Building Eco-Social Capacity: a model addressing worldviews and motivation that accommodates perspectives of Western Sydney community groups

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at a Centre for Education Research Symposium
Precarious Times: New Imaginings for Sustainability
17-18 June 2014

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Eco-social capacity is “the combination of human and social capacities that enables effective decisions and action on environmental matters” (Colley et al. 2012).

We've created a model of eco-social capacity-building that emphasises key processes for engaging people in our current context of deep environmental crisis and extraordinary opportunity.
Key Features of the Model

The model provides for stronger engagement through emphasis on:

- Allowing inspiration
- Managing fear
- Sharing and developing worldviews

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- Connecting to environment and society: accepting and benefiting from relatedness as a psychological foundation
- Enabling participation: egalitarianism, social learning, collaborative skills
Structure of this Presentation

- Research background, methods and participants
- What emerged
- How the research lead to the model
- Some components of the model – especially worldview
- The model of eco-social capacity building
Research Background & Methods

- Twelve community groups - grant applicants for cultural projects on environmental community engagement
- Semi-structured interviews/reflections
- Overarching focus – the issues with environmental community engagement and how participants defined and evaluated outcomes.
- Grounded Theory approach
- Analysis:
  - Transcription, coding & key concept identification
  - Emergent themes
  - Literature investigation
  - Model
What emerged from the interviews...

The overt statements...

- Roles of inspiration and fear

- Factors promoting and inhibiting participation

- Building collaborative capacity
What emerged from the interviews...

The conspicuous omissions...
- Worldviews
- Connectedness as a capacity – both environmental & social
- Statements of capacity-building outcomes (Colley et al. 2012)
Other Models: Environmental Literacy

The Tbilisi Declaration - categories of Environmental Education Objectives:

- **Awareness**—to help social groups and individuals acquire an awareness and sensitivity to the total environment and its allied problems.

- **Knowledge**—to help social groups and individuals gain a variety of experience in, and acquire a basic understanding of, the environment and its associated problems.

- **Attitudes**—to help social groups and individuals acquire a set of values and feelings of concern for the environment and the motivation for actively participating in environmental improvement and protection.

- **Skills**—to help social groups and individuals acquire the skills for identifying and solving environmental problems.

- **Participation**—to provide social groups and individuals with an opportunity to be actively involved at all levels in working toward resolution of environmental problems (UNESCO 1978:27).

Environmental Literacy Reviews: McBeth and Volk (2009), Hollweg et al. (2011); McBride et al. (2013)
Components of the Model: Self-Determination Theory

- Competence (mastery)
- Motivation
  - Relatedness (connectedness)
  - Autonomy (directing self)

Self-Determination Theory
For example:
- Deci 1980
- Deci & Ryan 2000
- Deci & Ryan 2012
Extrinsic Motivation - External -
Motivation for an activity because of a separable outcome - an external reward such as money.

Extrinsic Motivation - Integrated -
Motivation by values that were once external, but are now integrated into the person's outlook.

Intrinsic Motivation

- Motivation for an activity that is rewarding in itself.
- Meets our innate psychological needs (competence, relatedness and autonomy)

Greatest discipline!

Greatest learning!
Components of the Model: Fear

Simplified and sourced from Maloney et al. (2011) “Fear Appeals and Persuasion”, and related to the representation of self-efficacy in Social Cognitive Theory (e.g. Bandura 2001)
Components of the Model:

- Competence (mastery)
- Relatedness (connectedness)
- Autonomy (directing self)

Motivation
Components of the Model: Worldview

Worldview

Motivation

Competence (mastery)

Relatedness (connectedness)

Autonomy (directing self)
Cultural Transformation and... Worldview

• Body of literature on ecocentric worldviews and the Great Turning
  – The concept of “The Great Turning” (Macy and Brown 1998)

• Significance for environmental engagement:
  – Anthropocentric worldviews are driving humans into the breakdown of their ecological relationships.
  – Ecocentric and relationally-oriented worldviews allow people to re-conceive their role in the environment as part of a natural system. This re-conception reconciles environmental action with greater competence, relatedness and autonomy.
Components of the Model: Anthropocentric Worldview

- Competence (mastery)
- Motivation
- Relatedness (connectedness)
- Autonomy (directing self)
Components of the Model: Anthropocentric Worldview

- Competence (mastery)
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ANTHROPOCENTRIC WORLDVIEW

Mastering exploitation of living systems
Rejecting Environmental Connectedness
Controlling resources
Components of the Model: Ecocentric Worldview

- Competence (mastery)
- Motivation
- Relatedness (connectedness)
- Autonomy (directing self)
Components of the Model: Ecocentric Worldview

ECOCENTRIC

Motivation

Mastering our role as facilitators of living systems

Accepting Environmental Connectedness

Relatedness (connectedness)

WORLDVIEW

Competence (mastery)

Collaborating with diversity

Autonomy (directing self)
The Model of Eco-Social Capacity Building

Knowledge, Critical Thinking, Systems Thinking

Knowledge, Critical Thinking, Systems Thinking

Mastering our role as facilitators of living systems

ECOCENTRIC

Accepting Environmental Connectedness

WORLDVIEW

Collaborating with diversity

Motivation

Relationship Skills

Relatedness (connectedness)

Autonomy (directing self)

Competence (mastery)

Motivation

Relationship Skills

Relatedness (connectedness)

Autonomy (directing self)

Competence (mastery)
Significance of this Model

- It provides an alternative structure for outcomes, design and evaluation of environmental community engagement.
- It gives particular focus to the motivational aspects, and thereby increases the potential for the vital positive feedback loops that interatively increase engagement.
- It makes transparent the central motivational role of worldviews in enabling environmental action, setting the stage for conscious, consensual negotiation and development of enabling worldviews.
- By making sense of a range of views expressed by environmental community groups in Western Sydney, it is likely to be meaningful and relevant to all those operating in comparable modes of environmental engagement and education for sustainability.
The Model of Eco-Social Capacity Building

Motivation

ECOCENTRIC
- Accepting Environmental Connectedness

WORLDVIEW
- Collaborating with diversity

Relationship Skills

Relatedness (connectedness)

Competence (mastery)

Knowledge, Critical Thinking, Systems Thinking

Mastering our role as facilitators of living systems

Autonomy (directing self)
References


Title Image courtesy of artist Stanlee Gatti and photographer Kat Wade (2006)