The Magic of Inclusion: Transformative Action for Sustainability Education

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1. Introduction:

Firstly, let us offer a word about the authors of this chapter. The collective “we” used throughout the chapter refers to a collaboration of three quite different scholars each with her own interests and passions. The plurality of our perspectives as researchers and activists is respected in this use of the first person plural. Also our cultural diversity, while not explicitly mentioned in the text, informs the discussions that were part of the writing process. Each of us is based on a different campus and works on a different professional area of academia and activism and so our choice of “we” is an open cross-pollination of multiple voices and ideas rather than the result of a convergence. In this chapter we combine theory and praxis, drawing from our expertise in and out of the classroom, on and off campus. Building on a practice that has involved reflection, learning, unlearning and relearning, we feel we have developed authenticity and trust in each other. When planning the chapter, we have been guided by an overarching question: what is missing, who is excluded? With that said, it may be that some readers feel we have made assumptions that do not reflect their circumstances, knowledge or experience. We invite readers to get in touch with any questions or comments you may have, especially if you feel we have overlooked or misunderstood your perspective. Above all, it is our hope that this chapter may serve as one of many departure points for collective thinking around inclusion-oriented education for sustainability (ESD). This cannot be achieved without creating connections between different individuals, cultures, fields and institutions, breaking down hierarchies and disciplinary silos while still respecting autonomy of research.

2. Sustainability

We want to start by offering a short background to this rather slippery topic of sustainability. Human welfare in the context of an intact environment was first discussed on an international political level at the first UN Conference on the Environment in Stockholm in 1972. In the same year, the Club of Rome report "The Limits to Growth" was published. This report discusses the topic of sustainability in considerable detail. With the Brundtland Report in 1983, the United Nations General Assembly formulated a worldwide program or recommendations for action that

sharpened the international discussion on sustainability or sustainable development. Among other things, it emphasised the linkage of environmental and developmental issues, as well as inter- and intragenerational equity, all the while taking into account the global perspective. With the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio in 1992, the model of sustainable development, which gives equal importance to the economic, environmental and social dimensions, was finally recognized internationally: “The right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations”. Relevant milestones and frames of references for the international community with regard to sustainable development were then established following Millennium Development Goals in 2000 that were the result of the Johannesburg Conference in 2002 and the Rio Conference in 2012. More recently, the United Nations subsequently adopted the Agenda 2030 with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The SDGs are characterized by their universality. This is to say that they hold all countries accountable in a global partnership that subscribes to a shared understanding of values. The 17 goals of the SDGs are based on the following guiding principles (also known as the 5 Ps): People - Planet - Prosperity - Peace - Partnership.

The objective of the SDGs is to ensure inclusion and equality for every person. Significantly, this is not just about safeguarding the rights of marginalised groups into account in the implementation of the SDGs, although this is obviously an important part of it. It is above all about empowering all people, including marginalised groups, to enable active participation in sustainable processes on all levels.

The question is, why does inclusion matter in the context of sustainability? First of all, it should be emphasised at this point that sustainability not only includes the ecological dimension. Social justice is a core element that contributes to the need to break down global power structures to the community level in order to enable equal opportunities for all in a healthy, just and sustainable environment. How closely questions to do with the environment and peace are intertwined can be clearly demonstrated by current global crises, be it the Covid-19 pandemic, the loss of biodiversity, or wars such as the war in Ukraine. The effects of these global crises are visible in almost all regions of the world and they include both famines as well as energy shortages. Peace cannot be guaranteed without attending to the environmental crisis.

But who are we referring to when we talk about inclusion? And what does “All means All” mean in the context of sustainability? With inclusion, we are oriented towards diversity: all people, regardless of socio-economic background, cultures, individual abilities or disabilities, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and so on. But we also mean the inclusion of nature and animals. Consequently, when we talk about inclusion, we understand diversity as a principle of inclusion. In other words, we argue that inclusion should be understood as a process that creates a context free of discrimination. It is a context that empowers everyone to actively participate in questions to do with sustainability. A key element of ensuring inclusion is, quite simply, participation of all. However, there are structural challenges that often tend to hamper participation of all in societal processes. Therefore, the need for cultural, society-wide change is becoming more necessary. Here, education plays a major role with “the importance of building capacities to enable learners to think, reflect more critically about actions, understand and respect diversity with strong beliefs and actions rooted in social justice, equity and participation” (Joon & Roncevic 2015:35). On the one hand, there is a need for inclusion in education so as to ensure “a sense of change where something excluded or omitted is now being included in the system” (O´Donohue & Roncevic:20). On the other hand, there is also the need to strengthen inclusion through education. A pedagogical answer can be found

in the concept of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), also Goal 4 in the SDGs, to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. With Goal 4.7 of the SDGs, ESD and Global Citizenship Education two approaches are highlighted. In particular, ESD is about equipping all learners with the competences (for example critical thinking, system thinking, empathy) they require in order to meet the uncertainties that global challenges present and will continue to present in the future in a sustainable manner. To ensure inclusion in general with ESD, implementation of this approach is urgently needed. Unfortunately, for the most part, these two concepts (ESD and inclusive education) are discussed separately and from different perspectives. Indeed, there is a research gap in linking the development of a common perspective of the two and there is also a lack of documented practical experiences with inclusion-oriented ESD (Rončević & Rieckmann in review, Rončević & Schulz in review, Vierbuchen & Rieckmann 2020, Böhme 2019). We therefore want to encourage inclusive education and ESD to be thought of and implemented together from the very beginning. Inclusive education naturally also refers to people with special (learning) needs. Here, special educational approaches are also used to ensure access for people with different modes of access to ensure that all learners receive the best educational support according to their individual (learning) needs. In concrete terms, this means, for example, that learning opportunities and learning materials must have a certain flexibility so that they can be adapted according to individual needs.

3. Reflective exercise for the reader as a bridge into competencies

Our first intention was to share best practices of how to incorporate inclusion-oriented ESD in the classroom. In the early stages of writing, however, we grew a little uncomfortable about sharing exercises and activities without knowing more about the social contexts, positions and even geographical locations of the reader. Inclusion can never be based on a one-size-fits-all model. So we decided against sharing exercises that could turn out to be ineffective or possibly counter-productive in educating teacher-trainees in some contexts. Instead, we will offer a set of reflective exercises for teachers or trainees aimed at discovering and identifying the thoughts and belief systems that might shape inclusion-oriented ESD. While we will speak more specifically out of our own discipline-specific fields of research later on in this chapter, for this exercise we would like you to consider your own subject or field of expertise by reflecting on a set of questions. Please jot down your answers to the following prompts on a sheet of paper or using any digital writing device:

- What is the subject you are teaching or that you have been trained to teach?

- Name three important learning outcomes you aim to provide when you teach that subject.
- How would those outcomes be achieved if the subject didn't exist? You will need new or possibly unfamiliar terms to answer this.

It is necessary to think more self-reflexively about what it is exactly that we teach if we want to understand how to make what it actually offers students more inclusive. The prompts above direct the educator to reflect on what is important to them and others about their subject. They may discover new aspects of the content, theory and practice of teaching this subject that are relevant beyond their field. This is also an opportunity to build a new vocabulary for communicating with the broader community on what they do in the classroom. This is a way that the input of educators helps to ensure that education avoids becoming inert or fixed.

Importantly, the foregoing prompts for self-reflection also help to situate educators and learners in their learning environment. An inclusive approach to sustainability education means that educators and learners work together, that they welcome all ages and socio-cultural groups. In order to envision alternative futures it is necessary to facilitate multi-vocal contributions of all participants across educational systems. For such encounters to happen in an open and inclusive way, both educators and learners need to practice deep listening. The following exercises can be used as a starting point in any educational situation. Their aim is to develop a sense of agency, identity, and meaning through engagement with ourselves and with the world. It is also an exercise in making visible what may otherwise be hidden, including aspects of our habitat. The age range of learners for this exercise encompasses both secondary school students as well as their teachers.

Becoming aware

To do this exercise you will need 3-5 minutes. No tools are required. Look around the classroom or the space where learning takes place. Take your time. Become aware of the place, the furniture and the way it is arranged. Where is the light source, either natural or artificial? There may be several. Spread your awareness to include other teachers and learners who share this space with you. Where are they seated in the room? And are there sentient beings other than humans in this place? Can you see or hear something of the natural world? Are any non-human creatures visible from where you are? What about organic matter and other life forms? Has any of the outside come inside? Once educators and learners have developed a habit of awareness regarding the educational environment that they inhabit, it may be possible to turn our thoughts to how we communicate this to the wider community in a broad and encompassing way.

A sense of belonging

Sustainability education is about developing caring relations with both the human and the non-human world. A necessary insight for this is to achieve a sense of being a member of the environment one cares for rather than an external agent tasked with caring. This means moving beyond "humanist stewardship frameworks and their implicit human exceptionalist assumptions" (Taylor, 1449).

Instructions: we recommend that participants write anonymously for example by using Padlet as in the following sample student responses, or via journaling that may or may not be anonymous. The **conversation prompt** is: "What I learned from living things: share a time when you learned something memorable from non-human life." In the same way that inclusion can be understood to encompass the non-human as well as everything beyond the human, it is also the case that an inclusion-oriented approach to sustainability education is mindful of future generations. Educational spaces can design a more just, sustainable and joyous future marked by principles of diversity and inclusion. The following exercise may be useful in reflecting over one's own relationship with future generations of humans. **Instructions**: to do this exercise you will need 10-15 minutes, pens and paper. Design a message to posterity of what you think you current habitat communicates to strangers. Please only use shapes, shades, patterns and doodles. You can choose to design a message of caution and warning or a welcoming and cheerful message. Jagged, spiky, knotted shapes may suggest threat and harm, but what shapes suggest a loving, welcoming greeting from our century? These exercises may guide educators and learners in finding out how we view ourselves and how we invite others into our educational space.

4. The role of educators as agents of change

Now let us consider how educators might engage with and enact knowledges into actions in their practice. We are consciously using the plural term for knowledges and actions in order to represent the diverse forms of embodied, individual, and collective knowledges as well as conscious as well as unconscious beliefs, attitudes, values, and judgments that inform the design and carrying out of educational experiences. Educators can play a transformative role as agents of change for implementing inclusion and sustainable development education at local, national and transnational levels: in the teaching and learning community of the classroom; in the social and cultural community of the early-years setting, school or university; in their own society; and in systems of

intercultural exchange and engagement with global citizenship. The educator possesses a powerful opportunity in their everyday practice to enact an inclusive and environmentally-sustainable pedagogy which is rooted in principles of care, the uniqueness of each learner, the interconnectedness of humanity and our ecological environments, the integrity of nature in its own right, the rights of each learner, and the rights and needs of each culture, especially indigenous and marginalised groups. It is crucial for sites of formal teaching and learning such as the institutions of the school and university as well as informal educational spaces and educational partnerships to recognise and respond to both the individual learning and educational needs of each learner as well as to local and global environmental, economic, and cultural challenges.

Although there are many competing understandings of sustainability education and inclusive education, education at the intersection of these domains involves highlighting local and/or global social injustices and inequities with a view to motivating individuals and groups to work towards a different future, based on a more equitable, sustainable, and just vision of human and ecological worlds (Bryan et al., 2009). The overarching concern of inclusive sustainability education aims towards a re-organisation and re-imagining of human and non-human relations within ecological, economic, and cultural environments for supporting all people and the natural world in the current contemporary moment as well as in and for the future. Because the nexus of inclusive education and sustainability education within educational contexts is not always named or defined, it is important for student teachers and educational professionals to collectively centre educational practice which prioritises equitable, inclusive, and environmentally and culturally sustainable relationships in all contexts of teaching and learning.

As part of our invitation to student teachers and teacher educators to incorporate this model of inclusive sustainable development education into your practice, we draw on Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Susan Lytle's theory of practice that conceptualises teaching for equity and social and environmental justice as being far more than the development of skills, strategies, and teaching methodologies. Actually living and enacting the mission statements of educational institutions, especially third-level institutions, is vital in order to recognise and empower educators' agency and all learners' equity of participation within the classroom as well as outside the classroom. An understanding of both the educators' and learners' own lives and lived experiences as well as the potential of collective action and intersectional and intergenerational solidarity are needed.

We encourage you to reflect on your beliefs, attitudes, agency, advocacy for inclusive education and sustainable development education, your professional partnerships, and your relationships with

parents and families in this regard. Change towards a culturally and ecologically-sensitive inclusive sustainability education needs to happen at individual, institutional, and community levels and educators need to connect key ideas of inequality and inequitable distribution of resources with conceptions of justice, recognition, and emancipation at the level of each individual learner's educational needs, local cultural and ecological contexts of discrimination, disadvantage and privilege, and global contexts of challenges such as climate justice, poverty, hunger, quality education for all, gender equality, responsible consumption and production, sustainable cities and communities, and peaceful societies. Bringing together inclusive education and sustainability education offers a crucial intervention for an educational practice which is capable of acknowledging and analysing oppressive and discriminatory educational, ecological, and cultural systems as well as the dynamic interaction of knowledges and actions to confront and transform these systems.

In their everyday practice, educators at all levels must negotiate and navigate curricula and contexts in disciplinary-specific as well as interdisciplinary ways. Key to this professional decision-making and series of educational actions is the educator's relationship what can be called 'Big C' Curriculum and 'little c' curriculum. Curriculum with a 'Big C' involves the explicit and standardised concepts, content, and skills which are informed by local and national learning outcomes, educational benchmarks, assessments, and standards. 'Little c' curriculum encompasses the 'how' of teaching, the day-to-day interactions with learners, and the myriad of implicit teaching and learning modes and systems which the institution of schooling implicitly presumes and inculcates e.g. dress codes, the privileging of certain languages over learners' home languages, gender norms, the normative assumption of ableist physical teaching and learning materials and environments. Both the 'Big C' and 'little C' involve conscious and unconscious normative structures, power relationships, privileges, inclusionary and exclusionary practices. Just as the 'Big C' curriculum might assume a Eurocentric bias or ethnocentric worldview in supposedly 'objective' content in History or canons of literature around particular communities, histories, and knowledges, the 'little C' curriculum is similarly biased towards maintaining the hegemony of particular norms, individuals and groups while disenfranchising marginalised learners and groups who are neurodivergent, indigenous, working-class, migrants, people of colour etc. A socially- just, environmentally-just, and change-oriented teacher is one who recognises that no teaching is neutral (Freire, 1970) and who is committed to critical pedagogy, critical literacy, sustainable and inclusive teaching and learning, democracy, and democratic practice. Educators' acknowledgment and affirmation of the diversity of lived experiences and environmental contexts that they as well as

each of their students bring into the classroom are key for enabling educators to link real-world issues and challenges and to make teaching and learning authentic and meaningful.

The letter 'C' also brings us to the importance of educators' own competencies which are vital for equipping them to act as agents of change at local and global levels and to culturally and environmentally respond to the needs of their diverse learners, their educational, economic and social contexts, their local and national Curricula, and their own daily interpretation and enactment of curricula. There are many national and international systems and programmes of educator competencies but in our collective perspective, the following three competencies are particularly important for equipping and empowering educators' capacity and confidence to implement inclusion-oriented sustainability education: creativity; collaboration and deep listening; and systems thinking (the ability to deal with complexity). Creative Scotland define creativity as 'the capacity to generate ideas; things that have value to the individual. Looking at things with a fresh eye; examining problems with an open mind; making connections; learning from mistakes and using the imagination to explore new possibilities' (2013: 55). Creativity supports the development of the pedagogical expertise of student teachers, including subject-specific pedagogical content knowledge such as play-based pedagogy in the teaching of Mathematics or a place-based pedagogy in the teaching of Geography, as well as empowering learners to more fully participate in and have equitable access to learning. We would urge educators in all educational levels and sectors to incorporate these professional values and actions into their own practice as well as incorporating a diversity of opportunities for learners to develop their own creativity and imaginative agency. Educators' own creativity and the fostering of learners' creativity take on even more urgency due to ongoing and new challenges and crises that the human and nonhuman worlds are facing.

The second competency which is vital for designing and implementing an inclusive model of sustainability education involves the importance of collaborations and deep listening between all educators, learners, and stakeholders in each educational setting and sector as well as across educational settings and sectors. Meaningful and reciprocal partnerships and collaborations are crucial. Early-years practitioners, primary-school teachers, secondary-school teachers, teacher educators and all of their diverse educational settings must be regarded as equal and valued sites and producers of knowledge by academia and academics around sustainability education for creating and maintaining successful and cross-sectoral links policy, teaching, learning, research, and lived experience. Deep listening — an ongoing practice of suspending self-oriented, reactive thinking and opening one's awareness of the unknown and unexpected —is a powerful tool for enabling more authentic and shared understandings and consensus across differences and diversities

of learners and their economic, social, and ecological contexts. Through deep listening, we can affirm, motivate, and empower others as well as ourselves, build trust and goodwill, learn and exchange new ideas and alternate perspectives, work through conflict, make it safe for us all to equally and equitably participate in education, and transform human and nonhuman relationships. The third competency of systems thinking is linked with the importance of deep listening as both competencies required a readiness for recognising and respecting complexity. While systems thinking can mean different things to different people, systems thinking generally involves a sensitivity to the dynamic complexity and intersectionality of identities, cultures, and ecologies and calls for compassion, courage, curiosity, clarity, and a commitment to enacting change in ways that benefit all stakeholders. It requires a shift in mindset from the linear to the circular, a willingness to see a situation or problem more fully, and acknowledgements that educators and learners are interrelated, that human and nonhuman worlds are interconnected, and a respect for the legitimacy and diversity of multiple interventions to social, political, and ecological challenges. Bringing creativity, deep listening, and a systems-thinking mindset together in educational practice can offer possibilities for different futures which can sustain and affirm the needs and diversity of learners, contexts, and planetary boundaries alike.

In order for student teachers to develop these three competencies and for educators in all settings to authentically and meaningfully enact the values and actions of inclusive sustainability education, all disciplines, subject areas, and levels of education must embrace and play their individual and collective roles. No discipline or level of education (early years, primary, secondary, third-level, adult education, community education etc.) is exempt from engaging with and enacting the values and transformative actions of inclusive sustainability education. There can be pervasive normative assumptions that inclusive sustainability education is more 'naturally' relevant or applicable for some subjects such as Geography while it can be perceived as irrelevant or inapplicable to subjects such as Drama Education or PE Education or 'too complex' for young learners in early years settings. Such norms and normative knowledges can be embedded in neo-colonialist and conservative power relationships, binaries, and histories of cultural and ecological hierarchies. Many student teachers arrive at their engagements with sustainability education and inclusive education from an ethnocentric place, taking neurodivergent, classist, and ableist norms and European 'superiority' for granted and believing that their viewpoint is both the best and 'common sense'. Educational theorists such as Douglas Bourn advise student teachers and teacher educators to deconstruct issues and events and consider them from a range of perspectives in order to develop a 'sense of global outlook' or 'global mind-set' which understands the viewpoints of others. Educators need to develop competencies which empower themselves as agents of change and which

support their learners to view the human and nonhuman world through diverse lenses. Challenging ethnocentrism and the associated normative regimes of ableism, racism, sexism, and homophobia, and incorporating multiple perspectives into teaching and learning are intrinsic elements of an inclusive sustainability education pedagogy. Creativity and dialogic methodologies such as deep listening and systems thinking are key tools for recognising, naming and fighting oppression and inequities at both a local and a global level and for responding to the needs of contemporary learners, communities, and ecological environments as well as the needs of future human and nonhuman generations.

5. Magic Matters

Along with promoting principles of care, the classroom is also a place for provoking a critical perspective on what is or is not possible, especially when dealing with wicked problems and powerful adversaries. It is often a matter of deciding when to employ rational principles based on standards such as precedent or so-called business as usual, and when to seek alternatives. This is acutely relevant in our time considering that schools play a very important role in educating citizens of an uncertain future who will need to be climate aware and capable of adapting to rapidly-changing circumstances. At the same time, global decision-making bodies are showing that they cannot effectively turn the climate crisis around via rational argument and strategic planning, and this is despite impressive scientific and technological development over the last few decades. The environmental crisis is literally a case of shapeshifting on a planetary scale and to address it another type of knowledge is required, one that cannot be measured against key performance indicators that do not register the pace and degree of change taking place. We call for the magic of inclusion in the sense that no line of enquiry is omitted simply because it seems impossible or irrational or does not fulfil some established criteria of feasability. A starting point for understanding what is magical about inclusion-oriented ESD is to remind readers that when people collaborate widely on climate action using methods and motives that conventional knowledge deems impossible and irrational, change happens, previously indiscernible ways forward (or back) become visible and viable. This has been proven most spectacularly by Greta Thunberg. Her FridaysForFuture, and other such global movements of climate activism, are manifestations of action at a distance, a key definition of magic. In this case, an individual or collective speech goes beyond its immediate audience so that it moves listeners or readers who are far away, sometimes becoming a call to action.

As we know, learning always involves change. When a student gains an insight, masters a concept or acquires a new skill, they do not just become better equipped at dealing with reality, as well they

become capable of creating their reality. Moreover, when collaborative and literacy skills are built in to everything they learn, then they are able to enlist others in creating worlds they can share. We see the climate crisis as a specifically pedagogical challenge insofar as all responses should involve learning very new ways of being in the world and of living equitably with others. More specifically, in the present context it is as much about unlearning and dropping harmful habits and practices as it is about taking on new ones. The kind of learning that must face climate crisis means comprehending new ways of seeing the human and other-than-human so as to grasp new methods for mutual survival while letting go of other, less sustainable and thus counter-productive ways. It is about broadening and deepening the vocabulary we use for defining and invoking spaces of creative and inclusive practices. Pedagogy changes people in a process that can be likened to shapeshifting as it shifts our boundaries and expands what we believe is possible. At stake is the kind of knowledge acquisition that requires students to pass through liminal and transformative experiences to make real discoveries about themselves and their world. This is what Rudine Sims Bishop means when she speaks of "sliding doors" that readers find in books that they "have only to walk through in imagination" to find themselves responding to actual or possible worlds (ix). Sims Bishop notes these doors can be mirrors as well by which readers learn about themselves and their own worlds. We will say more about that in relation to children's literature. For now, we want to point out that an inclusion-oriented practice towards educating for sustainability emphasizes dealing with realities as they are rather than denying them. It also fosters the equally real capacity to imagine different future realities and new ways of collaborating with others.

Collaboration with others requires communication and the ability to share vocabularies and literacies widely. No matter where in the world you are teaching, you will find that language proficiency is an educational goal built into the curriculum. Literacy and language proficiency are important for preparing students to become participants in democratic processes and actively contribute to sustainable communities. Even if you are not teaching languages or literature, we argue that the practice of creative writing as a path towards improving literacy helps forge inclusive approaches to sustainability education. Creativity is a means of welcoming diversity since it is often aimed at discovering aspects of one's world, of oneself and of others that reveal a wealth of possible relationships that might otherwise be excluded or overlooked. Creativity can include improvisation, a focus on listening, as well as spontaneous call and response as a way of engaging with expression. Creativity is about getting outside of one's preconceptions and assumptions and learning instead new ways of seeing and responding to diversity. We are passionate about using creativity to develop literacy because this helps remedy the problem of uneven participation in classroom activities due to varying literacy levels. Naturally, there is a continuation of this benefit after

schooling when literacy is a basis for improved participation in society. Creativity has to do with a spirit of adventure in collaboration that can draw on a plurality of voices – one's own as well as others' – for developing relations between diverse beings and bodies. Sustainability education is about bringing creativity together with the courage needed to work with others in imagining alternative ways of living in communities. However, to ensure that these communities are inclusive, it is necessary for all to contribute in speaking, reading and writing.

Courage is a focus in many creative exercises that help overcome the fear of looking stupid in the eyes of others. And this is a key element of collaborative creative endeavour. Improvisation is one way of encouraging students to develop trust and the ability to respond to others in a way that is similar to ensemble theatre performance. The following variation on the collaborative writing game called **exquisite corpse** helps students overcome the fear of expressing themselves creatively. It succeeds in this because they are riffing on words and phrases that they didn't personally come up with. In this version of the game, the teacher shares with the class the final sentence from a novel or a text that the group is studying. One student then begins the activity by writing a sentence or a phrase beginning with the last four words of that sentence and folds the paper to hide what they have written. Then, before passing the paper over to a fellow student, they write the last four words of their sentence on a new line which the next person now has to complete. They then repeat the process with the folding of the paper and beginning a new line with their final four words for the next student to complete, and so on. This activity can also be done online using a private message function. In this case, students each receive the four prompt words from the teacher and then send their sentence back one at a time to the teacher who will send the final four words to the next student. The teacher is responsible for collecting all the contributions and distributing the words to the next student until all have made their contribution. The body of writing that emerges at the end of this activity becomes a wonderful joint creation that often provokes wonder and curiosity. When the teacher reads it out loud, with the lines of each participant sutured via the repetition of four words, the result is often heartwarming and beautiful.

Similarly to the empowering potential of creative writing and creative self-expression, children's and young adult literature can provide a powerful and transformative space for exploring identities, norms, power relationships, and human-nonhuman relationships. Stories offer opportunities for affirming ourselves and our understanding of our place in our world as well as engaging with diversity and alternative ways of being and doing in non-hierarchical ways for building reciprocal learning and respect. In Rudine Sims Bishop's inspiring framework about the potential of literature for young people to create a celebration of belonging as well as difference, fiction and nonfiction

can operate as ”windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created and recreated by the author. When lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a mirror” (Sims Bishop i). We would invite you to consider which picture books, films, short stories, poems, novels etc. in your own personal life have acted as windows and doorways into another way of thinking and being and which have acted as mirrors which consolidate and reflect your own experience, perspective, and identity. We would also encourage you to reflect about what kinds of literature have you selected in your professional role as educator and might you select for bringing into your learning community and your educational practice. Who is recognised, privileged and centred in these works? Whose voices and perspectives are normalised in these works and who is absent or neglected or erased? What kinds of conscious and unconscious biases are involved regarding social and economic systems and issues of class, race, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, and disability? What kinds of ideas, beliefs, values, and knowledges are being consciously and implicitly taught and learnt regarding human-nonhuman relationships, ecologies, and global environmental challenges?

Children’s and young-adult literature as well as the wider area of arts-based approaches can open up and support safe imaginative spaces for educators and learners alike to reflect and collaboratively explore diversities of voices, traditions, identities, contexts, and perspectives while also inviting us to consider our realities and lived experiences and to imagine new possibilities and alternatives. Visual narratives such as picture books, comics, graphic novels, films, animation, and illustrated nonfiction offer rich and enriching potential for developing different learners’ linguistic capacities and visual literacy skills while building learners’ environmental agency and engagement with ecological issues as well as social, cultural, political ideas. Learners at all educational levels can interact with children’s and young-adult literature to inspire their own creative and investigative projects around their own family histories, their local communities, and their understandings and participation in human-nonhuman relationships e.g. creating guidebooks about their heritages which recognise and centre indigenous and marginalised knowledges, keeping a naturalist's notebook which enacts and advocates for care and a commitment to sustainability. Educators and learners might collaboratively explore works of activism, political speeches, guerrilla theatre, hip hop activism, culture jamming, and associated genres as well as create their own activist works such as letter-writing to political and community leaders, petitions, advocacy journalism, and social-media campaigns around issues of economic, ecological, and cultural concern to them, their families, and communities such as sustainable consumerism, discriminations against minority groups, the circular

economy, enabling the human rights of all learners etc. Literature for young people and by young people can act as an immersive and accessible springboard for place-based embodied learning and projects around investigating the histories, stories, languages, needs, cultures, and heritages of local, national, and global communities.

6. Conclusion

Our world is facing complex challenges such as unprecedented loss of biodiversity, climate crisis, geo-political conflicts. Democracy is also at risk due to increasing populism in some regions of the world. Society-wide transformations are needed to ensure stability together with sustainability. Education needs to be part of these changes which will include transformative inclusion-oriented ESD. An inclusion-oriented ESD prepares the young generation - regardless of socioeconomic and cultural background, (dis)ability, race or sexual orientation - for current and future challenges and enables them to deal with their impacts. Such an approach may result in the participation of all learners in the struggle for a more sustainable future. In this chapter we have offered new orientations for educators and student teachers to begin to incorporate inclusion-oriented principles within the formal school system and beyond. We highly recommend that educators start the process in a way that suits them. This could be through classroom activities, extracurricular activities or subject design with the aim of enabling all learners to actively work through sustainability questions. In uncertain times like these, the focus should be on taking stronger action, opening up spaces for young learners to identify alternative, sustainability-oriented actions and, above all, try out new approaches. In order to realize this ambitious approach, we call for an openness in our educational practices to help facilitate the unprecedented and perhaps inexplicable change that our times call for. This is what we mean by the magic of inclusion.

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