



National Roundtable on Environmental & Sustainability Education in Pre-Service Teacher Education

Introduction

As part of the *National Roundtable on Environmental & Sustainability Education in Pre-Service Teacher Education*, hosted at Trent University in June, delegates from across Canada met in person to discuss, analyze, share research on, and strategize ways to strengthen the presence of Environmental and Sustainability Education (ESE) in pre-service teacher education. Representatives from faculties of education, NGOs, ministries of education, policy agencies, and school boards shared their expertise and experience to develop new initiatives, plan potential collaborations, and strengthen their networks. One of the key outcomes of this event was the creation of a National Action Plan and Declaration, developed and endorsed by those in attendance on the final day of the Roundtable.

National Action Plan

1. Establish a new national organization to support ESE in Pre-Service Teacher Education in Canada

At the present time, there is no group or organization whose central role is to improve the state of ESE in Pre-service Teacher Education in Canada. A non-profit organization needs to be established to support and coordinate efforts across the country. Establishing a clear mission, set of objectives and activities, and a governance structure will be part of this process. Locating funding to support this organization and its work will be an important step of this component.

2. Assess the state of ESE in Pre-Service Teacher Education in Canada

We aim to collect data to ascertain the state of ESE in Pre-service Teacher Education in Canada. By collecting quantitative and qualitative data using a variety of research methods (meta-analysis, surveys, and document analysis), a clearer picture of the state of ESE in faculties of education can be created, and used as a benchmark to direct future action and advocacy, and monitor progress in this field.

3. Develop supports for ESE in Pre-Service Teacher Education in Canada

Many educators and NGOs are developing supports to improve the state of ESE in Pre-service Teacher Education in Canada; however, there are few places to share tools and resources centrally. We propose developing a digital hub as a means to share theoretical and pedagogical supports, research, and resources to advance this work collaboratively.

4. Advocate for the crucial importance of ESE in Pre-Service Teacher Education in Canada

Advocacy for the importance of ESE in Pre-service Teacher Education can begin immediately, capitalizing on the growing awareness of the need for action to deal with environmental degradation and climate change. Working to encourage a variety of individual advocacy actions (e.g., meeting with a Dean of Education) and collaborative advocacy actions (e.g., lobbying the CMEC) can begin to raise awareness amongst policy-makers and faculty leadership of the importance of this work. Part of this work involves sharing the *Otonabee Declaration*, already signed by 42 of the delegates of the National Roundtable.

Otonabee Declaration

Acknowledging the centrality of land in Indigenous worldviews and teachings, we respect the inherent rights and sovereignty of Indigenous peoples as we sign this declaration.

Whereas human activity has caused environmental degradation, including climate change, species extinction, acidification of the oceans, and the melting of Arctic sea ice;

Whereas educators, children, youth, schools, and universities can play a pivotal role in addressing environmental concerns and should work towards socio-ecological justice and developing environmental literacy;

Whereas there are demonstrated benefits for people of all ages by being in and with nature;

Whereas children, youth, and their educators should be considered full actors in their community life and be encouraged to develop a world vision promoting harmony among humans and other life systems,

And whereas UNESCO has called for a reorientation of teacher education to address environmental sustainability;

We urge leaders in Canadian faculties of education, ministries of education, boards of education, and bodies that regulate the teaching profession to make Environmental and Sustainability Education a mandatory component of initial teacher education.

Dated June 16th, 2016 at Trent University, Ontario, Canada

If you would like to add your signature to this declaration, please email your name to: contact@eseinfacutliesofed.ca

Next Step: Your Involvement

We are inviting those interested in helping to develop this Action Plan to contact us by providing their name, contact info, and identifying the component of the plan they would like to work on. Over the summer, we will organize those who contact us into Working Groups to begin to develop the National Action Plan. Please consider joining one of the Working Groups – this work will advance quickly if many people are involved!

Email: contact@eseinfacutliesofed.ca

Members of the Planning Team of the National Roundtable

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Appendix A: Full list of proposed Action Plan Components

Below is the full list of components of a National Action Plan that were proposed and deliberated at the National Roundtable. This list has been distilled into the five components of the Action Plan as detailed above.

- Create a national organization to promote in ESE in Canada's Faculties of Education (a mission, vision, aims, objectives)
 - Cooperation between Faculties of Education
 - Collaboration with community partners
 - Common learning/ summer institutes at Faculties of Education ("lab school", "living lab")
 - Share research results
 - Use disruptive pedagogies in our classrooms
 - Disrupt mechanistic mindset: holistic ("head heart", "hand and spirit")
 - Gather information from Faculties of Education about courses/classes that help develop EE teacher identity (values and worldview)
 - Develop separate courses in ESE
 - Students' leaders/activism (social media platform; summit?)
 - Regular communication with members and external stakeholders (e.g., newsletter, social media)
 - Space for open dialogue
 - Engagement with Deans of Faculties of Education
- Survey current professional development for Faculty in Education/create survey
- Create professional development for faculty members/create survey
- Create an implementation plan for a culture of environmental/sustainability inclusivity
- Explore funding agencies/sources/awards and establish ourselves as a research/advocacy community
- Develop information and resources on "ESE in Faculties of Education" website
- Share a list of community partners (Pembina, schools and boards, NGOs) on the website
- Advocate: lobby for the purpose/presence of ESE with the ACDE, OADE, CMEC, Individual Deans, Canadian Commission for UNESCO, Subject associations, CATE, etc.
- Advocate for Admissions policies/ criteria with EE focus
- Develop criteria for what successful ESE looks like