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**Beyond Sustainability Curriculum Integration - Educating Otherwise**

Paul Morgan

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SUSTAINABILITY RESEARCH and PRACTICE SEMINAR

NOVEMBER 15, 2023
Professor Paul Morgan
Educational Foundations and Policy Studies

Beyond Sustainability Curriculum Integration – Educating Otherwise

Wednesday, 12:00 to 12:50 pm in person (255 A/B Sykes Student Union) and in our Zoom room: https://wcupa.zoom.us/j/91259797459, passcode: 194422
Beyond Sustainability
Curriculum Integration
Educating Otherwise
May 2024?
Sustainability Curriculum Integration

Implicit Theory of Change?
Imagine this:

2 Million Bachelor’s Degrees
1 Million Graduate Degrees

Every May, of the millions of graduates, a critical number fan out into communities and into every profession where they have the understanding, vision, and practical experience to help lead efforts to regenerate everything.
Is it happening?
Is it working?
enormous gap between the scale of the challenge and our responses
Sustainability Integration
“Almost everything being done in the name of sustainable development addresses and attempts to reduce unsustainability. But reducing unsustainability, although critical, does not and will not create sustainability”

--John R. Ehrenfeld, *Sustainability by Design*
More Sustainable?
Less Unsustainable!
Less Unsustainable
How do we ensure that our *graduates* are not our institutions’ most harmful emissions?
Our higher ed institutions have not yet made the bold transformations needed to address the depth, scale, and nature of our challenges.

It all amounts to . . .
BUSINESS USUAL.
WITH
A LITTLE MORE
GREEN
What do we do?
More of what we’re already doing?
Fallacy of Sustainability Education
First – clarity about our assumptions
We need . . .

Clarity about the scope, scale, and nature of the challenge so that we can approach our work with inspired, courageous purpose.

Clarity about what we think we’re doing and why so we actually produce graduates who are empowered to work towards a sustainable future.
How serious is our predicament?
RISK

LOW  HIGH
EVERYTHING IS FINE

KEEP SHOPPING
2. This is Solvable

The problems can be addressed adequately with changes to policy and practice, plus technological solutions.

From Hospicing Modernity, Vanessa Machado de Oliveira
3. Transformation Needed

We will need to take concerted collective action and mobilize political will in order to enable the kind of transformations that can adequately address the serious problems we face.

From *Hospicing Modernity*, Vanessa Machado de Oliveira
The depth and magnitude of the problems we face will make impossible the continuity of our existing ways of knowing, being and relating; we will need to disinvest from dominant problem-solving strategies and tap into exiled capacities to address these challenges.

From Hospicing Modernity, Vanessa Machado de Oliveira
Right Answer?
All of the Above

(minus the shopping and imminent apocalypse)
Why are solutions and collective action not enough?
Answers

• They will never do more than make an unsustainable system somewhat less unsustainable.

• Successes within Business-as-Usual tend to decrease creative tension

• We literally can’t imagine what a sustainable future looks like
At some point in the near future . . .
The Uninhabitable Earth
A STORY OF THE FUTURE
David Wallace-Wells
Pivotal Moment

Graph showing progress in change from point A to point B with tipping point and effort axis.
Obstacles to action will melt away, and higher education sustainability educators (aka, you) will be called on to present your plans for rapidly transforming the purposes and practices of higher education in order to respond to the planetary crisis.
What do we do?

What initiatives, what purposes, and what kind of learning will help us transform beyond BAU?
What do colleges and universities need to be or become to stay relevant once the sh*t has hit the fan?
In Groups

What would you propose we do when barriers to implementation melt away? Generate a list of initiatives & priorities . . .
Most of us have trouble imagining anything other than schooling-as-usual with greener stuff and a greener curriculum. Why?
The Juggernaut of Modernity
A Unique Historical Moment

“Now for the first time in human history, a particular worldview is becoming conscious of its own impending fall and has the opportunity to consciously re-forge its worldview to confront the threat.”

--Jon Kohl
Yes, but we are stuck on the juggernaut of modernity.

Why?

Because it’s not out there. It’s in us.
Modernity

is *it* in you?
Entranced by a vision of the future that has been implanted in our minds. What is that vision?
DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF ELECTRIC SHEEP?

THE INSPIRATION FOR BLADE RUNNER

PHILIP K. DICK

Introduction by Roger Zelazny

“A kind of pulp-fiction Kafka, a prophet.”
— Eric P. Nash
The New York Times
I said to my soul, be still, and wait
without hope, For hope would be hope
for the wrong thing.

-T. S. Eliot
Right Answer?
All of the Above

(minus the shopping and imminent apocalypse)
"Future generations, if there is a livable world for them, will look back at the epochal transition we are making to a life-sustaining society. And they may well call this the time of the Great Turning. It is happening now." - Joanna Macy
Sustainability Curriculum Integration for the Great Turning

1. Actions to slow the damage to Earth and its beings;

2. Analysis and transformation of the foundations of our common life;

3. A fundamental shift in worldview and values (i.e., getting off track)
Structural Changes

Holding Actions
Shifts in Consciousness

Structural Changes

Holding Actions
If we actually manage to survive here, it will be because we've moved into a new era as different from ours as the Renaissance was from the Middle Ages -- and as unimaginable to us as the Renaissance was to the Middle Ages.

~Daniel Quinn
This is Solvable (No, but . . .)

The problems can not be addressed adequately with changes to policy and practice, plus technological solutions, but we must slow damage to the Earth and its beings.

From Hospicing Modernity, Vanessa Machado de Oliveira
Transformation Needed

We will need to take concerted collective action and mobilize political will in order to enable the kind of transformations that can adequately help address the serious problems we face.

From *Hospicing Modernity*, Vanessa Machado de Oliveira
The depth and magnitude of the problems we face will make impossible the continuity of our existing ways of knowing, being and relating; we will need to disinvest from dominant problem-solving strategies and tap into exiled capacities to address these challenges.

From Hospicing Modernity, Vanessa Machado de Oliveira
Hospicing Modernity

Vanessa Machado de Oliveira

“...This is a book about breaking spells. And not just the obvious kind, but the grievously impacted, deep-in-the-syche variety.”
—Martin Shaw, author of Courting the Wild Twin

Facing Humanity’s Wrongs and the Implications for Social Activism
Soft Reform

To make the same world a little bit better through transformations of policies and practices.

horizon: single story of progress, development and evolution

methodological critique; focus on effectiveness

SAME QUESTIONS, SAME ANSWERS

Recognition of epistemological dominance

Radical Reform

To make the same world a lot better by including more people, voices and perspectives in collective action.

horizon: unification of stories in a single direction

epistemological critique; focus on representation

SAME QUESTIONS, DIFFERENT ANSWERS

Recognition of ontological dominance

Beyond Reform

To disinvest in the current unsustainable world and to walk with others into the possibility of new worlds.

horizon: learning from repeated mistakes in order to make different mistakes

ontological critique; focus on representability

DIFFERENT QUESTIONS, DIFFERENT ANSWERS
The world in which you were born is just one model of reality. Other cultures are not failed attempts at being you; they are unique manifestations of the human spirit.

Wade Davis
Threefold Curriculum Integration

• Greening the Curriculum
  (aka Solutionist)

• Critical Education for Sustainability
  (aka Transformation and Justice)

• Education Otherwise
  (aka Decolonial, Shifts in Consciousness & Worldview)
Education Otherwise

What does it look like in practice?
Climate Wayfinding for Higher Ed

a 5-part workshop to foster clarity and connection for your climate journey

application in bio
The Relational Work of Systems Change

Collective impact efforts must prioritize working together in more relational ways to find systemic solutions to social problems.

By Katherine Milligan, Juanita Zerda & John Kania | Jan. 18, 2022

Illustration by Hugo Herrera

Sometimes we lose sight of a simple truth about systems: They are made up of people. Despite all of the frameworks and tools at our disposal and all of our learning as a field of practice, purely technical, rational approaches to systems change will not make much of a dent in shifting power or altering our most deeply held beliefs. If most collective impact efforts fall short of supporting people to change in fundamentally consciousness-altering ways, then the system they are a part of will not significantly change either.

However, over the past two decades, the prevailing view among many funders, board members, and institutional leaders has been that only quantifiable and predetermined outcomes can create impact. But if the interrelated, devastating, and deepening crises and divisions over the past two years have taught us anything, it is that complex, adaptive
The Relational Work of Systems Change

Five qualities that support the transformation of systems
Imagine building these into Curriculum Integration Initiatives.
Emergent Change

• No quantifiable, predetermined outcomes
• No reductive technical solutions
• No strategic plans
Rarely do we work together in ways that catalyse shifts in individual and collective consciousness powerful enough to transform systems. To get to more radical outcomes, we need more radical ways of working together. It is both as simple and as hard as that.

Visit collectivechangelab.org to learn more.
Schooling-as-Usual

≠

A Radical Way of Working Together
How has education contributed to the problem?

How has formal education colonized our hearts, intellect and imagination with messages about and desires for individualistic metropolitan consumerism?
Most learning is not the result of instruction. It is rather the result of unhampered participation in a meaningful setting. Most people learn best by being with it, yet school makes them identify their personal, cognitive growth with elaborate planning and manipulation.

(Ivan Illich)
“School is the advertising agency which makes you believe that you need the society as it is.”

Ivan Illich
Our institutions must become simultaneously more like retreat centers and more like hubs of community engagement.
transformation is often more about unlearning than learning.

richard rohr
Thank You!

Paul Morgan
pmorgan@wcupa.edu