Discerning the *Extras* in ESD Teaching: A Democratic Issue

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**Introduction**

There is an ongoing debate in contemporary research of education for sustainable development as to how good environmental education ought to be conducted and which goals should be accomplished (Fien, 1993, 2004; Hart, 2003; Huckle & Sterling, 1996; Jensen, Schnack, & Simovska, 2000; Kyburz-Graber, Hofer, & Wolfensberger, 2006; Sund & Wickman, submitted; Tillbury & Turner, 1997). The educational content is rarely commented on, however, except to note that the often dominating ecological subject content should be extended to include content from areas such as economics and the social sciences. According to Sterling (2004) and Bonnett (2003a) this is not enough: education itself also needs to be changed. A transformed education is an important aspect of sustainable development and not just an instrumental tool by which society might reach sustainability. From a democratic perspective, it is essential to make the current tendency of change from environmental education (EE) to education for sustainable development (ESD) much more visible. In other words, the aim should be to turn the globally discussed change of a school subject into a lifelong learning perspective (Breiting, 2000). Doyle (1992) thinks that the dichotomy between subject content and the conduct of teaching is created. Schnack (2000) emphasises that the actual creation of teaching is to be regarded as a teaching content: "The central curricular question is no longer simply concerning the process of education, but must itself form part of the content" (p.123). If it is as Schnack (2000) and Doyle (1992) describe, then educational researchers need to grasp the content issues in a much more holistic way and study subject content, teaching methods, and perhaps also teachers’ aims, simultaneously. Munby and Roberts (1998) point to the importance of studying the educational context that arises through teachers’ different messages to students and is communicated through speech and other actions during the actual practice of teaching. The conclusion of this introductory discussion is that there is a need for an analytical tool with which to put together and offer an overview of educational context. The context in which subject content is taught is here called the socialisation content (Östman, 1995).

One important point of departure for this study is that the learning of subject content and socialisation content occurs simultaneously, and together they constitute the educational content. This study focuses on the socialisation content, which is studied through describing teachers’ different starting points for their messages to students. These might be different messages *about* the subject content, different messages *in the teaching process*, or whether the students are allowed to become more involved in the experience of education.

There are several arguments for studying the educational content of schools in a more overarching way. One important reason is to create conditions for more open and democratic discussions. In a democratic country the school’s educational content should be subject to a common critical investigation, where the nature of the content and its extent are as apparent as the motives. The extended subject content in ESD is often easy to present, while the socialisation content is hardly known or noticed. The subject matter and its pedagogy are especially important in ESD, given its value-related nature (Corney & Reid, 2007) (see Lundegård, this volume). The starting points for teachers’ value-related and often hidden choices of socialisation content are of common political interest. These therefore need to be made visible, rather than implied or insinuated as a kind of tacit background (Bonnett, 1999).
This has its origins in teachers’ choices in a number of different fundamental educational aspects, which could be fruitful in terms of illustrating and understanding the relation between EE and ESD.

The aim of this study is to contribute to a better developed knowledge of content in environmental education and education for sustainable development. This study analyses the socialisation content in EE and ESD and its points of departure in central aspects of education. The socialisation content is the educational context in which a subject matter is communicated. By studying earlier research concerned with the content and conduct of environmental education, the purpose is thus to develop an analytical tool for researchers that could help to make teachers’ communicated socialisation content much more visible. In other words, by formulating specific questions about different aspects of education, these questions could be regarded as an analytical tool that not only facilitates the identification of the different messages that teachers communicate to students through speech and other actions but also makes them more visible.

In this way I would like to contribute to the development of opportunities for researchers and teachers to talk about content issues in ways other than the more usual subject-related approach. Moreover, the results allow all the educational stakeholders to challenge and critically examine the content and value-related starting points presented in EE and ESD.

**Theoretical starting point**

In the section that follows I describe a way of studying socialisation content more closely by developing a tool that facilitates a systematic encounter with teachers’ different messages during the conduct of education. The tool has been developed in an attempt to describe and make such messages visible, and at the same time account for their starting points in fundamental aspects of teaching.

Teachers have a profound impact on students’ learning (see Jonsson, this volume): “Teachers author curriculum events to achieve one or more effects on students” (Doyle, 1992, italics in the original text). Teachers can be said to direct their teaching, and often invite students to take part in a mutual creation of education. In this direction teachers do not only explicitly communicate a certain intended content, but through speech and other actions also communicate a number of other unintended, implicit messages. These tell the students what is to be regarded as important, what is being aimed at, or how the content might be related to the world at large. These messages help students to understand the context in which the content should be understood, and socialise them in a specific educational context. Content and socialisation content can provide meaning for students (Östman, 1995). A differentiation is often made between learning and socialisation (ibid), but rational facts are not value neutral (Bonnett, 1999). The learning of scientific meaning is accompanied by others e.g. the teachers’ view of nature. These companion meanings (Roberts, 1998) can be seen as offering students different meanings (Englund, 1990), even though it is not at all certain that all these offerings will be developed into something that has meaning for them. Östman and Roberts (1994) express this uncertainty about which offerings might be expected to become meanings as: “Our point is that some meanings are more likely to develop than others, according to what is available to the learners”. In this sense, companion meanings can be regarded as a socialisation content that consists of different offerings to the students and where together with subject content these can be developed into deeper meanings and understandings.
In previous educational research socialisation content has traditionally been understood as a deliberate fostering content in order to, for example, maintain specific societal norms (Östman, 1995). Like Östman (1995), this study does not regard the socialisation content as necessarily fostering. This study does not make any distinction between those parts of socialisation content that could be fostering and those that are not. In addition, the study does not make any distinction as to whether the teacher consciously (intended) or unconsciously (unintended) communicates socialisation content, or whether its origin in relation to other central educational aspects is consciously reflected upon or routinely selected by teachers. The study departs from the fact that subject matter is always communicated in a specific educational context. From a learning perspective, Scott and Gough (2003) describe this as “learning always take place within a pre-existing but often dynamic context of power relations, rules, expectations, historical narratives and perceptions of group and individual interests, which affect not only what learners learn but what they think is important to learn and why”. Companion meanings are consequences of how teachers themselves relate to different questions about important educational aspects, which together form a dynamic teaching context.

In an earlier study I emphasised that teachers’ teaching purposes were closely related to their conduct of teaching (Sund & Wickman, submitted). In similar fashion, Hart (2003) argues that "they [teachers] appear to me to articulate this environmental/ecological consciousness practically through their conscience and their actions as teaching professionals with social responsibilities ” (italics in original). It would thus appear that teachers’ practical teaching activities support their ideas about good education; something that could certainly be regarded as obvious. Although the subject matter in different environmental educators’ teaching is often relatively similar in character (Sund & Wickman, submitted), it is possible to identify differences in their teaching by examining the socialisation content. Roberts and Östman (1998) have pointed out that content other than just subject content is communicated in teaching:

Science textbooks, teachers, and classrooms teach a lot more than scientific meaning of concepts, principles, laws and theories. Most of the extras are taught implicitly, often by what is not stated. Students are taught about power and authority, for example. They are taught what knowledge, and what kind of knowledge is worth knowing and whether they can master it. They are taught how to regard themselves in relation to both natural and technologically devised objects and events, and with what demeanour to regard those very objects and events. All of these extras we call “companion meanings”.

(p. ix, emphasis as the original)

These extras that Roberts and Östman (1998) illuminate here are generally concerned with companion meanings about the subject. This study takes into account that the dichotomy between what and how can be regarded as being created (Doyle, 1992) and seeks to show that companion meanings are communicated through different kinds of actions. It is also important to create opportunities to illustrate those companion meanings that are not directly related to the subject but to how the teaching is actually carried out (Munby & Roberts, 1998). It thus becomes important to show that teachers, through their teaching activities, continuously connect with and make decisions about different aspects of teaching. My understanding is that Hart (2003), in his descriptions of teaching practice that align with other teachers’ descriptions of their practices (Sund & Wickman, submitted), has observed that teachers’ purposes and value-based choices come to expression during the actual process of teaching. These companion meanings, expressed as the teaching is actually lived through, constitute a socialisation content that occurs in the interplay between how and what and that needs to be made more visible in order to facilitate democratic insight into the teaching.
content. Teachers make different choices in their teaching, and their standpoints can often be concealed in a variety of teaching habits (Wickman, 2004). Each teaching situation is preceded by different choices that include the selection of specific values and can together be regarded as a kind of ideology or worldview (Östman, 1995). In the actual practice of their teaching teachers also make habitual choices, which mean that points of departure and socialisation content are often hidden, or perhaps even forgotten in these teaching habits. From a democratic perspective, Östman and Roberts (1994) maintain that it is essential that all the content that is communicated in school is made visible and presented to all the stakeholders:

The informed involvement of teachers and other stakeholders, based on a thorough understanding of the choices being made – choices of both subject matter content and companion meanings – is vital to the conduct of education in democratic countries. The selection process has a moral character, in that some consequences for students are being privileged over others, and the moral responsibility for making the choices is shared among all stakeholders in the curriculum development process. Hence the need for all stakeholders to understand. (p. 3)

It is important that the points of departure for teachers’ choices are visible when they are expressed as socialisation content in the practice of teaching; something which may also have consequences in terms of the students’ futures. In a democratic society these value-related starting points are of great common interest and should therefore be made known and visible for critical examination. The starting points for teachers’ choices can be sought in important aspects of teaching. These are often intertwined together like a web (Bonnet, 2003a). This study is thus not aimed at dividing teachers’ teaching into smaller separate parts, but instead attempts to make more of its content more visible. In other words, the analysis tool outlined here could help researchers and other stakeholders to unfurl and make visible those parts of teachers’ teaching content that are often concealed in teachers’ habitual choices in the actual conduct of their teaching.

Development of the analytical tool

The following section describes how the analytical tool’s questions are identified by focusing on essential aspects of teaching. The word “aspect” is used here to point out that the points of departure for companion meanings are very varied and include e.g. ethical dimensions as well as more overarching relations or dimensions of educational content. This section begins with a short discussion as to why questions on aspects of teaching are meaningful. Different examples from previous research are then studied, which help to illustrate why these aspects are regarded as essential in the teaching of environmental issues.

The literature analysis uses earlier research as data, and points to a number of examples that can be referred to or equated with discussions about different kinds of companion meanings. Those examples that touch upon similar aspects in environmental education are brought together to form a foundational question. In connection with this formulation I add a few personal comments based on my own experience of working with teachers’ long-term teaching purposes (Sund & Wickman, submitted). Finally, a foundational question relating to a specific and important aspect of EE and ESD teaching is formulated.

Although the selection of research literature is varied, it does not attempt to provide a comprehensive description of the research discussion on content. The intention is rather to show examples of different areas of EE and ESD research. The examples have been selected from policy debates, research on student participation, the differences between EE and ESD,
and critical research. The purpose of the selected literature is to highlight different and important aspects that can together illuminate the origins of socialisation content in a more fruitful and holistic way. A summary of all the formulated questions is provided in Table 1. These questions should be regarded as foundational questions that can be reformulated in order to best serve different research data.

One way of discerning socialisation content, the extras, and its points of departure is to formulate questions. Researchers like Wals and Jickling (2000) have formulated questions about e.g. the starting point of the learning process: “Does the learning process depart from the learners own ideas, interests, values, etc?” The answer to this question communicates companion meanings about the teachers’ view of the students’ roles and significance for the current teaching situation. The companion meanings can be described and systematised and together highlight the socialisation content’s starting points; a central educational aspect which in this case is constituted by teachers’ approach to power relations between teacher and students.

Important educational content aspects in the connection of what and how
The relationship between man and nature is a central aspect in EE, which often derives its main subject content from the natural sciences (Bonnett, 2003b; Östman, 1995). In actual teaching, companion meanings are communicated about e.g. whether man can be regarded as part of nature or whether man is outside nature and merely administers it in the best interests of mankind (see Kronlid and Svennebeck, this volume). Teachers’ views of man’s relation to nature can be communicated through different companion meanings as to why environmental issues are important (Sund & Wickman, submitted). If the teacher considers man as part of nature it follows that a threat to nature is also a threat to mankind, which means that in education environmental issues are often regarded as urgent questions of survival. But if teachers consider man to be more a manager of nature’s resources, companion meanings are often communicated as to how technical advancements and more ecologically-friendly lifestyles reduce man’s impact in a relatively controlled way. Teachers’ answers to questions of why environmental issues are important take their departure in teachers’ value-related choices or attitudes to the relationship between man and nature, and communicate companion meanings to the students of nature as an object to administer or as a common subject to be rescued.

Teachers’ more general views about the purpose of education can be called an educational philosophy, which is an important point of departure in teachers’ conduct of teaching (Sandell, Öhman, & Östman, 2005). Two main purposes can be formulated: students should be developed into independent individuals or to be developed to participate in the collective work of society. All education has an inbuilt tension that teachers have, in one way or another, to deal with: that between educating autonomous, critical individuals or democratic citizens who are expected to learn and abide by the different norms of society (Bonnet, 2003a; Bonnett, 1999; Öhman, 2004). Teachers can develop the individual by teaching them more scientific facts and supporting them in their personal development of more environmentally-friendly values. The collective can be developed by practicing democratic abilities such as critical thinking, argumentation and presentation (Nikel, 2005; Sund & Wickman, submitted). This educational aspect, which concerns the individual or collective emphasis of teaching, is also made visible through the ways in which teachers organise their teaching and educational settings. Teaching can be product-oriented or focus more on the teaching and educational process, in which content is created together in different ways and for common mutual purposes. Teachers can choose whether to communicate facts and actively participate in the
students’ work and challenge them to rethink their values, or invite students to participate through group discussions and student-planned actions (Jensen & Schnack, 1997). Companion meanings that have their origins in aspects of teaching that connect with the overall purpose of education can be made visible by asking, what is the teaching aiming to change? Teachers’ different approaches to knowledge also communicate companion meanings as to what is essential for the students to master and how this can be developed in their education so that they can successfully and fruitfully participate in environmental and sustainable development work.

According to many researchers the content of an integrative environmental education or education for sustainable development should be in some way related to a more general context of humanity (Fien, 2004; Huckle & Sterling, 1996; McKeown & Hopkins, 2003; Nikel, 2005; Sterling & Cooper, 1992; Sund & Wickman, submitted). The discussions have also considered whether different “adjectivals”, such as peace education, human rights education and development education can be included in ESD in a natural and genuine way (Sterling & Cooper, 1992). An education that regularly illumines different inter-human and inter-generational aspects, with time and space dimensions, should have the qualities necessary to include such adjectivals. Molander (1996) describes how teachers communicate knowledge that students do not directly need to learn. He argues that such knowledge should rather be regarded as different connecting points for students and teachers in a larger educational context and that point to something beyond themselves and their contemporary educational situation. Molander (1996) refers to this type of knowledge as orientation knowledge. This concept describes knowledge that justifies teachers’ and students’ choices of goals as well as the different alternatives selected in the conduct of education. Orientation knowledge could be regarded as a kind of overall social directional compass for the entire educational content. This concept also facilitates the inclusion of a more human ethical content in EE discussions, thus enriching the hitherto traditional environmental ethics content. In other words, it aids a moving away from an emphasis on an empathy-with-nature approach towards more a explicit focus on an empathy with other people living now and with generations to come (Breiting, 2000). I recognise this latter empathy as one that is concerned with inter-human relations. Making use of the concept orientation knowledge can be a fruitful way of connecting the often normative policy levels of the world community and its instrumental view on the role of education to teachers’ operational levels, where the aim is often towards a more open and less normative approach to education. Sterling and Cooper (1992) explain that EE has an inner, more human dimension, and the human ethical reflection that has been described here could be apprehended as an inner dimension. With a starting point in an ethical dimension that consists of differing degrees of inclusion of human ethics, teachers communicate companion meanings about solidarity, justice and other expressions that reflect education’s more overarching role in human development. Teachers’ value-related choices in terms of the ethical dimension are made visible by companion meanings in response to the question: Which different inter-human relations are established?

Several researchers have stressed the importance of offering students opportunities to work in more outward-oriented ways for society and the world (Bonnet, 2003a; Bonnett, 2003b; Fien, 2004; Huckle, 1996; Jensen, 2000; Jensen & Schnack, 1997). Through an intimate cooperation between education and the surrounding society it is possible to develop students’ personal abilities so that they can actively, and in a qualified way, participate in society’s common work of change. Jensen and Schnack (1997) have developed the concept of action competence, which describes how students can be encouraged to develop both personal and collective abilities and achieve an action competence. By allowing and supporting students’
own planning of different actions in society, companion meanings are communicated in the teaching process about the existence of environmental and developmental issues in students’ lives. The mutual interests of school and community thus correspond. Teaching that is mainly conducted in the classroom can contribute to making students understand that environmental issues are something relevant and important mainly in school i.e. as a topic or an occasional feature in their education. Students working with other classes, or communicating with other schools nationally or internationally, are communicated companion meanings that inform them that environmental issues are common concerns for many people all over the world (Fien, 2004). Students using authentic information material that has been produced by e.g. the UN can develop a sense of being important participants in work on global issues. (Sund & Wickman, submitted). Teachers’ attitudes to the relation between school and society can be made visible by studying companion meanings that describe where and how students can work with environmental issues. Companion meanings are communicated about different outward-oriented contacts where the school and the surrounding world communicate. The space within which students can be active in society and the community can be made visible by asking: How useful is school knowledge in environmental and development issues?

Munby and Roberts (1998) think that students have the right to comprehensive information in their education and they regard this as a power aspect between teachers and students, where teachers can offer students full democratic influence. This influence gives students possibilities to create a democratic space that I call students’ action space. Wals and Jickling (2000) also framed questions as to how students might be allowed and encouraged to be active participants in education: “Does the learning process allow for active participation, democratic process, ownership, and empowerment to emerge?” This is about students’ possibilities of participation and shared responsibility. Öhman (see this volume) discusses this in terms of democracy and citizenship constantly permeating the common activities, i.e. being included in the education. Some kind of action space should thus exist from the very start; an action space that gives students opportunities to develop as active participants in their own education. Democracy in education should not come before nor after education, but in it (ibid). Jensen (2000) argues that it is the teacher who creates the possibilities for students’ democratic space: “the challenge facing the adult (i.e. the teacher) therefore is to create space in which the pupils can demonstrate this [action] competence.” Teachers’ value-related approaches in power relations between themselves and their students are expressed in companion meanings about teachers’ views of their students’ citizenship, whether they should claim and exercise this, or whether they already have an action-space. In the conduct of their teaching teachers communicate companion meanings about students’ roles and responsibilities for their own education and the common work of society. These companion meanings of power relations can be made visible by asking: What role do students play in education and environmental issues?

Result

In the above literature analysis five questions have crystallised that illuminate five essential aspects of education in environmental education and education for sustainable development. These questions are explained in more detail below. Teachers communicate companion meanings in different ways and these can be used to describe how teachers approach these different value-related aspects of education. The questions in the analytical tool have been developed in order to make teachers’ companion meanings visible. In the following section, examples are presented as to how researchers can identify and observe companion meanings
in different types of data, such as that from interviews, text materials or classroom observations.

**Teachers companion meanings – the extras**

1) Why are environmental issues important?

This question spotlights companion meanings concerned with teachers’ attitudes to relations between man and nature. The companion meanings communicate for whom or what the environmental issues appear to be important. Teachers with an anthropocentric view might discuss the necessity of learning more about nature in order to take care of and manage it in the best possible way. Nature thus appears as a teaching object that is separate from mankind. This view can be common in the fact-based tradition (see Öhman, this volume). An anthropocentric approach can also emphasise the political aspects of environmental issues and discuss them as common societal questions. This view ought to be common within the pluralistic tradition, where nature can be described as an object of political interest. Teachers with a more biocentric view of man’s relation to nature often teach students in nature – outdoors – in an effort to awaken feelings of belonging to or of being at one with nature. In education, nature and man can be presented as a kind of common, mutual subject to be defended (see Almers and Wickenberg, this volume); a view that can be common in the normative tradition of environmental education. The importance of environmental issues communicates a socialisation content that relates to how nature is described and used in education, as an object, subject or controversial societal issue.

2) What is the teaching aiming to change?

Teachers’ ways of teaching and describing knowledge and abilities take their point of departure in the aspect of teaching that deals with individual or collective solutions as the overarching purpose of education. The teaching can be product-oriented, or more oriented towards the teaching process. Product-orientation often aims at developing individual subject knowledge and personal values, while process-orientation aims at actively developing democratic competencies through group work and various student actions. Process-orientation can denote an environmental education that is more pluralistic in nature and where students work with specific self-planned assignments (see Öhman, this volume). The teachers’ project of change alerts researchers to the teachers’ socialisation content, with its departure in teachers’ approaches to the overarching purpose of education, such as which knowledge students should develop. This knowledge could be referred to as students’ tools of change in environmental and developmental issues.

3) What kind of inter-human relations are established?

Inter-human relations can be understood as expressions of a possible increased inclusion of human ethics in the environmental education content. Education might quite simply lack messages about human ethics because the content is devoid of inter-human social orientation relations and values. Such education can be understood as being firmly rooted in subject matter perspectives. Education can thus have its starting point in a nature ethic in which the used subject content is mainly scientific, which means that the social orientation of the subject content towards a more human ethical orientation, i.e. between man and man, might be very limited. Teachers who communicate social orientation knowledge regularly include inter-generational or other historical perspectives in their teaching. Apart from the global perspective of environmental issues, global perspectives also include inter-human issues such as mutual interdependence, an equitable distribution of global resources and solidarity. By studying companion meanings of the education’s social orientation, researchers can form an
understanding of the shift in teachers’ educational content towards a more human ethical starting point, which is indicted by different expressions of inter-human relations.

4) How useful is school knowledge in environmental and development issues?
This question makes teachers’ companion meanings that have their origin in the educational aspect concerning the relation between school and society visible. In teaching, society can be portrayed as a study object or something that the school is an indispensable part of. Teachers who show confidence in the usefulness of school content or knowledge can offer students a greater participation in and communication with society. The question also reveals teachers’ attitudes in the relation between school content and the content in informal education that is offered by different non-governmental organisations and authorities. Educational content can be a content that occurs in the actual conduct of teaching in interplay with society, which contributes to making the content authentic. Companion meanings communicate messages about where the content is applicable in solving and working with environmental issues in students’ everyday lives. Teachers who mainly work in their classrooms and use materials that are adapted to the school environment communicate that environmental issues are limited to the sphere of the school. Teachers who allow their students to work with current environmental issues in society communicate messages that the basis of their work is within society as a whole. Through international school collaborations and authentic materials from international organisations it is possible to extend students’ action spaces to also encompass international arenas. Socialisation content communicates to students where environmental issues and the material necessary to work with them are to be found in their everyday lives. Through this question, researchers can develop an understanding of teachers’ attitudes and approaches to this aspect with regard to the relation between the school and the surrounding world.

5) What role do students play in education and environmental work?
This question highlights teachers’ companion meanings about the importance of students’ participation in education and for overall societal work with environmental issues, which have a common departure in the aspect that relates to power relations between teachers and students. Companion meanings are communicated through the way in which teaching is directed. In a teacher-controlled education, companion meanings about students not having yet managed to claim full citizenship are communicated. They have to be educated before they can actively participate in their own education. Teachers who activate students in group discussions communicate companion meanings which confirm that their opinions are valuable and can be developed in conversations with peers. Students can be perceived by teachers as some kind of educational raw material, or as fully-fledged citizens with responsibilities and valuable personal resources. Democratic aspects like participation and influence in the planning of their education communicate that students are competent enough to participate in the development of their own education. Socialisation content communicates how important students are in education and in society’s common work. Through this question, the researcher identifies companion meanings relating to students’ action spaces and makes them visible.

Table 1: Illustrates the five analytical questions relating to essential aspects of environmental education that help to make teachers’ socialisation content visible. Teachers’ ways of answering these questions highlight the companion meanings that teachers communicate to students in their teaching. The companion meanings can in turn point to teachers’ approach to the different value-related aspects of teaching.
### Analytical questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1) Why are environmental issues important?</th>
<th>Companion meanings</th>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Examples of answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Views of nature as an object or subject</td>
<td>Relation to nature:</td>
<td>Man – nature</td>
<td>Resource management – Survival – The intrinsic value of nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the education:</td>
<td>Individual – collective</td>
<td>Facts, values – Communicative democratic abilities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethical historical dimension:</td>
<td>Environment, here, now – Humans, there, then</td>
<td>Insignificant – social and cultural orientation in the world</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching relation:</td>
<td>School – society</td>
<td>Classroom – communicative knowledge with the surrounding world</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power relation:</td>
<td>Teacher – student</td>
<td>Limited – active co-creators and citizens</td>
<td></td>
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### Discussion

The questions developed in this study can be regarded as foundational questions that are central to environmental education and education for sustainable development. They have primarily been developed to illuminate important value-related teaching aspects and facilitate their study. The questions can be reformulated or deepened by means of various follow-up questions. They can be adapted for use in analyses of different kinds of research data from interviews, classroom observations, text analyses, curriculum material or in the development of questionnaires.

The analytical tool can also be used to deepen and expand earlier educational research. Öhman (see this volume) has studied teachers’ environmental education in Sweden and found that they mainly teach within three selective traditions. Öhman (ibid) explains that the descriptions of the categories are somewhat simplified in order to make them clearer, which can mean, for example, that parts of a teacher’s teaching can fall into two different categories. The analytical tool can be used to examine the delimitation between two categories more closely. It can be particularly interesting to study similarities and differences in the socialisation content between the normative and pluralistic traditions, where questions of students’ action space can be especially fruitful. Teachers’ views on students’ citizenship could be an important educational aspect to study in comparisons between EE and ESD. The questions could also be useful in studies of environmental education traditions without dividing teachers up into different categories i.e. studying them as all-pervading development perspectives of different educational aspects in the socialisation content. It might also be
interesting – and valuable – to study the extras and their origins in the whole scale of environmental teaching, from a teacher-controlled and science focused EE to more subject and student-integrated teaching that presents a more transformative EE/ESD. The questions are also useful in the assessment of schools in relation to e.g. the implementation of ESD in connection with changes in the national curriculum. The good examples highlighted in these national evaluations can then be studied in more detail to discern their different educational aspects and what it is that makes them good examples of ESD. The questions can thus be used to develop an educational research tool that is based on schools’ “best practices” and can, if so wished, support a more reflected development of the socialisation content of environmental education towards ESD.

Better conditions for a democratic discussion of socialisation content

The questions developed in this study are not intended to make teaching more value-based but rather contribute to making some of the choice situations that students and teachers continuously encounter and relate to much more visible.

So, while we need frameworks which can enhance our ability to debate and critique the curriculum and associated goals within context, we must recognize the ethical/moral underpinnings of those arguments within the context of their modernist origins and provide the scope (within such frameworks) for alternate ethical discourses which might supersede them. (Hart, 2004)(p. 230)

It would perhaps be difficult, or even impossible, to find a commonly accepted moral starting point to suggest other ethical discourses for environmental education. The human ethical element highlighted in this study could provide a structured way of changing the ethical emphasis of the content to some extent. On the other hand, in a democratic perspective it seems important to realise that, like other educational aspects, ethical aspects are part and parcel of teachers’ teaching practices. Teachers’ value-related choices and attitudes are significant for the formation and content of teaching. Teachers’ value-based interests should not dominate their teaching, however. There are teachers who teach according to the normative tradition (see Öhman, this volume) and who risk being counterproductive. For example, in one breath they might say how important it is for students to get involved in environmental issues, while in their actual teaching practices they prevent students from participating in meaningful ways (Sund & Wickman, submitted). Teachers’ strong personal ambitions may well undermine students’ possibilities to actively participate and take responsibility for their own education and societal work as democratic citizens.

It does not matter that the authoritarianism is not deliberate. Whenever there is a massive socialisation toward intellectual dependence, how are students suddenly become thoughtful, responsible citizens who habitually question and exercise their reasoning powers with respect to knowledge claims, explanations and decisions? It is in giving serious consideration to that kind of question that the manner of teaching can be seen as a potential link between the here-and-now of the science classroom and the long term value that democratic societies accord to responsible citizenship. (Munby & Roberts, 1998) (p. 114).

In order to avoid ignorance of the impact of socialisation content, with origins in e.g. power aspects as indicated in the above example, it is vital to make visible and study the companion meanings that are communicated by teachers in their teaching practices and actions. This study has suggested and outlined a tool that could facilitate and further such research. Orientation knowledge could be a link between the classroom and a responsible citizenship which could also be extended to a kind of global citizenship. Together with a well-integrated subject content in education for sustainable development, the socialisation content should be central to a continuous, general reflection of inter-human ethics, and also be subject to a critical examination of central concepts like democracy and equality. Environmental
education is political (Östman, 1995), which means that the starting points for teachers’ choices of socialisation content need to be made visible. The results of this study will hopefully contribute to deepening and extending a continued fruitful debate as to how ESD can be developed in different cultural contexts. Different interpretations of the concept of democracy make it necessary to clarify the origins of socialisation content so that its political and cultural undertones can be brought to light. More generally, in a global ESD discussion questions still remain as to who has the preferential right of interpretation for concepts like democracy, equality and freedom of speech. A western cultural view of democracy and equality spreads across the world at the same time as ESD is very sensitive to differences in the cultural contexts of different countries (Nyberg & Sund, 2007). In these international discussions about education for sustainable development, socialisation content and its value-related starting points are of central importance. An understanding of these aspects will hopefully lead to better conditions for creating a basis for open democratic discussions that in the future will be necessary to the success of global work for change in environmental and developmental issues – work that often starts in school and which this study has tried to illuminate by unwrapping aspects of the value-based content that teachers communicate to their students and exposing it to a critical democratic public.

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