

Environmental Ethics and Integrating Sustainability into Management Education

Ashraf Imam, Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, Aligarh Muslim University
Mohd Ashraf Ali, Associate Professor, Department of Commerce, Aligarh Muslim University
M N Zadeh, MS.c Dairy Economic (Final)-N.D.R.I, Karnal

Abstract

The integration of sustainability and environmental ethics into management education has improved in the past decade and these concepts are adopted by management schools. Business schools have integrated and communicated social, economic and ecological sustainability in their educational programmes, research and their organizational practices and processes. This is partly a response to external pressure, as societal concerns about sustainability grow and businesses have made greater efforts to green their processes and products. But it is also a response to internal pressure from faculty who has focused their research on the intersection of business and the natural environment. Academic administrators such as deans can encourage this integration in a number of ways. Business schools have already made commitments to contributing to sustainability education nowadays. This paper examined the impact of a procedure implemented and used at management colleges to promote integration of the concept of sustainability and environment ethics into courses. The results of this paper after study indicated that this procedure can indeed stimulate faculty members to integrate sustainable development in their courses. It is clear that the reported changes in courses were also influenced by other factors such as the increased general awareness of environmental issues. It then identifies some key enabling factors and barriers to successful integration of sustainability themes into the management education.

Introduction

The integration of sustainability and environmental ethics into management education has improved in the past decade and these concepts are adopted by management schools. Business schools have integrated and communicated social, economic and ecological sustainability in their educational programmes, research and their organizational practices and processes. This is partly a response to external pressure, as societal concerns about sustainability grow and businesses have made greater efforts to green their processes and products. Business schools have already made commitments to contributing to sustainability education nowadays. This section gives the concept of environmental ethics and about sustainability. It then identifies some key enabling factors and barriers to successful integration of sustainability themes into the management education.

Concept of Environmental Ethics and Sustainability

A broad understanding of environmental education inevitably leads to questions of development. A framework of such education is briefly discussed in this paper. The current efforts are to give basic idea about the environmental ethics and sustainability for moving in the right direction. These concepts will bring together the educational concerns of the development and environmental worlds.

Environmental ethics is the part of environmental philosophy which considers extending the traditional boundaries of ethics from solely including humans to including the non-human world. It put forth influence on a large range of disciplines including law, sociology, theology, economics, ecology and geography. “Environmental ethics relates to the relationship between humans and the environment and is defined as a system of ethical values, human reasoning and knowledge of nature which endeavors to forge patterns of right conduct towards environment. These patterns are necessary so that needs of living beings of the present generation are fulfilled without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs (McDonough and Broungart, 2002). Environmental ethics is relationship between humans and the natural environment they live in. It is the area of study that can teach important information about the responsibility of academia to educate future decision makers in the area of environmental ethics so they will become more confident when standing up for their own opinion or resisting outer pressure if needed. Management students may improve their critical thinking with a background in environmental ethics when decision making arise”. (Darwish et al., 2010)

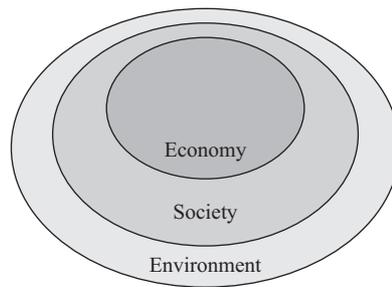
There are many ethical decisions that human beings make with regards to the environment. For example:

- Regarding clear cut forests for the sake of human consumption.
- Regarding continuing to spread.
- Regarding continuing making gasoline powered vehicles.
- Regarding environmental obligations keeping for future generations.
- Is it right for humans to knowingly cause the extinction of a species for the convenience of humanity?

The academic field of environmental ethics grew up in response to the work of scientists such as Rachel Carson and events such as the first Earth Day in 1970, when environmentalists started urging philosophers to consider the philosophical aspects of environmental problems. (en.wikipedia.org)

Sustainability is the capacity to endure. In ecology the word describes how biological systems remain diverse and productive over time. For humans it is the potential for long-

term maintenance of well being, which in turn depends on the maintenance of the natural world and natural resources. Sustainability has become a wide-ranging term that can be applied to almost every facet of life on Earth, from local to a global scale and over various time periods. Long-lived and healthy wetlands and forests are examples of sustainable biological systems. As the earth's human population has increased, natural ecosystems have declined and changes in the balance of natural cycles have had a negative impact on both humans and other living systems. Paul Hawken has written that "Sustainability is about stabilizing the currently disruptive relationship between earth's two most complex systems—human culture and the living world." Definitions of sustainability often refer to the "three pillars" of social, environmental and economic sustainability.



(Diagram of sustainability showing how both economy and society are constrained by environmental limits)

The word sustainability is derived from the Latin *sustinere* (*tenere*, to hold; *sus*, up). Dictionaries provide more than ten meanings for *sustain*, the main ones being to "maintain", "support", or "endure". However, since the 1980s *sustainability* has been used more in the sense of human sustainability on planet Earth and this has resulted in the most widely quoted definition of sustainability and sustainable development, that of the Brundtland Commission of the United Nations on March 20, 1987: "sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (en.wikipedia.org)

Sustainability is a major issue for all organizations in the twenty-first century. Increasingly, corporations are being encouraged or required to address sustainability by boards, stockholders, and other stakeholders – and are exploring and implementing sustainable practices to improve both the environment and their own competitiveness (Rusinko, 2007). At the same time, institutions of higher education are exploring means to integrate sustainability into curricula (Cusick, 2009; Rusinko and Sama, 2009).

Thomas Gladwin offered that "Sustainability is about bringing human economic activity into harmony with social and environmental life support systems in perpetuity, in a just way."

Environmental Ethics and Integrating Sustainability into Management Education

Management graduates apply their technical skills in a wide variety of legal, institutional, and environmental settings, acting as agents of technology-driven social change. While decision making and problem-solving has been a much-lauded hallmark of management education. Decision-making is made all the more complex by a number of technical, economic, environmental, social and ethical constraints. In particular, environmental sustainability has given rise to a new framework of analysis that is now an essential part of the work of managers. Management curricula, like those of many applied sciences, typically start with foundation courses in management, and quickly move to applied management subjects, focusing on the analysis of business environment problems and solutions. Little time or space has traditionally been allocated in management educations to the wider social, political and environmental setting of management practice. Over the last decade or so, many management education institutions and universities departments around the world have modified their curricula to cater for the increasing importance of environmental and social concerns in the wider community.

Questions therefore arise about the best way to teach environmental sustainability, ethical decision-making and social responsibility. No single framework or template appears to have emerged from the literature for teaching methods for Environmental ethics and sustainability as their course content. Some departments have introduced new environmental components in their degrees. More ambitiously, some new curricula have attempted to introduce management-related environmental and social issues from within existing courses in analysis and design. However, while the literature is relatively rich in discussions of different philosophies of, and approaches to, teaching sustainability and ethics to management students, far fewer papers have discussed practical problems of teaching sustainability and ways of overcoming them. Fewer still have considered the merits and drawbacks of incorporating sustainability and ethics in the same learning framework. Integrating sustainability into management education, given their particular goals, resources, and environment. While many of the examples address a business school and how it can integrate sustainability both internally and beyond school boundaries.

Environmental Ethics and Integrating Sustainability into Management Education is an essential part of a larger conversation regarding quality of life for all the inhabitants of world. As university teachers and researchers our responsibility is to participate as critical colleagues and advocates in the intellectual lives of our faculties, institutions, and the broader community. We must examine the assumptions and propositions that circulate within our fields, including the concepts and assumptions informing environment ethics and sustainability into management education. Sustainable development offers a philosophic and analytical framework for educative enquiries in which economic, social, and

environmental factors must be considered in relation to one another. Such enquiries provide opportunities for deliberating and addressing complex issues. Educational processes that follow from these enquiries also require critical and open-ended engagement with complex issues. Part of our task therefore is to develop networks across faculties and disciplines thereby enabling joint discussions that will explore and theorize relationships and issues among social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. These processes of inquiry, theory development, and critical dialog are our tasks, as opposed to imposing the concept of sustainable development on others. One way of developing such a critical discourse is to make sustainable development an open question for examination in the socio-political and socio-ecological contexts within which we work. Business schools have integrated and communicated social, economic and ecological sustainability in their educational programmes, research and their organizational practices and processes. This is partly a response to external pressure, as societal concerns about sustainability grow and businesses have made greater efforts to green their processes and products. But it is also a response to internal pressure from faculty who has focused their research on the intersection of business and the natural environment. Academic administrators such as deans can encourage this integration in a number of ways. Business schools have already made commitments to contributing to sustainability education nowadays.

Sustainable development is seeking to meet the needs of the present without compromising those of future generations. We have to learn our way out of current social and environmental problems and learn to live sustainably. Sustainable development is a vision of development that encompasses populations, animal and plant species, ecosystems, natural resources and that integrates concerns such as the fight against poverty, gender equality, human rights, education for all, health, human security, intercultural dialogue, etc. ***Education for sustainable development*** aims to help people to develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge to make informed decisions for the benefit of themselves and others, now and in the future, and to act upon these decisions. The *United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014)*, for which UNESCO is the lead agency, seeks to integrate the principles, values, and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning, in order to address the social, economic, cultural and environmental problems we face in the 21st century (www.unesco.org). Environmental perspectives cover several major themes, reflecting diverse goals and audiences, including: Water, Climate change, Biodiversity and Disaster prevention. Teaching society how to behave responsibly towards the environment forms the core of education for sustainable development. Building on more than 30 years of experience in environmental education, education for sustainable development must continue to highlight the importance of addressing the issues of natural resources (water, energy, agriculture, biodiversity) as part of the broader agenda of sustainable development (www.unesco.org).

Sustainability has burst out on top of the management education scene within the past few years. Student affairs professionals, faculty, business officers, campus planners, and the national associations for these and many other campus personnel have made sustainability the focus of recent conferences, publications, and trainings. Local, national, and international attention to sustainability becomes more focused each year as our global dilemma becomes clear exponential growth of the human population and our unyielding consumption of finite resources are unsustainable and are causing damage to our global ecosystem. Government, industry, aid organizations, and other groups of people around the world are looking to institutions of management education to create sustainable solutions to environmental, societal, and economic challenges. Some institutions have made significant efforts such as developing new academic programs, creating graduation requirements, and training faculty on how to integrate sustainability across the curriculum to educate all their students about sustainability and prepare graduates to be thoughtful citizens of a planet in peril.

Despite the calls for involvement and the strong response from the management education community, college and university leaders have surprisingly few resources from which to draw ideas for comprehensive sustainability education strategies. Some scholars have called for broad integration of sustainability education across the various curricula of colleges and universities (Chase & Rowland, 2004; Creighton, 2001; M'Gonigle & Starke, 2006; Orr, 1994; Rappaport & Creighton, 2007). The knowledge, skills, and values presented as a model for management education by the institution and universities in Indian and Global educational Institutions with regard to transformative environmental education, somewhat lost in the fog—most institutions and universities are not doing enough to prepare students to create a sustainable future. Management Institution and universities should demonstrate their commitment to sustainability on students' first day on campus, which occurs for many students during the summer before their first year of college. New student orientation programs are generally one- to two-day campus visits when incoming students register for classes, learn about campus services, and begin to become inculcated in the student culture of their chosen college or university. If sustainability is to be part of the campus culture, then it deserves attention during orientation. Previously the faculty of management education offered a traditional program focused mainly on the provincial curriculum and emphasized professionalism in approaches to teaching and learning but today's faculty of management education complement is diverse, and the student body reflects multicultural population. Although traditional program still includes a focus on the provincial curriculum, it distinguishes itself from other programs by emphasizing environmental and societal issues in all aspects of the curriculum and all approaches to teaching and learning. This transformation came about as a result of a core group of faculty members who worked on committees to build consensus on initiating curricular and

programmatic changes.

Environmental literacy & sustainability is an important component of management education and, as such, now the focus of management studies that looked at the extent to which sustainability concepts have been incorporated into management education curriculum.

For *A Survey of the Environmental Education of Students in Non-Environmental Majors at Four-Year Institutions in the USA* (Wolfe, 2001), chief academic officers at four-year institutions were surveyed to examine the extent to which their institutions provide for the environmental education of students in non-environmental majors and to identify various approaches for increasing environmental literacy at the college level. In this survey, environmental literacy was defined as “a basic understanding of the concepts and knowledge of the issues and information relevant to the health and sustainability of the environment as well as environmental issues related to human health” (p.2). Of the nearly 1,000 institutions that responded to the survey, 11.6 percent indicated that an environmental literacy course was required of all students and 55 percent reported that such a course was not required but was available and countable toward the institution's general education requirements. In other words, only 11.6 percent of institutions require environmental literacy for their graduates and, worse yet, at 45 percent of the institutions, non-environmental majors do not have the option to include environmental courses as electives for part of their general education requirements.

The National Wildlife Federation's Campus Ecology Program conducted a separate survey entitled *State of the Campus Environment: A National Report Card on Environmental Performance and Sustainability in Higher Education* (McIntosh et al, 2001). This survey of both two- and four-year colleges showed that only eight percent of higher education institutions had an environmental literacy undergraduate requirement, and another five percent had this requirement for most of their students. An additional three percent were planning to build in this requirement in the future.

Mark Van Putten, President and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation explained the situation: While a number of colleges and universities stand out for educating students in all disciplines about sustainability, the survey found that, unless they are majoring in biology or environmental studies, students in many institutions may complete their studies without gaining basic environmental literacy. (McIntosh et al, 2001 p. iii).

Management Educational Institutions are now striving to reduce environmental impacts and operating expenses by replacing lighting fixtures, bathroom faucets, heating and cooling equipment, and other inefficient energy and/or water systems, especially if there is a

relatively short payback period on the initial investment. Energy conservation and greenhouse gas emissions reductions are the primary foci for most of the management institutions and universities & focused on such as creating on-campus organic farms, developing zero-waste operations, and building stronger connections between campus and the surrounding community. Educations Campuses are essentially small communities but many opportunities exist for students to get hands-on experience with campus operations that they can then apply in their real world.

All of the strategies like green orientation, first year education, graduation requirements, interdisciplinary perspectives, sustainable campuses, and sustainability-focused academic programs should be implemented in management educational institutions and universities, large and small. Aside from what can be a sizable investment in faculty and staff time, the operating expenses of some of these programs can be minimal. Creating this sort of institution is certainly ambitious, but it is achievable if individuals take ownership of specific programs and work together (with learning outcomes in mind) to coordinate sustainability initiatives. Faculty, staff, and students exist at every college and university who is passionate about sustainability and eager to find ways to make a difference. This interest and energy needs to be channeled into bringing about transformational educational experiences that students both want and need and upon which the fate of our environment, society, and planet may very well depend.

Impacts of Environmental Ethics and Sustainability

The number of charters and declarations, promoting sustainability in education is increasing with the number of universities integrating sustainability. For many universities, those declarations are self commitments and are used to improve public relations. Although they may have further implications, declarations can be a strong policy statement. Over 300 European universities have signed the Copernicus Charta and in the same moment, they sign a commitment for sustainable development. Impact on society by their four roles:

- Education: Train and influence future decision makers
- Research: Management Education research influences daily life
- Administration/Management: Management Institutions are large employers and consume all kinds of resources.
- Role in Society/Outreach: Management Educational Institutions have a direct (regional development, Managers in society) and indirect (education, research, administration) influence on societal development and especially the surrounding and environment. By fulfilling their role and obligations, universities and institutions can contribute to a

sustainable development for the society and the institutions itself.

Universities & Management Educational Institutions can benchmark themselves with others and can get a better understanding about the structure and proceedings of environmental ethics and sustainability by learning about good practices and processes of other universities in other countries. Integrating sustainability offers a new challenge for universities of which they can only succeed – Succeed in social well-being, ecological quality and economic prosperity. A promising development at management educational institutions and at university is the increasing number of courses and centers that have a specific focus on sustainability. These centers play an important role in institutionalizing a school's focus on particular issues because they provide a common platform for convening, seeking grants for research and programs, and communicating with a wider audience. Often these centers are staffed by teaching faculty and also by an administrator who supports the activities of the center. It is reasonable to conclude from the analysis of the survey that there is an increasing amount of discussion about the role of business and the relevance of sustainability to business in both required and elective courses in business schools.

Approaches to teaching Environmental Ethics and Sustainability

The teaching of values for sustainability must be emphasized in management education. Environmental ethics that have sustainable living at their core should be taught to promote the transformation and construction of society. This can be done by developing in learners, values of social responsibility, concern for all life forms and commitment to work with others.

Encouraging Issue-Based Learning

Learners in management education should be involved in the issues surrounding the environmental and development problems. The use of issue investigation as a context for the exploration of moral, social and political values, required for the development of environmental ethics, must be encouraged in management education as much as possible.

Adopting a Holistic Curriculum Approach

Education in management should treat environmental and development issues holistically through all areas of understanding and experience. Such an approach will no doubt immensely contribute to the education of the whole person.

Making Education Relevant

Learners should be encouraged to explore links between their personal lives and wider

environmental and development concerns. Education should help learners to develop an understanding of themselves and the world around them. In this way, education will be made relevant to the needs of learners and society.

Adopting a Socially Critical Orientation

Education in management should prepare learners to be socially critical. Critical thinking skills, critical reflective knowledge, democratic skills and experience of the processes of environmental politics need to be developed in learners in order to improve their capacity to address environment and development issues.

Incorporating a Futures Perspective

Incorporating a futures perspective requires examining probable futures that occur as a result of existing environmental relationships, and of possible alternative environmental futures. In this respect, learning should involve looking to the future as well as the present and the past.

Making Learning Action-Oriented

Education programmes in management need to involve learners in real and simulated environmental action through active learning strategies. There is a need to provide knowledge and experience in a variety of environmental actions e.g. eco -management, legal action, political action, consumerism, negotiation and persuasion.

Environmental ethics and Sustainability are taught in different forms in management education. and no assessment has been made in the literature of the rationale for teaching them within a common decision-making framework. When it comes to courses specifically dedicated to environmental ethics and sustainability, management schools and universities have made progress and institutions now reported that they include these topics into their courses syllabi. Of course, there is small numbers of institutions do include the courses on other topics where sustainability issues are raised but do not occupy the center of the syllabus. Nevertheless, it becomes clear from our survey that sustainability is most definitely at the margins in the business school curriculum. That's why our intention here is to look at the presence rather than the absence, and to assess what we can learn from the experiences of faculty who do teach in this arena. Therefore we scanned our database for faculty who had developed dedicated courses on some aspect of sustainability and conducted phone interviews with several to learn more about their approaches to this complex subject. We interviewed these faculties, reviewed their syllabi and have gleaned a number of observations and lessons which we hope may serve to encourage others in their curriculum development efforts and to offer some likely pathways for such efforts and need

to be changes in current curricular frames for Courses on Environmental Ethics & Sustainability.

Barriers to the integration of sustainability into Management Education

Faculty member reached out to colleagues from other disciplines to team teach the case study she integrated into her core Marketing course, thereby demonstrating the kind of cross-boundary thinking that is required to address sustainability issues and hopefully influencing her colleagues at the same time. Faculty often reported that their interest in this area was not about environmental or sustainability issues. In addition, several faculties pointed out that working in this area could be dangerous for inexperienced and for junior faculty. It was also noted that often there is only one faculty person working in this area at a school, meaning that if he or she decides to teach something else or to move to another school, the course goes away. We heard from interviewees fairly consistently that student interest in sustainability coursework was greater among international students than the Indian students. In general, Management students were seen as less open to these issues than international students. However, these day's number of students in these field increasing. Students were reported as being more attracted to the courses framed around business opportunity, although there are a consistent group of students who are committed to environmental and sustainability issues. Similarly, those courses that were organized around an industry (e.g., financial services) or around a functional ability (supply chain management, entrepreneurship) did attract more students. No single framework or template appears to have emerged from the literature for teaching methods for Environmental ethics and sustainability as their course content.

Summary

In summary, Environmental Ethics & Sustainability into management educations and the course content of Management programs tell us about how well concepts of sustainability are being integrated into management education?

Environmental Ethics & Sustainability are subjects increasingly chosen for discussion at events held outside the classroom at business schools but further research would be required to assess how wide an audience these discussions attract and how impactful the sessions are on students' thinking about the business sector.

As part of their diverse offerings to Management students, some institutions provide opportunities for students to get hands-on consulting experience in emerging markets – both through extracurricular internships and in elective courses.

Management Students are often the ones who initiate the kinds of events and business school

programs that build their capacity as emerging leaders to understand the types of business practices that” promote sustainable development and consumption patterns to alleviate poverty and increase the quality of life for all people.” They are essential drivers for change. A promising trend, but one yet to realize its full potential, is the emergence of management institutions and Universities that encourage teaching, research and outreach to the business community on sustainability related topics.

There continues to be limited evidence that topics related to the broad domain of sustainability are finding their way into many of the traditional business school course with important exceptions. Students are being presented, however, at some schools with elective courses that do develop their ability to consider new ways to recognize the tremendous power of the private sector to bind resources to create sustainable good and services.

Courses with this content generally open students' eyes to possibilities for business to thrive financially and achieve social and environmental progress and give them the chance to explore the constraints to achieving this result. They also provide a framework for students to wrestle with making decisions in situations where there are conflicting yet valid expectations held by diverse constituencies.

Courses addressing sustainability issues also expose students to cross-sectoral engagement as a tool for problem solving and innovation and as a result they often explore the complex challenges and opportunities of public private partnerships.

Man has the fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of a quality that permits a life of dignity and well being, and he bears a solemn responsibility to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations...” (UNESCO, 1972). Over several months of surveying students from management educational institutions near by our location Aligarh Region-UP, we found that students consistently expected to be more evenhanded than their predecessors in managing companies in ways that take social and environmental conditions into account. Moreover, student enthusiasm for inquiry into the diverse responsibilities of business appears to be increasing. Interest by students in having issues related to corporate social responsibility raised in all academic disciplines in management school. The knowledge, skills, and values presented as a model for management education by the institution and universities in Indian and Global educational Institutions with regard to transformative environmental education, somewhat lost in the fog, most institutions and universities are not doing enough to prepare students to create a sustainable future.

Best practices in sustainability education including green orientation, first year education, graduation requirements, interdisciplinary education, the campus as a model sustainable

community, and sustainability-focused academic programs are combined to construct a comprehensive, easy-to-replicate strategy that administrators, faculty, staff, and students could use to improve sustainability education efforts at their own institutions.

Sustainable development offers a philosophic and analytical framework for educative enquiries in which economic, social, and environmental factors must be considered in relation to one another. Such enquiries provide opportunities for deliberating and addressing complex issues. Educational processes that follow from these enquiries also require critical and open-ended engagement with complex issues. Part of our task therefore is to develop networks across faculties and disciplines thereby enabling joint discussions that will explore and theorize relationships and issues among social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. These processes of inquiry, theory development, and critical dialog are our tasks, as opposed to imposing the concept of sustainable development on others. One way of developing such a critical discourse is to make sustainable development an open question for examination in the socio-political and socio-ecological contexts within which we work.

Recommendations

- Make the administration and faculty leaders aware of the need for environmental ethics and sustainability (EES) into the management education program.
- Provide educational opportunities to ensure that every member of the faculty understands the need for EES, how it is relevant to management education in improving quality and how each individual can contribute to the overall effort.
- Set up a participatory and democratic process involving every part of the Institutions and University (i.e., faculty, staff, administration, research faculty, school liaisons, students, etc.) to address sustainability and environmental ethics.
- Move quickly to institutionalize this concept EES, so the progress will continue in spite of frequent changes in faculty, administration, or others and innovative undertakings.
- Continuous monitoring the process and timely review gives us good feedback.
- Recognize and reward academic effort and administrative leadership, especially when it is voluntary and above and beyond the regular requirements.
- Sustainability now offers the faculty of management education an opportunity to expand on its commitment to quality and to begin to address social justice issues

related to poverty, violence, militarism, globalization, eco-racism, and environmental degradation.

- Management Institution and universities should demonstrate their commitment to sustainability on students' first day on campus, which occurs for many students during the summer before their first year of college. New student orientation programs are generally one- to two-day campus visits when incoming students register for classes.
- Course Content in management education is based on the belief that entrepreneurs are powerful agents of social and economic change who, if properly harnessed, can drive, rather than hinder, our movement to a sustainable economy and environment from global social and environmental trends.
- Students should welcome the opportunity to think across disciplines like environment ethics and sustainability and to discuss issues associated with globalization. This will help them realize that their decisions as business executives which affect the lives of millions.

The challenge ahead is not unlike the challenge faced by years ago. The task now is to find ways to engender understanding and build commitment and enthusiasm for the conceptual framework and academic imperatives that sustainability education implies.

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Website Links

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