

UNESCO Chairs / UNITWIN Networks Consultation Report Form¹

Under the UNESCO World Higher Education Conference ([WHEC 2022](#))

[Section for Higher Education](#) | Division for Education 2030

Basic information

Date of consultation	[22/11/2021]		
Location of consultation	[British Columbia, Canada using an online platform]		
Hosting UNESCO Chair or UNITWIN Network (include webpage if available)	Dr. David B. Zandvliet, Professor and UNESCO Chair, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, British Columbia, CANADA		
Name and email address of key contact person	David B. Zandvliet (dbz@sfu.ca)		
Complete name, title, and affiliation of moderator(s)	Dr. Shannon Leddy, Teaching Professor, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, CANADA		
Language of consultation	English		
Time spent in consultation (minutes)	100 minutes		
Number of participants	17		
Participant profiles (please, briefly describe the composition of the group)	Participants attending this consultation were professors and researchers from leading research institutions in BC, Canada (and neighbouring Washington State, USA) that are linked to Simon Fraser University (SFU) and the Institute for Environmental Learning (Chartered by UNU as the BC / North Cascades RCE on ESD).		
Countries represented by participants	Canada and US (BC and Washington State)		
Stakeholder groups (please mark with an "x" as appropriate)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Professors/ Researchers	<input type="checkbox"/> Students/Youth	<input type="checkbox"/> Higher education managers/authorities
	<input type="checkbox"/> NGOs/civil society	<input type="checkbox"/> International organisations	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy makers/government
			<input type="checkbox"/> Private sector
			<input type="checkbox"/> Others (please, specify):

¹ This template includes some elements used by the consultation developed by [The Futures of Education](#) initiative.

Which theme did you choose for this consultation?

- Theme 1: Impact of COVID-19 on higher education
- Theme 2: Higher education and the SDGs
- Theme 3: Inclusion in higher education
- Theme 4: Quality and relevance of programmes
- Theme 5: Academic mobility in higher education
- Theme 6: Higher education governance
- Theme 7: Financing higher education
- Theme 8: Data and knowledge production
- Theme 9: International cooperation to enhance synergies
- Theme 10: The futures of higher education
- Other (please, specify):

Synthesis of contributions

Kindly provide a summary, synthesising and reflecting the ideas provided by all participants. There is no need to identify participants. Consultation reports should not exceed 1,200 **words**, including the responses to the three questions outlined below (consider a balance of approximately 400 words per response). If necessary, add attachments. Remember that question 1 is general, but questions 2 and 3 should refer to the specific theme you have chosen (see list in **Annex 1**).

Question 1: What should be the present and future role of higher education (and teacher education) to favour the wellbeing of humans and sustainability of societies?

Our consultation considered the need to honour Indigenous voices and cultures as part of our commitment to sustainability and that following this, approaches to higher education (and teacher education) need to consider specifically the values and ethics which arise out of culturally imbedded approaches to sustainability. The following are a few excerpts from our conversation:

Think about how an Indigenous person looks at what is meant by teaching and it's vastly different in terms of the way that I learned from my teachers about sustainability and the ethic and the values that I have, because I have such a strong (land) ethic. What does that mean in terms of how you bring that into a person in terms of the land, in terms of destruction to the land and the sustainability issues that are part of that ethic and that value?

We've come at a lot of sustainability work as if there are technical solutions. And there aren't - these are moral questions ultimately. In schools and teacher education institutions we tend to deal with the construction and operation of the physical universe, but we really leave the questions of the workings of the moral universe tacit, we just aren't willing to talk about them, and this could be, a very important thing for us to consider for the role of teacher education.

Teachers and learners (need to) recognize that the land is our teacher and that it is absolutely important to incorporate traditional knowledge. But what is traditional knowledge? One of the (ideas) is that, traditional knowledge is not about "what you know about the place you live in", but "how to live well in a place you know" and so knowledge is very much about the ethics of how to live, of how to respect and sustain that which sustains us - call it land, environment or nature, but it is indeed very strongly a matter of ethics.

What is the relationship between learning about the environment? for the environment? in the environment? We need to develop a clarity as to the relevant weighting we give to these domains. A lot of us have science backgrounds and we tend to view the environment through a formal science perspective. But science is redefining itself now. If you look at the cultural conversations that are going on, the idea of science - as it is conventionally taught - is being challenged in many respects and I think that part of our challenge is to develop different ideas about the weight given to those domains within what we call an 'environmental curriculum'.

It (can also be) focused on eco-cultural restoration and Indigenous education, resurgence and healing. Healing is a huge part of what we do as educators, and part of it is because when we learn we are making mistakes and those mistakes require healing: in the healing parts there's this natural beautiful kind of cycle.

Question 2: What are the main **challenges/problems/gaps** in relation to the implementation of teacher education and environmental learning?

A further theme that arose from our consultation was that there is an imperative to pay attention to the language we use in our descriptions of environmental sustainability and that this language should be complemented by concrete actions on the land and in our communities. The following are a few excerpts from our conversation:

There are a number of terms that I look at and continually hear in academia, and for me, they seem to be cliches that have no manifestation in the world. To a large extent in academia, we're naming things. We're naming things in the world and then we're assuming that we can take these names, put them in a conceptual space, or a theoretical space and assume that grammar is going to take the place of the natural world as an environment for these words. A lot of the time I feel as though language is just talking about itself.

Teaching about the environment can be a separate track. (However) it really should pervade all that we learn it has to be cross cutting, and it should be cross cutting in our lives as well. To achieve that, we will also need new language, we need to come up with new words, expressions, ways of speaking. That really impress upon us (and especially on young minds) that we are a part of nature not apart from it.

It is teaching by doing / by story (that is needed). And for me, taking that idea apart would be worthwhile. I think of that and how our teaching stories, how they're combined with experience on the land and those relationships and how they relate to us and to each other, and how that's embedded in the real world, science of nature, and how that brings forward and embeds ethics and values about how to be a human being with each other and how to be a human being with all the living relatives.

I think we really have to look at that term 'sustainability' just referencing what other had to say, do we really want to use that word. I mean, do we want to think about perhaps more in terms of reciprocity, because this sustainability (term) is so human centred.

Question 3: What needs to *change* or be *created* to face these challenges *within* and/or *outside* of teacher education institutions?

Our consultation also focused on the need to influence change in the general aims of postsecondary education. Our idea is that higher education should not (just) be about obtaining the knowledge and skills needed to obtain gainful employment, but instead should focus on improving the quality of life for all, in the communities that we call home. The following are a few excerpts from our conversation:

For me, the aim of schooling seems to be too limited, the aim of schooling is about getting a job and doing a good job and that's not in line with what we're living (with) in the world at this moment and what 'success' might look like in the future for younger people. We just don't know, and so school aims need to broaden and open up. I think (what) we're working on could be a way to increase school aims to allow for other aims to enter into the pantheon of what school emphasizes.

I think we all know that technology is the major driver of climate change. Yet, in technology education it seems as though we're just going to keep doing the things that have always been done. In other words, using the corporate status of the university to try and make money.

So, we change it from being science ed, to 'being'. This is just what we do as humans -- we take care of our school grounds, we plant food for other people, and we are concerned for our actions. It's not just part of the class - it's training for how we become better and more moral individuals.

I would have to say that we are challenged in some ways to decouple teaching the 'concept of teaching' from its absolute linkage to schools, and particularly to the institution of schooling, the way it operates within our culture. I think that a lot of our current faculties of education replicate the same kinds of job descriptions that we've had in teaching for a long time and I think that needs to be redefined.

So what it comes down to is this is a moral issue - it is an ethical issue so how do we change, you know, how do we how do we become the kinds of people who we need to be, who the Earth needs us to be right now. For me it's really this question of being, as I said, it's not about content.

Which Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were particularly emphasised during this consultation?

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Goal 1: No poverty | <input type="checkbox"/> Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy | <input type="checkbox"/> Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Goal 2: Zero hunger | <input type="checkbox"/> Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal 13: Climate action |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Goal 3: Good health and well-being | <input type="checkbox"/> Goal 9: Industry, innovation, and infrastructure | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal 14: Life below water |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal 4: Quality education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal 10: Reduced inequality | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal 15: Life on land |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Goal 5: Gender equality | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities | <input type="checkbox"/> Goal 16: Peace and justice strong institutions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal 17: Partnerships to achieve the goals. |

You may provide additional feedback...

Are there any other issues that should be considered in relation to higher education challenges and options in your community, your region, the world?

There are many issues we could discuss here but the main additional point is that space in the postsecondary curriculum space is always limited by time. Participants in our consultation feel that it is urgent to infuse culturally relevant environmental and sustainability values throughout the postsecondary curriculum (regardless of discipline). It should be one of the primary aims of a postsecondary education.

Is there any other comment you wish to share with UNESCO or the organisers of the WHEC2022?

The work initiated during this consultation will continue in the form of several collaborative projects which will extend over the next three years. These will include the writing and revision of a framework for environmental learning in our province, coupled with an identification and mapping process which will help to infuse land-based and place-based approaches to learning throughout the curriculum. The final phase of this project will be to collaboratively design and implement a program of teacher professional development.

List of participants (University faculty)

Mr./Mrs.	First name	Last name	Title/organisation	Nationality	Email address	Indicate with a "NO" if the participant DOES NOT want to be publicly identified.
Dr.	Jeannette	Armstrong	Associate Professor, University of British Columbia (Okanagan)	Canadian	jeannette.armstrong@ubc.ca	
Dr.	Hartley	Bannock	Assistant Professor, University of Northern British Columbia	Canadian	hart.banack@gmail.com	
Dr.	Peter	Cole	Professor, University of British Columbia (Vancouver)	Canadian	coyoteandraven@mac.com	
Dr.	Richard	Kool	Royal Roads University, School of Environment	Canadian	rick.kool@royalroads.ca	
Dr.	Shannon	Leddy	Teaching Professor, University of British Columbia (Vancouver)	Canadian	sleddy@mail.ubc.ca	
Dr.	Milton	McClaren	Professor Emeritus, Simon Fraser University	Canadian	milt_mcclaren@sfu.ca	
Dr.	Pat	O'Riley	Honorary Professor, University of British Columbia (Vancouver)	Canadian	orileysr@mac.com	
Dr.	Sandra	Scott	Associate Professor, University of British Columbia (Vancouver)	Canadian	sandra.scott@sfu.ca	
Dr.	Nick	Stanger	Associate Professor, Western Washington University (USA)	Canadian/American	stangen@wwu.edu	
Dr.	Zuzana	Vasko	Limited Term Lecturer, Simon Fraser University	Canadian	zuzana_vasko@sfu.ca	

List of participants (Graduate students and researchers)

Mr./Mrs.	First name	Last name	Title/organisation	Nationality	Email address	Indicate with a "NO" if the participant DOES NOT want to be publicly identified.
Mr.	Victor	Elderton	Doctoral student, SFU	Canadian	velderton@sfu.ca	
Ms.	Christine	Germano	Graduate M.Ed. (Alumnus) SFU	Canadian	christinegermano@yahoo.com	
Dr.	Luisa	Maffi	Director and Co-founder, Terralingua (NGO)	Canadian/American	maffi@terralingua.org	
Ms.	Cate	May-Burton	Doctoral student, UBC	Canadian	vcmayb@gmail.com	
Ms.	Miyoung (Kate)	Shim	Graduate M.A. (Alumnus) UBC	Canadian/Korean	kate.jiyoungshim@gmail.com	
Ms.	Poh	Tan	Doctoral student, SFU	Canadian	poh_tan@sfu.ca	
Dr.	Lily	Yumagulova	Post-doctoral Fellow, Simon Fraser University	Canadian	lily.yumagulova@gmail.com	