

Closing Remarks

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This anthology has, through its various chapters, shown four tracks in ethics and sustainability education. Introduced in the Preface, these together form an approach to and perspective on shaping education and research in this field. The first can be understood as an overarching perspective in line with continental didactical traditions that stress questions about what, how, why and for whom in all contexts where issues about teaching and learning are at stake. The second stresses the focus and content of ongoing learning processes and to what extent they are of analytical or normative character. The third is about how these processes develop and to what degree young people's integrities are being sheltered in these processes. To what extent is there room for them to openly and critically explore different positions and develop standpoints of their own, and to what degree is there an already defined point of view that everyone should develop? The fourth track is about sustainability itself, a phenomenon that is hard to define and that needs to be explored by a hermeneutics of suspicion because different and conflicting interests can be expected to operate behind its taken-for-granted goodness. Critical glasses are necessary for

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the educational practitioner as well as the researcher. In sum, one can say that the four tracks to a large degree concern the overarching didactical questions about “what”—that is, both the meaning of sustainability and analytical vis-à-vis normative focuses—and “how”—that is, the integrity of the individual that is affected by such learning processes.

The chapters have approached these tracks in a variety of ways by foregrounding them at different levels. Beyond these tracks the chapters also show (some more than others) the importance of contextualization in both education and research. Through, for instance, Chap. 3 one realizes that planned and explicit values education has to take the children’s ongoing implicit values education into account but also that so called “implicit” education may be very “explicit” from the children’s points of view. Research that aims to describe ongoing values and sustainability education could not in order to do so in a full sense be content with describing the explicit processes. This is a conclusion in line with research that in a school context underlines the importance of the hidden curriculum. In this anthology the contextual dimensions are also emphasized in Chap. 6 when stressing the essentiality of working with a life-world perspective where young people’s broad experiences are taken into consideration and their way of experiencing the sense of life is stressed. In Chap. 9 we are given examples of what this can mean in practice since it shows through examples from the author’s own education how concrete experiences have been of vital importance for students’ understanding and development. The meaning of such experience can moreover become especially clear on certain occasions, which is stressed in Chap. 2 through its presentation of the concept *le moment*. How intensive experiences and insights from fiction reading stand in relation to real-life experience is a difficult question, which several contributions address (Chaps. 4, 5, and 8). Is it possible through fiction almost to experience experiences that one has never had and overcome contextual limitations, and in that case what does this mean for sustainability education and for young people’s integrity in these processes (see e.g. Chap. 1)?

In the Preface we stress how ethics transcends all of the traditional cornerstones of sustainability (the ecological, the economic, the social and the cultural). Ethics cannot be understood as another cornerstone that can be added to the others. Questions about right and wrong, good and bad, are questions that to a greater or lesser degree are present in every process that people are involved in. Education and teaching are generally a profession that in its very nature is moral, not only in its form but to

a large degree in its selection of content. Sustainability is, as this anthology stresses, a complex phenomenon (see e.g. Chap. 7), and what perspectives—what knowledge—that education makes available and thereby possible for the students to gain is of course of importance. It will for instance affect to what degree they are able to realize the complexity and many-sidedness of sustainability and to participate in quality discussions about possible fruitful meanings. An ethical ability is often emphasized as being related to sensitivity and perception, which in turn can be understood as being related to a knowledge and understanding of how things are interconnected.

The habit of raising questions in a conscious sense about right and wrong, good and bad, what characterizes a good human being, a good life and a good society can be cultivated. A school class as a community can collectively develop a sensitivity to meanings and consequences of acts, cancelled acts and available alternatives. In such processes one's imagination, which, for example, fiction helps one to develop, constitutes a great resource. This anthology is a contribution to crucial ongoing conversations about available and sustainable common lives, about how education can make a difference in building prerequisites for such conversations in young people's everyday life-worlds and about how research can contribute to this process. It emphasizes the importance of further research in line with how sustainability education through this volume has come to be understood—that is, as a contextual, complex, normative and analytical as well as transdisciplinary task where ethical considerations are constantly present—not least regarding the centrality of young people's integrities being preserved in such educational processes.