach was not successful. However, 10 years ago, when it came to the incorporation of sustainability elements in pedagogical curricula at Hasselt University, the university decided to adopt a bottom-down approach instead i.e. to hear the needs of different actors, and to convince the masses that sustainability needs to be integrated into the curriculum and not proposed as a separate coursework. The bottom-down approach allowed different actors in the university sphere to embed sustainability elements into their curriculum with respect to the reality of their academic domains.

The dangers of a separate course on sustainable development : Professor Rigo shares that having a separate course on sustainable development for students studying mathematics, for example, would make the subject of sustainability unrelatable for them. However, if we incorporate elements of sustainability in their pre-existing courses e.g talk about the global pandemic in their course of applied mathematics, it would allow students to understand sustainability in the context of real-life problems without having to sit for a separate course on sustainability.

Complete digitisation of university curricula will never work: Professor Rigo argues that a fully remote or digitalised academic program will not work. On the contrary, the pandemic of coronavirus demonstrated our need for contact. Professor Rigo suggests that the user statistics of MOOCs and their low pass rates were also an example of how a total digitisation of a pedagogical curriculum is not effective. As a biologist by profession, he also maintains that people need to see each other. He shares the metaphor that humans are 'big apes' that need to touch, see and feel each

other. In other words, we need contact with each other. Rigo suggests that universities need to rethink the digitisation process of universities.

Keywords : Digitisation, Bottom-up approaches, Human contact

Name of interviewee: Maja Kofod Jensen

Date of interview: 29/08/2022

Position: Student chair of the Danish Ministry of Education and Science's working group on sustainable education in higher education. Involved in the Green Youth Movement focusing on climate activism targeting companies and politicians.

Institution: Aarhus University

Discipline/employment focus: Religious studies & social/political science.

Students' roles in bringing about Sustainable Education: Maja provides the unique perspective of a student, actively involved in bringing about sustainable education through her efforts. Maja's journey into advocating for sustainable education began with her writing an open letter addressed to the higher-ups at Aarhus University, calling for greater focus on sustainability within the university. This marked the starting point of her involvement in various projects. As a result of this letter, the university initiated the development of a climate strategy, involving not only faculty members but also two student representatives – one from the student union and one from the green student movement. However, the university's board opted for a narrower approach, concentrating on areas like energy, resources, and other tangible aspects of sustainability. Undeterred, the project members transformed this initiative into a campaign to generate political attention through social media. This campaign eventually led to Maja's appointment as the student chair of the Education Ministry's working group, which was tasked with creating a national action plan focused on sustainable education in higher education institutions.

Ideas of Sustainable Education: Maja emphasises the flexibility of sustainable education, acknowledging that there are various understandings of the concept. She appreciates that sustainable education can connect with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which have clear objectives but also recognizes that sustainability goes beyond these goals. Maja supports a conceptualization where different dimensions of sustainability, such as environmental, economic, and social, interact with, and influence, each other. Sustainable education is viewed as being inclusive, not favouring one aspect over the others but aiming for a harmonious interaction among the three dimensions.

Challenges with Achieving Sustainable Education: Maja discusses challenges in higher education, including the division between faculties and the lack of interdisciplinary collaboration. Funding and incentives are also identified as obstacles to sustainable education. To address these challenges, she highlights the importance of climate action plans targeting the education ministry as a means of driving top-down changes. While bottom-up efforts from students and lecturers are crucial, they require institutional support structures to be effective.

Key words: Student responsibility, Activism, Action plan

Name of interviewee: Jeppe Læssø

Date of interview: 19/08/2022

Position: Professor Emeritus, Advisor to Ministry's Panel on Sustainable Education

Institution: Danish School of Education, Aarhus University

Discipline/Employment Focus: Education for Sustainable Development

Jeppe Læssø, a Professor at Aarhus University and an advisor to the Ministry's panel on sustainable education, discusses his extensive experience in education for sustainable development. He has been actively involved in environmental movements since the early 1970s. Jeppe highlights the Bildung tradition in Europe, emphasising action-oriented learning and his role in creating a national action plan on sustainability education in Denmark.

Jeppe emphasises the need for more aesthetic and sensory learning experiences in education, as he believes the current curriculum is too dense and education needs to be slower. He views sustainable development as a holistic concept that cannot be easily separated into distinct components. Jeppe also advocates for participatory methods in teaching, aiming to equip students with action competencies rather than dictating the "right" way to approach sustainability.

Regarding institutional challenges, Jeppe calls for greater interdisciplinary collaboration in higher education, making it more connected to the real world. He believes that higher education institutions should bridge the gap between education and society.

Keywords: Action competencies, Bildung, Participatory methods, Higher education as more interdisciplinary, Aesthetic learning

Name of interviewee: Phillip Parmentier

Position : Professor of Science of Education / Director of Teaching Administration
(Directeur de l'administration d'enseignement)

Institution: UCLouvain

Discipline/employment focus: Educational Science

What students want/ expect from universities : From Parmentiers personal experience, students expect universities to become a key actor in addressing social issues. Parmentier specifies that students no longer simply desire to acquire academic knowledge to become mathematicians, sociologists, economists etc., but they also want to acquire knowledge that will allow them to bring changes. In other words, aside from academic training, Parmentier believes students are looking for holistic training that will equip them to transform the world.

The problem with disciplines and how to insert sustainable education in university curriculum: For Parmentier, the fragmentation of disciplines in universities is a common problem in higher education today. That is to say, each discipline in university is taught without interaction with other fields. However, the disciplines of sociology, law and chemistry alone will not suffice to solve complex problems - we need to use all these disciplines together. To do so, requires interdisciplinary practices in universities. Moving ahead, we do not need a separate course on sustainable education. Parmentier firmly believes that a course on sustainable education in schools is not the answer. Rather, the subject of sustainable education has to be embedded into disciplinary knowledge to tackle societal challenges.

What would be the optimal point of departure for entering sustainable development : Parmentier believes that we should use different doors to bring sustainable education into universities. For example, we can begin with the use of "discussions" among students and teachers to raise awareness on the need for sustainable education in universities. Parmentier also suggests the need to focus on interdisciplinary and technical responses to introduce sustainable education in higher educational institutions. He elaborates that it is our responsibility as teachers

to discuss relevant social issues and attempt to provide answers with respect to our disciplinary approaches.

Keywords: Fragmentation , Holistic training programs, Interdisciplinarity

Name of interviewee: Marcel Robischon

Date of interview: 06/09/2022

Position: Head of the Division of Agricultural Ecology at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and Circle U chair (climate hub)

Institution: Humboldt University

Discipline/employment focus: Agricultural ecology, developmental biology and ecology, world natural heritage and agricultural heritage

Circle U involvement in promoting Sustainable Education: Marcel discusses his role as a Circle U chair in the climate hub, and his participation in a range of activities, including Christmas lectures, seminars, walks, and place-based learning experiences. These projects bring together students from diverse disciplines, offering them the opportunity to engage firsthand with agricultural practices. Importantly, these initiatives foster a sense of community among participants and emphasise the idea that learning is a lifelong journey, extending to both students and professors. Furthermore, these projects encourage participants to seek learning opportunities both within and outside the traditional university setting.

Ideas of Sustainable Education/Education for Sustainability: Sustainable education is not merely a process of acquiring knowledge; it is an educational approach that has a transformative impact, lasting throughout a person's life. It nurtures curiosity and a deep-seated interest in gaining and sharing knowledge, while also cultivating habits of critical thinking. On the other hand, education for sustainability places a stronger emphasis on ecology and environmental sustainability. It involves a holistic understanding of complex, interconnected processes, often referred to as systems thinking. This definition may vary across individuals and cultures but commonly includes resource management for future generations.

Sustainable Education Practices Inside Universities: Teaching within universities is increasingly seen as an ideal means of education, emphasising the integration of research and teaching. In disciplines such as agricultural ecology, incorporating sustainability principles is relatively straightforward, given its inherent environmental focus. Sustainability concepts are woven into course curricula through examples, case studies, and on-site learning experiences, including field trips.

Sustainable Education Practices Outside Universities: Learning opportunities extend beyond the boundaries of the university. Students actively seek internships with companies and NGOs that prioritise sustainability. These experiences enable students to transform the world into their classroom, gaining practical insights into real-world sustainability practices.

Importance of Research: Research is viewed as a cornerstone of active learning within universities. Students engage in research projects, including bachelor's and master's theses, as a means of connecting with the broader world. This hands-on involvement in research often leads students to start their own NGOs or continue their research endeavours.

Students' Skills/Abilities/Knowledge: Students are regarded as active learners in their pursuit of education. Professors adopt a coaching role, providing support and guidance to facilitate sustainable learning. Self-directed learning and student-led initiatives play a crucial role in this process. Equally important is the ability to apply the knowledge acquired within the university context to real-world situations. Building networks across different nationalities and disciplines is also emphasised to foster a collaborative approach to sustainability challenges.

Institutional Opportunities/Challenges: Higher education institutions face various opportunities and challenges in promoting sustainable education. Securing funding for the development of innovative concepts is essential but often complex. Universities tend to progress slowly due to their bureaucratic nature, presenting a challenge in implementing new approaches. Additionally, student-teacher collaboration is sometimes limited, and practice-based projects may fall outside the regular curriculum, making them less accessible to all students. Nevertheless, universities are recognized as collective entities actively engaged in various sustainability projects, contributing to the broader understanding and communication of sustainability concepts.

Key words: Circle U, Transformative learning, Life-long learning

Name of interviewee: Anke Schwittay

Date of interview: 13/10/2022

Position: Professor in Anthropology & International Development

Institution: School of Global Studies, University of Sussex

Discipline/Employment Focus: Anthropology, Development, Sustainability, Creative Universities, Policy and administration

Anke Schwittay, a Professor at the School of Global Studies, University of Sussex, discusses her extensive experience in anthropology, international development, sustainability, creative education, and policy. She highlights her research on creative teaching methods and her recent book, *Reimagining Education for Global Challenges and Alternative Futures*, which explores creative approaches to higher education.

Sustainability Education and Sustainable Development: Anke emphasises the importance of sustainability education and its relationship with sustainable development. She believes in the significance of teaching students about values and concepts related to sustainability, regardless of the terminology used. She mentions the example of 'Buen Vivir,' an indigenous epistemology from Latin America, as a valuable perspective to introduce to students as a way to decolonising education.

Systems Thinking and Alternatives: Anke stresses the importance of introducing students to complexity and systems thinking to understand interconnected systems on a larger scale. She is interested in exploring alternative ways of living and addressing ecological and environmental challenges outside the realm of higher education, to examine alternative approaches in education.

Keywords: Alternative approaches to education, System thinking, Decolonizing education, Ecological learning

Name of interviewee: Meenaskhi Umesh

Position: Director

Institution: Puvidham Learning Center, Tamil Nadu, India

Discipline/employment focus: Umesh is an architect by academic training as well as a trained counsellor. She is the founder of Puvidham Learning Center,

<https://puvidham.in/>

Learning is a Natural Process : Umesh's experiences reveal that learning is a natural process and that teaching is actually a hindrance to learning. It is because when one decides to teach, they decide what they want to share. Whereas when a child learns, the child is in a position to decide what it wants to learn (author's note : and at what pace). Umesh believes that adults need to lead by example if they want their children to do something. If they want their children to read for example, parents should simply start by reading with passion themselves.

Life and Learning cannot be Separated : Umesh shares that the division of knowledge into subjects is a "technique" used by the capitalist world to make learning difficult for human beings. She emphasises that the division of knowledge into specific fields actually makes the knowledge unusable. For example, if maths is segregated from real life, it has no meaning. Only when knowledge is integrated into life (e.g calculating the cost of vegetables), is it usable. Otherwise, it is merely information.

Institutional barriers to education for sustainability : Umesh explains that the barrier to organic farming is the discourse that we need rapid food production for the growing population. However, the fact remains that the more chemicals enter the soil, the more the soil is harmed. At a point, nothing will grow. The true barriers to organic farming are then the multinational pesticide companies. Likewise, the current education system is designed to make us insecure, because if an individual feels secure and complete, they do not need the system. Umesh reaffirms that institutions will never allow education to become for the "common man".

Furthermore, one cannot shut down all schools and have a space allowing people to

be free and be who they are because that would mean businesses would not be able to sell their products. Umesh rephrases that a self-reliant, small-scale learning process - like the one she has founded (in Puvudham Learning Center) is entirely anti-capitalist. Umesh says that the community at Puvudham are creating and using the things they create. They are not dependent.

Keywords : Life and learning , Division of knowledge, Capitalism

Name of interviewee: Tasnia Yasmin

Date of interview: 05/09/2022

Position: Student at King's College, Project Assistant in the Sustainability Team at King's College

Institution: King's College

Discipline/Employment Focus: Co-creation between students and staff in Higher Education, Curriculum Mapping

Tasnia Yasmin, a master's student with an undergraduate background in geography, discusses her involvement in sustainable education projects at King's College London. She works as a Sustainability Project Assistant in the Sustainability Team, focusing on improving access to sustainable education across the curriculum. Her work emphasises student-teacher co-creation and includes projects such as Sustainable Development Goal Curriculum Mapping, involving over 60 students in mapping 1000 modules.

Sustainable Education: Yasmin highlights the concept of sustainable education, which encompasses economic, social, and environmental sustainability. She emphasises the importance of not only what you learn but also how you learn and apply that knowledge, promoting a global and holistic perspective.

Students' Skills and Abilities: Yasmin emphasises collaboration, co-creation, and the importance of amplifying student voices. Digital resources are used to connect with other universities and create a global community for adapting knowledge to local needs.

Education for Sustainable Development: Yasmin differentiates between education for sustainable development, which is external to the university, and sustainable education, which occurs within the university.

Keywords: Holistic understanding of education, Eurocentrism, Education for sustainable development, Bottom-up approach, Curriculum Mapping