Survey Supplement

Sustainable Development in Economic Sciences 2020

Definitions and descriptions of sustainability subject areas and of learning methods that ensure practical knowledge transfer and promote ‘shaping competences’ relevant to sustainability

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Sustainability Subject Areas

Source: (WWF Switzerland, 2018, adapted)

The following subject areas are particularly relevant to Sustainable Development in Economic Sciences:

### Subject Areas within Business Administration

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<td>Proactive Corporate Social Responsibility (Alternative Business Models, Social Entrepreneurship)</td>
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<td>• Thinking about social problems and concerns from an outside-in perspective</td>
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<td>• The role and importance of companies in society as (political) citizens (“citoyen”)</td>
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<td>Reactive Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)</td>
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<td>• Current and evolving debates on corporate responsibility for the respect of human rights along the value chain</td>
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<td>• How can the negative effects of all the company’s marketing processes on its natural and social environment be minimised</td>
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<td>• Concept of sustainability marketing and its benefits for Sustainable Development</td>
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• Key concepts and theories for sustainability-oriented innovations  
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• Different sustainability concepts and their basic prerequisites (strong vs. weak sustainability)  
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| 2  | Understanding and concepts of sustainability               | • Definition, dimensions and goals of Sustainable Development  
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• Key challenges of Sustainable Development  
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• Lessons from the financial crisis: banks as triggers of crises; derivatives and systemic risks  
• Ethical behaviour and role models in banking |
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• Sustainable investment strategies  
• Socio-economic characteristics, opportunities and risks of sustainable investments  
• Best practices to integrate environmental, social and governance criteria into the value chain of the investment process  
• Assessment tools and key performance indicators for SRI risk analysis and performance measurement  
• Sustainability reporting and assessment, which are necessary for informed SRI investment decisions |
| 5  | Sustainability in Banks and Insurance Companies            | • Sustainability in the banking and insurance industry, overview of theory, concepts and challenges, sustainable credit and underwriting standards  
• Environmental and social risks in lending  
• Sustainability as an opportunity: current practices and gaps  
• Sustainability strategy: the next generation of banks  
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| 6  | Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)                      | • Reference to the core business: sustainable business models and social entrepreneurship vs. donation ethics, risk and reputation management  
• Perspective: thinking based on social problems and concerns (outside-in) vs. thinking from within the company (inside-out)  
• The role and importance of companies in society as (political) citizens (“citoyen”) vs. economic citizens (“bourgeois”) |
| 7  | Evaluation of the Sustainability Performance of Companies  | • The importance of evaluating the sustainability performance of companies in connection with SRI  
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Learning Methods that Promote ‘Shaping Competences’

**Sources:** various

Learning methods that promote shaping competences not only promote the relevant shaping competences among students but also enable students to transfer what they have learned into practice. Typical learning methods that promote shaping competences are outlined below:

**Learning methods with some promotion of ‘shaping competences’**

**Case Studies**

*developed by Harvard Law School*

In a case study, students are presented a "case" which describes a problematic situation (real or fictional). The students are given the task of working out a solution or making a decision. Case studies are often used to enhance lessons. The solution is usually left open and the students are expected to work out a plausible result themselves. There are also case studies that provide the solution and encourage the students to discuss it and look for alternatives. A case study is therefore a description of a situation and its influencing factors that has been prepared for teaching purposes and that aims to achieve both an active examination of the content as well as specific action by the student. A case study is therefore not synonymous with an "example".

A distinction can be made between the following case types:

- Problem-finding case
- Decision-making case
- Assessment case
- Information case
- Investigation case

The learning effects of each case type differ as follows:

- **Information:** the data relevant to the case solution can be complete, incomplete or not available at all.
- **Problem:** the problem or problems underlying the case study can be explicitly specified. In contrast, the student may also be required to identify the problems independently and evaluate their relevance.
- **Solution:** the student has to search for alternative solutions and may be asked to choose one. The solution can also be anticipated and made into the subject of discussion.

**Simulations and Role-Playing Games**

*Role-Playing Games, Business Games, Serious Games, Game-Based Learning, Contests*

Simulation and learning games belong to a group of methods that creates a realistic environment in which behaviour can be tested. Often these games/activities are also used to start a (teaching) series. They are suitable for generating concern/empathy or for putting a group in a certain situation that they can otherwise only experience cognitively rather than emotionally.

Four functions are distinguished in simulations and learning games:

- **Diagnostic function:** how does a person behave in a certain function?
- **Feedback function:** a player receives feedback on behaviour or its effect.
- **Training function:** new behaviour patterns are tested and optimised.
- **Perspective function:** players slip into other roles in order to be able to assess (social) situations from other perspectives (e.g. role reversal).

Serious games are digital games that do not primarily serve entertainment purposes but may contain such elements. Serious games and educational games aim to provide information and education.
Learning methods with greater promotion of ‘shaping competences’

Problem-Based Learning
According to John Dewey

Problem-Based Learning (PBL), also known as Problem-Oriented Learning (POL), is a form of learning in which learners are expected to find a solution to a given problem largely independently. Typically, the method is planned with seven phases ("seven-jump process"):
1. Clarification of unknown terms
2. Topic identification or problem definition
3. Brainstorming on hypothesis generation
4. Systematic ordering and evaluation of the hypotheses
5. Formulation of learning objectives
6. Research ("learning time")
7. Synthesis

Project-Based Learning
According to William Heard Kilpatrick

Project-Based Learning, also referred to as project teaching or project work, is a form of teaching and learning based around a central project idea. It is an innovative method that strives to achieve more proximity to life, problem awareness and interdisciplinary thinking as well as independence and willingness to cooperate. The project usually goes through the following phases:
• Initiation – the meaning of project teaching is explained and ideas for projects are found.
• Start – the selected project is set in motion.
• Planning – negotiations take place to determine who does what, when, where, with whom.
• Implementation – the project is given a practical form.
• Presentation – the project results are presented.
• Evaluation – the project results are reflected on.
• Continuation – follow-up projects are initiated.

Action Learning
Action-oriented learning, based on a real project, according to Reginald W. Revans

Action Learning is a method of experiential learning ("Learning by Doing") for individuals or groups in companies or other organisations. In Action Learning, a team works on a specific project that is relevant to an organisation whilst at the same time reflecting on the learning process. The method typically includes the following elements:
• The decision to act originates from a client who is directly interested in the solution of a task. The team or its participants conclude a specific project agreement with the client. This contains all the important points concerning the result to be achieved, the way and means to do so, as well as details of the use of resources and responsibilities.
• A commitment to learn on the part of the participants is a prerequisite for the programme. Participants must have the will to learn new things: they are asked to improve the effectiveness of their own behaviour as leaders or part of the team, to gain a better understanding of their environment and to discover personal possibilities for exerting influence.
• The Set (which refers to a group of action learners) is central to learning success in order to encourage active participation in the solution of the task through group dynamics. In the Set, each member takes responsibility not only for their own learning success, but also for the learning success of the group as a whole. The Set usually consists of four to six participants, up to a maximum of eight. Ideally, they should have different professional and management backgrounds.
• The facilitator helps the Set to reflect on and evaluate the project experiences. He or she helps to resolve conflicts, promotes a climate of trust and provides a focus for discussions.
• A process of questioning and reflection promotes exchange and collective learning within the group. Frequently used methods for this are team reflection and problem-solving interviews.
Experiential Learning

Experiential Learning Model/Cycle, according to David Kolb

In the experiential learning cycle, learners go through a learning cycle consisting of four steps:

- **Specific practical experience:** this forms the starting point of a learning process. This experience is of a real nature, i.e. it has an observable consequence for the learner.
- **Observation and reflection:** on the basis of this experience the learner observes and then reflects on what he has seen. The experience is recalled and possible causes for the experience can be mentally played through.
- **Formation of abstract terms:** the reflection process leads to the formation of abstract terms, i.e. the practical experience influences the knowledge structure of the learner. This step leads to a generalisation, which abstracts from the specific practical experience and recognises the underlying principles. It is not until this step that the insights gained from the experience become knowledge that can be transferred to other situations.
- **Active experimentation:** in the fourth and final step, the learner becomes an actor again: by actively experimenting with the newly acquired knowledge, he tests himself in real situations. As a result of this last step in the learning cycle, practical experiences become possible for the learner again, and a second cycle begins. Since the learning cycle is repeated over and over again, the learning process becomes an upward spiral movement. Kolb emphasises that the learning cycle can in principle begin at any of the four points, i.e. even when teaching abstract concepts (e.g. theories), which are tested in practice through active experimentation and thus become tangible for the learner.

Inquiry-Based Teaching

Inquiry-based teaching is a didactic format for higher education in which students conduct their own research in the course of seminars or projects. Since students acquire knowledge independently and thus construct it, inquiry-based teaching belongs to the group of constructivist forms of teaching and learning.

Most universities in the German-speaking world use Ludwig Huber's definition as a working definition of inquiry-based teaching: "Inquiry-based teaching is distinguished from other forms of learning by the fact that the students (co-)design, experience and reflect on the process of a research project aimed at gaining knowledge that is also of interest to third parties in its essential phases – from the development of questions and hypotheses to the selection and execution of methods and the examination and presentation of the results as independent work or through active participation in an overarching project."

There are three essential characteristics that distinguish Inquiry-based teaching: students go through a complete research process as part of a course, they work on their own questions and they generate scientific knowledge.
Learning methods with significant promotion of ‘shaping competences’

Service Learning
according to Robert Sigmon

Service learning is a teaching method that combines social commitment with professional learning in the classroom. Service learning combines cognitive learning with the assumption of responsibility (service).

Service-learning combines academic teaching with civil society involvement. For example: law students who develop and run a legal advice centre for refugees. In doing so, young people learn that it is worthwhile to work for the community. They practise social and democratic skills and are able to apply their practical knowledge and experience to their studies. In this way, teaching becomes practical and hands-on. Service learning is thus based on the principle that social commitment can be combined with professional learning. In this way, "service" and "learning" benefit from each other: on the one hand, social commitment is enriched by the theoretical and conceptual knowledge acquired by the students during their studies, and on the other hand, professional learning gains relevance, reference to specific actions and depth of understanding through real-life experiences.

Service Learning is based on eight evidence-based and widely-negotiated quality standards:

- Meaningful Service
- Link to Curriculum
- Reflection
- Diversity
- Youth Voice
- Partnerships
- Progress Monitoring
- Duration and Intensity

Further information: www.benedu.ch

Project-Based Learning

Project-Based learning integrates the goals and principles of project-oriented learning but goes a decisive step further by locating and implementing projects in the real world rather than in a university context. In particular, intensive interaction with various practical stakeholders and the inclusion of their perspectives and interests result in real projects that reach a higher and more demanding level of complexity. The projects can be located at very different levels, e.g.:

- political projects
- practical non-commercial projects (if a civil society group benefits from the project, it becomes "service learning", see above)
- Purpose-driven start-ups (social entrepreneurship)

Close interaction between study content and practical implementation is crucial in project-based learning to ensure an optimal learning effect and develop real skills.

Living Labs

Living labs are a new form of cooperation between science and civil society which focuses on mutual learning in an experimental environment. Stakeholders from science and practice come together to develop and test scientifically and socially robust solutions based on a common understanding of a problem. The laboratory concept is extended from beyond its classical scientific and engineering meaning to a social context. It is expected that the scientific findings developed via living labs will be more easily taken up by politics, civil society and business, and that society will thus become more capable of taking action with regard to Sustainable Development.

In living labs, exciting learning projects can often be initiated and implemented by students. Such learning projects in real laboratories can be seen as a special form of "learning in real projects" (see above) – with similar goals and principles.
‘Shaping Competences’ Relevant to Sustainability

Source: de Haan (2008)

The ability to act requires not only professional skills, but also interdisciplinary skills. In the field of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), these interdisciplinary skills are above all the following ‘shaping competences’, according to Gerhard de Haan:

1. Being able to build up knowledge in an open-minded way, incorporating new perspectives
2. Being able to think and act with foresight
3. Being able to acquire knowledge in an interdisciplinary manner
4. Being able to identify and evaluate risks, dangers and uncertainties
5. Being able to plan and act together with others
6. Being able to take account of conflicting aims when contemplating strategies for action
7. Being able to participate in decision-making processes
8. Being able to encourage yourself and others to become active
9. Being able to reflect on your own guiding principles as well as on those of others
10. Being able to use preconceptions of justice as the basis for decision-making and acting
11. Being able to plan and act autonomously
12. Being able to show empathy for and solidarity with disadvantaged people

1. Being able to build up knowledge in an open-minded way, incorporating new perspectives

Students...

- identify the approaches and concepts for Sustainable Development of decision-makers in public policy and civil society
- adopt perspectives that enable them to outline different points of view and forms of knowledge (e.g. scientific, traditional, everyday knowledge) on global and local (non-)sustainable developments
- evaluate different (non-sustainable) design needs and patterns of action on the basis of the information obtained by adopting these perspectives
- describe and assess diversity and dissimilarity (diversity) in the cultural and ecological fields

2. Being able to think and act with foresight

Students...

- are familiar with methods of futurology (e.g. scenario technology, business games, future workshops) – adapted to their reality of life – in order to analyse problems caused by non-sustainable developments and to anticipate possible sustainable developments
- evaluate and use the results of futurology for designing Sustainable Development processes with regard to ecological systems, social justice, economic developments and political action

3. Being able to acquire knowledge in an interdisciplinary manner

Students...

- describe and explain the structure, function and development of the biosphere
- describe and explain networks of relationships to outline non-sustainable global developments (e.g. with the help of the syndrome concept)
- outline overarching sustainability concepts (e.g. strong and weak sustainability) and analyse their consequences for future developments
- outline sustainability concepts in the fields of technology, economy, trade, mobility, land use, building and living, consumption and leisure time based on individual examples
- describe and explain audit criteria for Sustainable Development (e.g. sets of indicators and auditing procedures)
- describe and assess aspects of globalisation and the perspectives of countries in their different stages of development
- describe and assess the differences between renewable and non-renewable resources and their use (e.g. renewable resources, fossil fuels)
- describe and assess concepts and visions of social justice
• outline fundamental human rights and international legal conventions and assess their individual and
global significance
• analyse and assess interdependencies between ecology, economy, politics, conflicts, poverty and
violence in their historical causes and current consequences

4. Being able to identify and evaluate risks, dangers and uncertainties

Students...
• are able to perform stochastic operations – adapted to their reality of life – with regard to statements
relevant to sustainability and justice
• can make appropriate statements with the help of heuristics and use the resulting findings in formulating
options for action
• can analyse and assess the risks and dangers of unsustainable behaviour

5. Being able to plan and act together with others

Students...
• work in groups to identify and analyse different points of view on sustainability with regard to their
background and can resolve controversies democratically in this context
• describe prejudices, concepts of the enemy and forms of discrimination and present ways of jointly
standing up to them
• name social, economic and political reasons for human rights violations, work together to develop
possibilities for the protection of human rights and are able to present forms of commitment to human
rights in a way that is appropriate to the target group and to the situation
• plan forms of solidarity that take into account provision for the future and show awareness of global
interrelationships, which they can implement using individual examples

6. Being able to take account of conflicting aims when contemplating strategies for action able to participate in decision-making
processes

Students...
• are able to estimate the temporal consequences of today's actions and plan and justify investments in
their own future provision
• are able to estimate the temporal consequences of today's actions and make currently justified decisions
for action which will benefit people or generations living in the future
• describe possible solutions for multi-criteria decision-making problems where different problem
definitions exist and/or Sustainable Development goals are in competition with each other
• can identify and describe social decision dilemmas in the context of everyday life
• can jointly discuss problem situations in which improvements can be made in one field of action while
accepting deterioration in another field of action, and justify proposed solutions
• develop concepts for sustainable action, taking trade-offs into account, on the basis of jointly
implemented transparent consideration processes

7. Being able to participate in decision-making processes

Students...
• describe solidarity and provision for the future for people and nature as a common and social task
• illustrate how cooperative problem-solving can be realised in the development of action strategies for
Sustainable Development
• identify and demonstrate procedures for reaching agreement on the goals and processes of Sustainable
Development in the case of normative and political differences (e.g. in the form of business games,
mediation)
• can constructively manage differences of opinion and conflicts on issues of (non-)Sustainable
Development
8. Being able to encourage yourself and others to become active

Students...

- describe their own and collective learning paths in the context of sustainability and outline how these can be used for further learning
- describe individual and collective motivations for participation in democratic decision-making processes and sustainable action
- describe and assess forms of collective commitment to solidarity activities (e.g. against poverty, discrimination or environmental risks)
- can describe and evaluate their personal handling of dilemmas, uncertainties and open situations
- describe their motivations for participating in democratic decision-making processes and sustainable action
- use self-motivation methods for commitment to sustainable forms of economy and life

9. Being able to reflect on your own guiding principles as well as on those of others

Students...

- describe lifestyles that ensure and promote sustainable consumption, environmentally and socially compatible mobility and leisure activities, and health
- are familiar with and discuss criteria for the production and purchase of products taking into account ecological, economic and social aspects
- determine and assess the background, forms and effects of their own lifestyle as well as the lifestyles of other people and societies with regard to the living and working situation of other people and the biosphere

10. Being able to use preconceptions of justice as the basis for decision-making and acting

Students...

- can assess and describe the effects and side effects of their actions on others
- can give and discuss examples of the advantages of considering the rights of others
- can distinguish and identify types of justifications for entitlement rights (due to performance, need or total utility) and justify their view of their validity
- can identify intergenerational conflicts of justice and offer responsible proposals for their solution
- can indicate the limits of moral conflict management and formulate and discuss examples of the conflict management function of institutions

11. Being able to plan and act autonomously

Students...

- are familiar with and can discuss their personal rights, needs and interests, describe their limits with regard to the goal of Sustainable Development processes as well as the rights of other people, and specify possibilities for standing up for the rights of future generations
- demonstrate their own experience of independent planning and independent action by carrying out a sustainability project
- draw up their own life plans from the point of view of sustainability and describe personal projects for their development

12. Being able to show empathy for and solidarity with disadvantaged people

Students...

- describe and assess forms of individual, social, economic and political assumption of responsibility for (non-)Sustainable Development processes
- represent ways in which empathy and solidarity with disadvantaged people and communities can be practised locally and globally
- describe ways of expressing empathy for nature which target the relevant addressees and evaluate different approaches with regard to their own possibilities for action
Bibliography
