

Introduction

Only in the last years, people have acquired a higher level of awareness about the fact that the World, as we know today has been and will be inevitably changed by human operations. What for years has been judged by many as a niche research field, something for hippies or naive educators, sustainability science is now reputed to be an imperative for all the traditional area of research. Education, indeed, is called today to play a fundamental role, to shape future citizens mindset towards the responsibility of everyone for the state of the health of our planet.

The role of universities for sustainable development is essential to guarantee that the call to the army will be compelling despite the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous scenarios we are all living. In 2018, the OECD released its strategic overview for the future of education, namely the Learning Framework 2030. In that document, the OECD and a hundred of international experts declared a shared vision of education able to help every learner to become a whole person that can potentially help other individuals, communities and the Planet in coping with future environmental, economic and societal challenges. Transformative competencies will represent the basis upon which future education and educators should rely on (OECD, 2018).

Creating new values, reconciling tensions and dilemmas, and taking responsibility are the three main groups of such transformative competencies. What it emerges from an in-depth reading of this report is that the education of future managers could not be exempted from adopting the same principles and logic, adapted to the specific context of educators of business and management disciplines.

Within this book, I adopt the same transformational process invoked for students, to my personal experience. Specifically, my principal intent is to use storytelling to present the case of an experiment I have conducted in one of my courses about the introduction of an Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) experience, run during the academic year 2018/2019. This book is shaped to provide to the reader modern insights and suggestions on how to replicate similar initiatives, with their pros and cons, limitations, and opportu-

nities. As such, the transformative journey regards how to transform the learning environment (the university), the pedagogical techniques for ESD, and, finally, the impacts on the students' knowledge and capabilities.

Furthermore, an analysis of the research papers and scientific contributions is provided to give robustness and a strong scientific background to every step used in running the experiment. As such, the presentation of the content starts with an indirect narration of pieces of evidence, to switch to a personal narration of facts later in the text, able to guarantee an evocative and emotional reflection on the experience. The narration of the events follows the scientific method called autoethnographic research approach that will be discussed, especially in comparison to alternative research method such those of personal accounts or ethnographic research or action research models.

In Chapter 1, the profile of a sustainability-oriented university is provided within a historical excursus from the beginning of the movement of universities for sustainable development, the Talloires Declaration, the Decade of the Education for Sustainable Development, and finally, the introduction of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Studies addressing the critical features of strongly-sustainability oriented universities are presented. In addition, Chapter 1 presents a selection of the most relevant international initiatives that have been founded to support universities providing tools, guidelines, and benchmarking opportunities. The chapter is structured to cover all the dimensions of the sustainability concerns of universities, that can be summarized as the institutional framework, campus operations, teaching, research, community engagement, and accountability and reporting.

Chapter 2 provides implications for education. The paradigm of Education for Sustainable Development is interpreted using the lens of business and management courses or, in general, for business schools. The complexity of the paradigm is analysed discussing feature-by-feature, such as interconnectivity, multidisciplinary knowledge, interdisciplinarity, trans-disciplinarity, interactivity, academic freedom, and empowerment. Later on, this chapter provides a list of useful criteria to business schools and management courses educators to design an ESD, that are derived from the most supported international initiatives like the United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education (UN PRME) or Global Responsible Leadership Initiative (GRLI). In the last part of the chapter, the concept of transformational learning, derived by Jack Mezirow, is presented, and discussed in its salience aspects. The theoretical and practical implications for business and management courses have been associated with every aspect. From Sage on the Stage to Guide on the Side, student-centred learning, active learning, cooperative learning, participatory and experiential learning are discussed about their potential implications for

ESD. Chapter 2 ends with a presentation and a discussion about the role of soft skills for ESD aimed at creating competences-based learning in future managers.

Chapter 3 has been wholly dedicated to discussing the methodological implications of this study. It starts by presenting the reason why an autoethnographic research approach could be considered an appropriate option for a study on an ESD experience in a business course. The general idea here is to use a method that allows providing contextual implications for educators. Specifically, relevant papers of business and accounting research streams are used to support the choice of such methodology, mostly based on the previous work of Kathryn Haynes, whom I had the pleasure to meet in the UK during an ESD workshop she organized in 2017. The chapter is developed to present the context of the University of Turin in the exact timeframe when I have run the experiment, herein the course of Risk Management and Green Business Strategy. To describe the composition of the class, among other indicators, one has been designed using the brand-new SDGs Index score. Such a score has been designed and applied to understand how much the international provenance of students should be considered as a critical factor during the design phase of a course. This is because, the experiment in question, was conducted within an international and multi-ethnic class, and there is a significant difference in talking about poverty in a class of students all from rich countries of northern Europe, or a class composed of students from developing countries. The chapter ends by providing elements that I have considered while designing the course to have a higher level of inclusivity and engagement.

In Chapter 4, I provide a detailed analysis of the projects presented by students involved in what I call the treatment group, according to the fact that, like in a counterfactual experiment, I have compared the outcome of the group doing the ESD with the performance achieved by the students frequenting the same course, but the previous year, where the ESD was not implemented. The two groups analysed are comparable for background and dimensions. For these projects, I narrate the main aims, the partners involved, and a sort of critical analysis of their major successes or failures. Specifically, projects have been run according to three main directions: projects that involve existing businesses (local), projects that involve family businesses (here a broader geographical dimension has been tolerated) and projects involving the university community or the university buildings in the first place. These three indications have been established to set up an experiment with an evident spillover effect on the real economy of the places and communities involved. I have taken this decision after revising the extensive literature on the role of universities as engines for the local economies, and as places where it is possible to

innovate, the so-called Living Labs (thoroughly analysed in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2). Critical and reflexive considerations found their place of discussion at the end of this chapter with the evaluation of the primary outcomes.

Finally, in the conclusive pages, I recall for the essential elements of the ESD experience providing a self-reflection on the primary outcomes achieved and the main limitations faced, referencing again to the OECD report about the education of the future. The chapter ends with a call to all educators involved in sustainability-related topics to develop a greater sense of agency from the inside of our micro-institutional contexts (a department, a course) for delivering an adequate education for sustainable development in business and management courses.