

POLITICAL MOVES

HOW TEACHERS CAN OPEN-UP FOR AND HANDLE POIGNANT
EXPERIENCES OF THE CONFLICTUAL ASPECTS OF
SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

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TEACHERS' INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS' LEARNING

- ‘**Teacher moves**’ = interventions of a teacher that govern students’ learning in a certain direction
- Research: Epistemological Move Analysis (*Lidar, Lundqvist and Östman 2006*)
 - clarifying the actions that educators perform in order to **guide students in their learning process** and the effects of these actions in terms of learning and meaning-making
 - ‘**epistemological moves**’: interventions that cause a change or enforcement of the direction of students’ meaning-making
 - ‘**privileging**’: which knowledge, skills, values etc. are taken into account → gives the learning a certain direction
- From epistemological to Political Move Analysis (*Van Poeck & Östman 2018*) and Ethical Move Analysis

TEACHER MOVES

Scene-setting	Staging an inquiry	
	Directing	Deepening
Instructing Adding	Confirming Reorienting	Generating Judging

(Östman, Van Poeck & Öhman 2019)

- **Epistemological moves** *(Lidar, Lundqvist & Östman 2006)*
- **Political moves** *(Van Poeck & Östman 2018)*
- **Ethical moves** *(Van Poeck, Östman & Öhman 2018)*

THE POLITICAL DIMENSION OF ESE

- The question how to organise society sustainably, acknowledging that this inevitably requires judgements, prioritisations and decision-making about different and competing alternatives



- Teacher moves affect how the political is experienced in educational practice

DIFFERENT WAYS TO HANDLE THE POLITICAL DIMENSION OF ESE IN TEACHING PRACTICE

- Political **reflection**: Systematic and rational (distanced) inquiry of different standpoints regarding how to organise society sustainably and of different opinions, judgements, prioritisations involved
- Political **deliberation**: Taking a stand in relation to different, conflicting alternatives, raising and defending personal opinions
 - **Consensus-oriented** deliberation: Resolving divergence into shared standpoint
 - **Normative** deliberation: Oriented towards a priori specified desired outcome
 - **Conflict-oriented** deliberation: Raising and defending opposite, contesting perspectives

EXPERIENCING THE CONFLICTUAL ASPECTS OF SUSTAINABILITY

- Strongly felt concerns and opinions regarding a sustainability issue
 - Pre-existing, brought to the classroom, mobilised while engaging in deliberation
 - Suddenly, unexpectedly experienced: ‘political moment’ (*Håkansson & Östman 2018*)
- Irreconcilable standpoints, commitments, concerns
- Something that is highly valued is at stake
- What should be prioritised? What must give way?
- ‘Political’ question, not moral (‘good or bad’) or rational (‘true or false’)

POLITICAL MOVES

- Experiencing conflictual aspects of sustainability issues = interesting learning opportunities
- Political moves create opportunities for students
 - to have a poignant experience of the political
 - to articulate strongly felt concerns and opinions
- Orient students' activities towards raising and defending conflicting standpoints and perspectives regarding sustainability issues:
Conflict-oriented deliberation

EXAMPLE: CONTROVERSY CREATING MOVE

- Farmer: So it's [profit] that now has the upper hand in agriculture. All the farmers are tearing their hair out and actually their closest relationship is with their bank manager. **Well, you can say if it's true or not OK?**
- Student 2: No, it's true, but as a farmer it's your choice whether to start a business or not isn't it?
- Farmer: Yes, that's true.

EXAMPLE: HIERARCHISATION MOVE

The farmer introduces the idea of what he calls ‘the three Ps’, which stand for ‘Planet’, ‘People’ and ‘Profit’: three concerns that you must take into account when you work as a farmer. He tells the students that he believes that Planet should be the first concern, but that others might think People or Profit should be the first one.

- Farmer: Now I don't know if this ties in somehow with your vision of agriculture? ...
- (He looks around in the group. Students take notes, others look at him. Nobody answers his question.)
- Farmer: Shall I answer how I think you look at this. Then you can contest me if (inaudible)... (laughter)
- Student 1: Agriculture must be productive. So much... not as much as possible, it's still the intention, yes to produce food and to make sure there's enough.
- Farmer: **Yes, so for you the P for profit takes precedence?**
- Student 1: Yes (nodding)

EXAMPLE: EXCLUDING-INCLUDING MOVE

- Farmer: **I don't receive any subsidies. And I also think that it would be very good to say that we are putting an end to them.**
- Student 2: But you also don't live from [agriculture]! (original emphasis)(raises her voice)
- Farmer: I do live from it. (original emphasis)
- Student 2: Oh, you said yourself that you don't pay yourself a wage! (raises her voice)
- Farmer: Yes but that's different. You don't need a wage to be able to live from it. I eat from it. That's a big difference. If you think I've got 2,000 euro on my account at the end of the month. I think I've got 900 euro or something like that on my account.
- Student 2: Yes but food alone doesn't get you far.
- Farmer: No, but yes, that's what we have to do. That's the transition we have to make. That's the change we have to bring about. I think some major steps are going to be necessary to consciously address or handle it.
- ...

EXAMPLE: EXCLUDING-INCLUDING MOVE

- ...
- Student 1: Not everyone can do it though. It is nevertheless...
- Farmer: Why not?
- Student 1: What would we eat? If everyone... There's more, I mean yes...
- Farmer: Then I'd say yes, ninety percent of farming throughout the world is managed like this.
- Student 2: Yes, there are also I don't know how many going hungry.
- Farmer: Yes, of course but that's because our onions and the chickens that are subsidised are exported to Benin, and to Toga and to the Gambia and wherever it is. (...)
- Student 3: But isn't that the fault of Africa's agricultural policy, that they have taken the wrong approach?

POLITICAL MOVES

Controversy creating move	makes the learners create, express and defend conflictual standpoints
Hierarchisation move	makes the learners prioritise amongst different alternatives and thus create a hierarchy of concerns by taking a stand on which concerns take precedence and which must give way
Excluding-including move	makes the learners contest a proposed decision of inclusion and exclusion regarding emotionally invested attachments

A VERY DIFFERENT TEACHING PRACTICE...

- Shaping the activity into a discussion oriented towards an a priori specified desired outcome: Normative deliberation
- Emerging experiences of the conflictual do not become manifest

NORMATIVE DELIBERATION: NEUTRALISING POTENTIAL POLITICAL MOMENTS

Reinstating move	makes the participants re-orient their attention from particular, emotionally invested concerns, commitments and experiences towards 'the lesson'
Norm installing move	makes the participants react and take a stand on the postulated standard about how to behave in a certain situation
Rationalising move	makes the participants take a stand concerning a factual justification for a proposed norm: accepting the justification or delivering a factual reason that justifies a divergent opinion

EXAMPLE: REINSTATING MOVE

- Woman 2: We also thought it interesting to reflect a bit. People in poor countries are on the look-out for drinking-water all the time
- Woman 3: Walk for miles to get water...
- Woman 4: Me too, formerly [she lived in Africa in the past]. Really. It doesn't matter now. (laughter) And we actually just stand in the shower and let all that water run down to us, what those people actually could drink. Well, if you give it a thought...
- Woman 3: We flush our toilet with it.
- Woman 2: But it would be very interesting if it would become more and more widespread to use rainwater for that.
- Educator: **Let's look at them, the behaviour clues.** (He shows the next slide of the presentation and starts to explain the several clues and their impact on the ecological footprint.)

EXAMPLE: NORM INSTALLING MOVE

- Woman 5: One obvious improvement would be to bike or walk short distances.
- Educator: What would you consider a short distance?
- Woman 5: Going to the bakery, for instance.
- Educator: How much is that in miles?
- Woman 5: One and a half?
- Educator: **No, let me help you out: in fact, we should bike any distance under 3 miles.**
- Woman 6: Hello-o!! (laughter)
- ...

EXAMPLE: RATIONALIZING MOVE

- ...
- Educator: **Why 3 miles? Because cars consume most over short distances.** (...)
- Woman 5: Then we also had to say why we found it difficult. We found it can be time-consuming at times.
- Educator: Remember the word I just used: planning?
- Woman 5: Yes, but still... Our kids, too. (...) That's why we thought it's not so convenient when you've got kids. In our view, a cart like that is more dangerous and a delivery trike is expensive. We've agreed among ourselves to use our bikes once our kids have grown.

DIFFERENT LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES: PRIVILEGING

2 different **directions**: what is privileged as important to take into account?

1. E.F. workshop: specific norms, facts and behaviour guidelines to reduce the ecological footprint, well-known and determined in advance by the educator and subsequently transferred to the learners through the workshop, attention is directed away from poignant experiences of the conflictual
2. CSA-farm: the diversity of actors involved, the passions, commitments, values, interests, ideals, concerns, etc. at stake for them, the entanglement of irreconcilable private and public interests, the mutual exclusiveness of emotionally invested attachments, and the need to make decisions that imply inclusion and exclusion

REFLECTIONS

- **Context matters!** design of the activity – students' reactions
- Educators can create a **space for 'the political'** but can never guarantee or plan that it will become manifest
- Moves \neq recipe for predetermined scenario \rightarrow **reflective tools**, 'backpack' of insights in different possible ways of intervening
- Being **better prepared** to be surprised, to think and decide by themselves how to react (always 'ad hoc')

EXERCISE:

EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT POSSIBLE MOVES?

DIFFERENT DIRECTION FOR LEARNING?

DISCUSSION:

USEFUL? RELEVANT?

PRACTICAL ENOUGH? UNDERSTANDABLE?

PRECONDITIONS? OPPORTUNITIES? DIFFICULTIES?

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