Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) teachers’ conception of sustainable development: some insights from South Africa

Carina America
EMS EDUCATION

GET-PHASE → EMS → FET-PHASE

EMS
1. Economic Literacy
2. Financial Literacy
3. Consumer Literacy
4. Entrepreneurial Knowledge and Skills
5. Managerial Knowledge and Skills
6. Leadership Knowledge and Skills

Accounting
Economics
Business Studies
EMS Education

• National Curriculum Statement (NCS): Learning Outcomes (LO):
  • LO1: Knowledge and understanding of the economic cycle (20%)
  • LO2: Understanding sustainable growth and development (15%)
  • LO3: Managerial, consumer and financial knowledge and skills (30%), and
  • LO4: Entrepreneurial knowledge and skills (35%)

• Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS): Topics
  • The economy (30%)
  • Financial Literacy (40%); and
  • Entrepreneurship (30%)
Sustainable growth and development and EMS education

- Exploring the challenges of distributing scarce resources in relation to society’s unlimited wants.

- The economic cycle deals with the flow of resources and goods and services amongst the different sectors in the economy, including households, business, government and the foreign sector.

- Reconstruction, Sustainable Growth and Development in South Africa are crucial to redress.

- The economic environment encourages learners to explore the world, society and the economy as a set of related and interdependent systems.

(DoE, 2006)
Rationale for this study

- Challenges: EMS-education
  - Focus areas in GET-band
  - Focus on Accounting more than Economics and Entrepreneurship
  - Subject matter content knowledge of teachers are varied
  - Progression to FET-band

- Complexity of sustainable development

- Relevance of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)
  - ESD prioritises the changing of mindsets and an active engagement of the learner in matters relating to a more sustainable future.
Sustainable growth and development

- **Sustainable growth**
  - “When something grows, it gets bigger. When something develops, it gets different. The Earth’s ecosystem develops (evolves), but it does not grow. Its subsystem, the economy, must eventually stop growing, but it can continue to develop and change indefinitely” (Daly, 1992:1).
  - It is impossible to have infinite growth in a finite environment. (Schumacher in Stubbs & Cocklin, 2008:208)

- **Sustainable development**: complex and contested
  - South African Framework for Sustainable Development placing government as a legitimate regulatory body for the dynamic interaction between the economic system, socio-political system and ecosystem (RSA, 2008:15)
  - “…development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987:43).

- **Economy, Environment and Society relationship**
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

ENVIRONMENT

SOCIETY

ECONOMY

SD
Research Methodology

• A case study design strategy

• Qualitative research approach
  • **Research question:** How do EMS teachers understand the concept sustainable development?
  • In-depth interviews
  • Content analysis
## Profile of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Teaching subjects <em>Current</em></th>
<th>Profile of School</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1 year 6 months</td>
<td>B Ed Gen Degree</td>
<td><em>EMS grades 8 &amp; 9</em></td>
<td>Previously disadvantaged; Pilot school; Afr. &amp; Eng</td>
<td>Temporary Teacher</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>13 years 5 months</td>
<td>B Com Gen HDE</td>
<td>*EMS grades 8 &amp; 9; Business Studies grades 10 to 12</td>
<td>Ex-Model C</td>
<td>Subject Head: Business Studies</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>18 years 6 months</td>
<td>B Com (Gen) HDE ACE Accounting</td>
<td>EMS grade 9 Economics Gr. 11 Accounting grades 10 to 12</td>
<td>Previously disadvantaged; Pilot school; Afr. &amp; Eng Focus School of Commerce</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>22 years 4 months</td>
<td>HDE (4yrs); Advanced Diploma in Bus Management (1yr)</td>
<td>EMS grades 8 &amp; 9; Business Studies grades 10 to 12</td>
<td>Ex-Model C; Afrikaans medium</td>
<td>Subject Head: EMS</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>29 years 11 months</td>
<td>B Com (Gen); Teachers Diploma Commerce; Advanced Diploma</td>
<td>EMS grades 8 &amp; 9; Economics grades 10 to 12; Accounting grade 10</td>
<td>Ex-model C school; Eng medium; 100% pass rate since 2000</td>
<td>Permanent teacher</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>31 years 6 months</td>
<td>HDE (4yrs)</td>
<td>EMS grades 8 and 9; Business Studies grades 10 to 12</td>
<td>Ex-model C school; Eng medium;</td>
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<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>21 years 6 months</td>
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<td>EMS grades 8 &amp; 9;</td>
<td>Previously disadvantaged</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
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Interview questions

• Q1: LO2: sustainable growth and development

• Q2: Curriculum aspects of LO2

• Q5: Sustainable growth

• Q6: Sustainable development

• Q15: What it is that needs to be sustained
Main categories

- **Purpose** - the reasons why sustainable development is necessary.
- **Nature** of the development, i.e. economic, social or environmental.
- Human **Focus** - referring who the development is for.
- **Time Scale** – over which time span the development is envisaged.
- Geography **Scale/Level** – area and/or scale, i.e. local, global, etc.
- **Challenges** – conflicting issues with regard to sustainability (Summers, Corney and Childs, 2004, Walshe, 2008)
- **Redress** – reconstruction and development [EMS curriculum]
Example of coding of Nature category

- Growth target (line 66)
  - Get foreign help (line 68)
  - Get money into the country through investments (line 69)
  - Foreign companies want to invest (line 70)
  - Foreign investment (line 73)
  - Starts with investment (line 81)

- Creating jobs (line 72)
  - World cup has made employment possible (line 73)
  - Starts with employment (line 81)

- Where the economy is concerned... strikes... other sectors (line 75)

- More production, must be more generating of money (line 78)
EMS curriculum:
Understanding of Learning Outcome 2

LO2: Sustainable growth and development

REDRESS
IMPROVEMENT
ENVIRONMENT
ECONOMY
SOCIETY
GEO SCALE: LOCAL
CHALLENGES

0 1 2 3 4 5

A B C D E F G
Responses to Question 15: What is it that needs to be sustained

<table>
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<tr>
<th>QUESTION 15</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
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<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>NATURE: ENV</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>NATURE: SOC</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>CHALLENGES</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Economy:
• entrepreneurs and …profitability [3]
• manufacturing sector [1]
• new jobs [2]
• Infrastructure [1]
• natural resources [1]
• better GDP [1]
• healthy climate for foreign investment [1]
• increased productivity [1]

Environment:
• the planet
• there must be something for descendants
• If we cut off trees, we need to put it back in nature
‘NATURE’ Category

Q15: WHAT IS TO BE SUSTAINED
- ENV: 3
- ECO: 6
- SOC: 4

Q6: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
- ENV: 3
- ECO: 11
- SOC: 3

Q5: SUSTAINABLE GROWTH
- ENV: 11
- ECO: 4
- SOC: 4

Q1: EMS LO2: SUST GROWTH & DEV
- ENV: 1
- ECO: 4
- SOC: 4
Sustainable growth, sustainable development, what needs to be sustained

- Purpose: IMPR 5%
- Nature: ENV 8%
- Nature: ECO 38%
- Nature: SOC 11%
- Who For: CGEN 1%
- Timescale: LT 3%
- Geo/Scale: NAT 8%
- Geo/Scale: LOC 8%
- Challenges 16%
Learning Outcome 2: Responses: Specific Concepts:

**REDRESS**
- RDP [3]
- Apartheid history important [1]

**IMPROVEMENT**
- National Budget to spread income equitably - improve quality of life [3]

**ECONOMY**
- Globalisation, international marketing [1]
- Business functions...saving and demand supply [1]
- History of banks [1]
- Entrepreneurship [1]; we look at micro businesses [1]
- Personal budgets [1]
- Different sectors and business functions [1]
- Infrastructure [1]

**SOCIETY**
- Social grounds...poverty, look at electricity....basic needs that are not met, sanitation... [1]
- What the government is granting social grants on [1]
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

• The predominant responses were identified as economic factors, followed by societal and then environmental impacts.

• Redress is an important focus of LO2

• LO is complex - challenge for teaching and learning

• Depth and breadth of curriculum concepts for LO2 is not fully understood
Why Redress is an important focus of LO2:

• It formed part of the prescribed content in the EMS curriculum at the time of the study;
• the South African Apartheid past is still firmly embedded in the psyche of many South Africans;
• redress continues to be a central focus in economic development frameworks proposed by the Government, e.g. RDP, GEAR, and now the New Growth Path, ;
• its implementation by the Government is perceived as lacking and therefore seems to be a recurrent objective; and
• redress is perceived as the solution to development problems such as poverty, joblessness, and inequality.
The way forward

- Interrogation of curriculum content in EMS education

- Interconnection of Environment-Society-Economy

- Education for Sustainable Development in EMS education?
The way forward: Introduction of concepts

- **Economic sustainability**
  - Sustainable consumption and production, resource use, resource exploitation, green economy, overuse of resources, poverty, environmental problems, environmental protection, recycling, renewable resource, preservation of resources, government policies, global competition, ecological footprints, population increase, economic power, living standards factors, future generations

- **Environment and Accounting Education**
  - Triple bottom line – planet, people, profit, government policies, social responsibility, corporate sustainability

- **Sustainable entrepreneurship**
  - Government policies, social responsibility, sustainable innovation, cleaner production, wealth creation and equity, sustainable consumption, waste management, energy efficiency, rethink, refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle
Thank you
References


Daly, H. 1992. Sustainable development is possible only if we forgo growth. Earth Island, 7(2):12.


