Advancing Education as a Goal for Sustainable Development

Transformative Learning for Sustainable Lifestyles

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The truth is that without significant precautions, education can equip people merely to be more **effective vandals** of the earth. If one listens carefully, it may even be possible to hear the **Creation groan at every graduation** ceremony when another batch of smart, degree-holding, but **ecologically illiterate**, Homo sapiens who are eager to succeed are launched into the biosphere."

David Orr (1994)*Earth in Mind*

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"I don't want to protect the environment. I want to create a world where the environment doesn't need protecting"

Shaun Frankson

What kind of learning will make this happen?

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The effectiveness of transformative learning

Transformational learning is about change, dramatic, fundamental change in **the way we see ourselves and the world** in which we live.

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Transformative learning involves **experiencing a deep, structural shift** in the basic premises of thought, feelings and actions.

TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING IS CRUCIAL BECAUSE

Environmental and Sustainability issues are CONTEXTUAL

Environmental and Sustainability issues are COMPLEX

Environmental and Sustainability issues are EMMERGENT

Environmental and Sustainability issues are CONTESTED

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We use transformative learning to explore ways of educating for a sustainable future

where one can appreciate that the future is ever-present,

where one can appreciate that the future is ripe with potential and

where one can appreciate that the future is full of possibilities

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The Discussion Plan

The tentative discussion will follow the following format:

1 I will discuss SWEDESD's understanding of transformative learning and social change

2 I will share SWEDESD's experiences of translating transformative learning into practice with communities of practice in Africa and Asia

3 I will connect the contribution of SWEDESD experiences to the framing of the Global Action Programme on ESD

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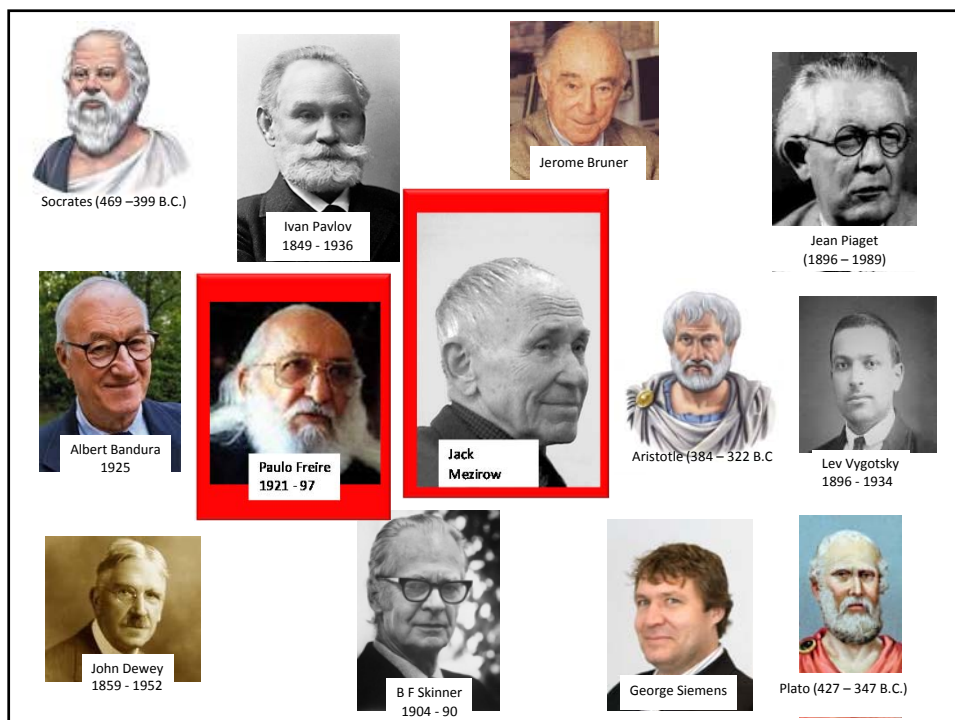SWEDESD

1 How do people learn?

We have tried to understand learning for over 2000 years.

Learning debate on how people learn dates as far back as the Greek philosophers,

The following are some leading learning theorists

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Socrates (469 –399 B.C.)

Ivan Pavlov
1849 - 1936

Jerome Bruner

Jean Piaget
(1896 – 1989)

Albert Bandura
1925

Paulo Freire
1921 - 97

Jack Mezirow

Aristotle (384 – 322 B.C

Lev Vygotsky
1896 - 1934

John Dewey
1859 - 1952

B F Skinner
1904 - 90

George Siemens

Plato (427 – 347 B.C.)

Transformative learning

- Childhood - learning is formative

- Adulthood - learning is transformative

Adults make meaning of experiences by
- examining, questioning, validating and
- revising beliefs, values, attitudes and feelings

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"Transformative learning is the process of using a *prior interpretation* to construe a *new or revised interpretation* of the meaning of one's experience in order *to guide future action*"

(Mezirow, 1991)

Learning - Planting and nurturing

The life of the plant is within the seed, not within the gardener. A gardener creates conditions enabling the life within the seeds to germinate, to blossom, to bear fruit. You cannot guarantee that every seed will yield its maximum possible output, and some seasons will realize a more abundant harvest than others. But if you create the right conditions, over time you can predict that your garden will produce consistently excellent results (Stephen R. Covey).

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At SWEDESD we believe
Transformative learning is one way of making this happen

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Essential components of transformative learning

Experience	Everyone has experiences that we must process

Critical reflection	Reflect and examine our underlying beliefs and assumptions

Reflective discourse	Open and objective analysis

Action	Immediate, delayed or a confirmation of our previously held beliefs

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There are three types of reflection

1. **Content Reflection**
Thinking of the actual content

2. **Process Reflection**
Thinking of how to handle/use the experience

3. **Premise Reflection**
Examining long held beliefs and assumptions

Transformational Learning Theory   16

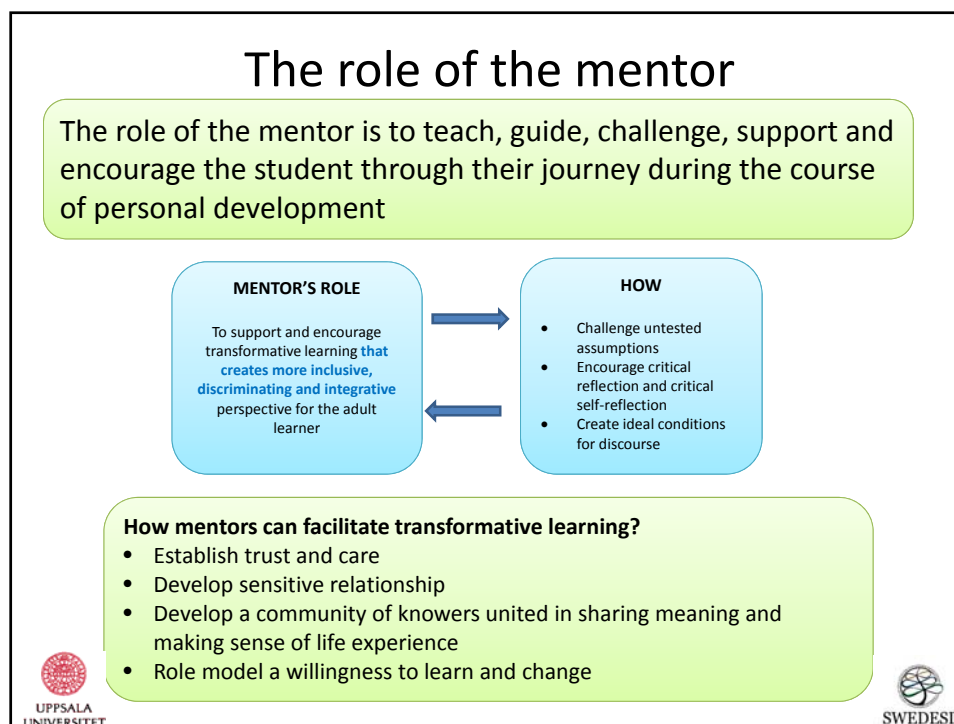## Mezirow's Ideal Conditions for Reflective Discourse (from Habermas)

- Have accurate and complete information

- Freedom from coercion and distorting self-deception

- Ability to weigh evidence and assess arguments "objectively"

- Openness to alternative points of view and to care about the way others think and feel

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Mezirow's Ideal Conditions for Reflective Discourse - continued

- Ability to become critically reflective of assumptions and their consequences

- Equal opportunity to participate in the various roles of discourse

- Willingness to accept an informed, objective, and rational consensus as a legitimate test of validity until new perspectives, evidence, or argument are encountered and established as yielding better judgments.

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Transformative learning

LEARNER'S EXPERIENCE

- Assumptions
- beliefs,
- judgments
- feelings

CRITICAL REFLECTION Processing experiences

Content Reflection
What

Process Reflection
How

Premise Reflection
Why

Reflective Discourse

Open and objective analysis of experiences

- Sifting
- winnowing
- distilling

Action

INVESTING

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The role of the mentor

The role of the mentor is to teach, guide, challenge, support and encourage the student through their journey during the course of personal development

MENTOR'S ROLE

To support and encourage transformative learning **that creates more inclusive, discriminating and integrative** perspective for the adult learner

HOW

- Challenge untested assumptions
- Encourage critical reflection and critical self-reflection
- Create ideal conditions for discourse

How mentors can facilitate transformative learning?
- Establish trust and care
- Develop sensitive relationship
- Develop a community of knowers united in sharing meaning and making sense of life experience
- Role model a willingness to learn and change

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2

SWEDESD PROGRAMMES OF
TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING

Two examples
Change project approach – Teacher Education
Inquiry based approach – Urban Sustainability
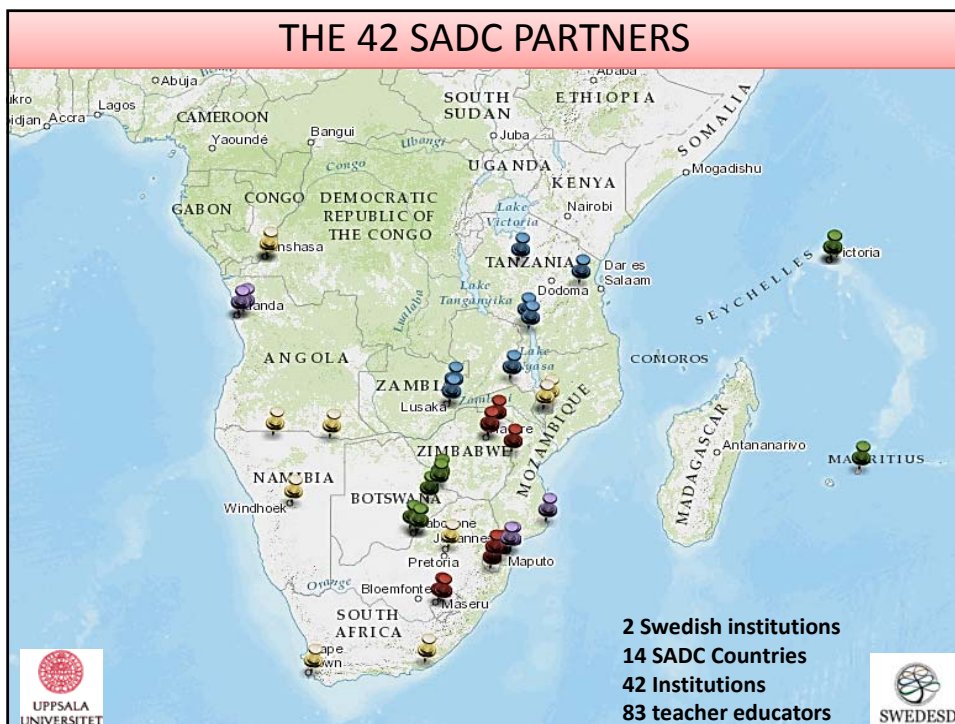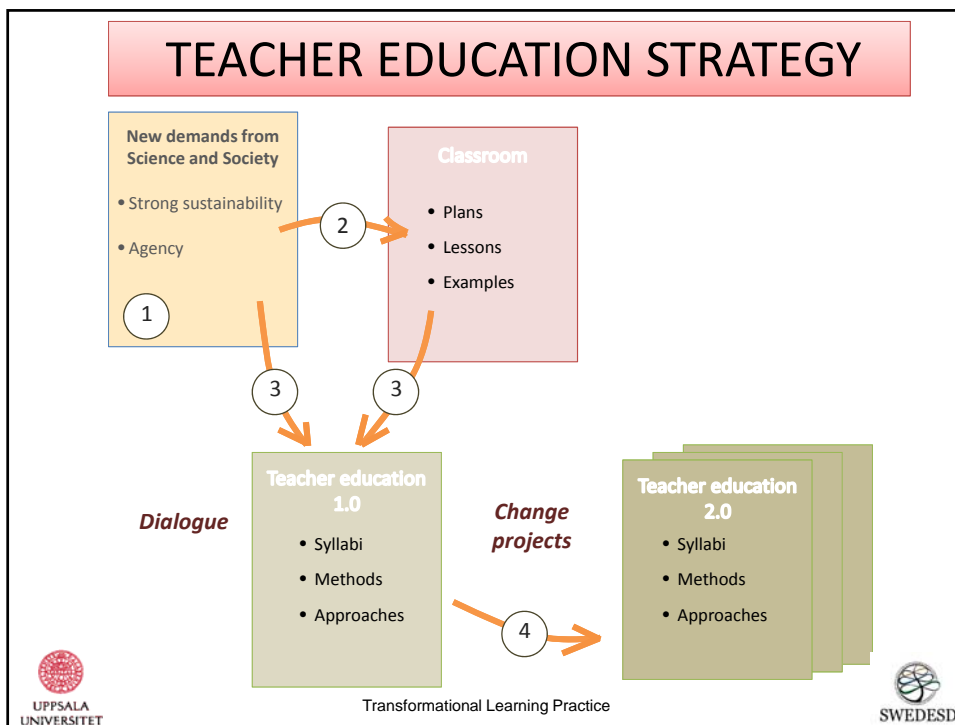
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2:1

THE CHANGE
PROJECT APPROACH

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TEACHER EDUCATION STRATEGY

New demands from Science and Society

- Strong sustainability
- Agency

Classroom

- Plans
- Lessons
- Examples

Dialogue

Teacher education 1.0

- Syllabi
- Methods
- Approaches

Change projects

Teacher education 2.0

- Syllabi
- Methods
- Approaches

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THE 42 SADC PARTNERS

2 Swedish institutions
14 SADC Countries
42 Institutions
83 teacher educators

Increasing the capacity of educators and trainers Competences

SYSTEMS-THINKING COMPETENCE: the ability to collectively analyse complex systems such as society, environment, economy, etc

ANTICIPATORY COMPETENCE: the ability to collectively analyse, evaluate, and craft rich ''pictures'' of the future related to sustainability issues and sustainability problem-solving frameworks

NORMATIVE COMPETENCE: the ability to collectively map specifies, apply, reconcile, and negotiate sustainability values, principles, goals, and targets

STRATEGIC COMPETENCE: the ability to collectively design and implement interventions, transitions, and transformative governance strategies toward sustainability

INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCE: the ability to motivate, enable and facilitate collaborative and participatory sustainability research and problem solving

(Wiek, 2011)

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Methods
How

Positioning of ideas about education alongside the social role of the educated person (Jickling and Wals, 2008)

Transmissive
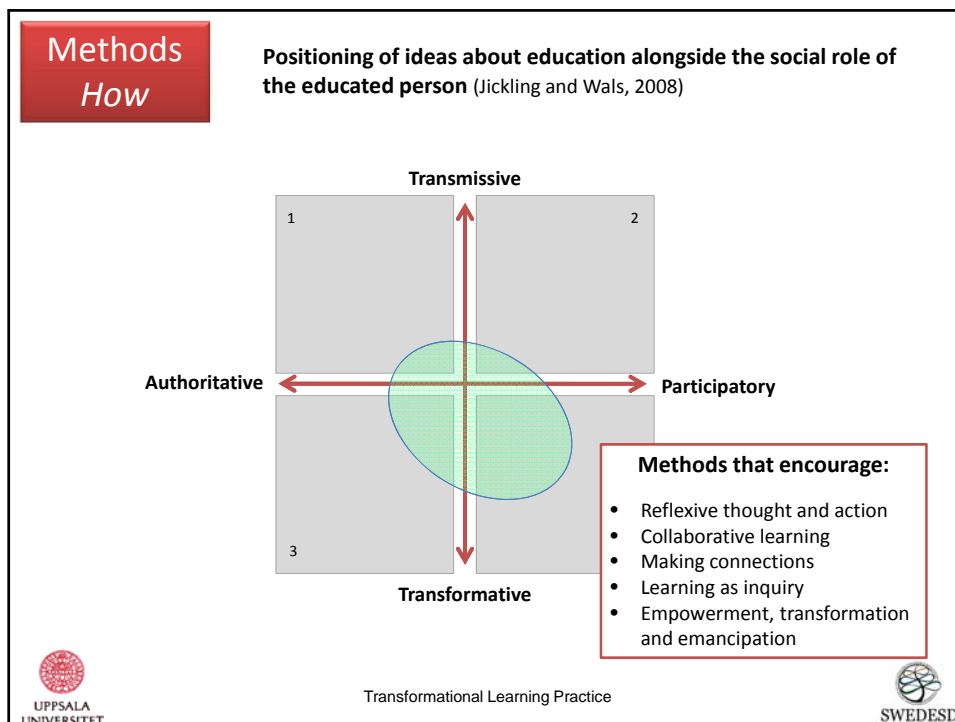Predetermined
Prescribed
Closed

Authoritative
Differential/Compliant
Training/Conditioning

Participatory
Active citizenry
Social learning

1   2
3   4

Socio-Constructivist Transformative
Transactional/Co-created
Socially critical/action-orientated
Open

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Methods
How

Positioning of ideas about education alongside the social role of the educated person (Jickling and Wals, 2008)

Transmissive

1

2

Authoritative

Participatory

Methods that encourage:

- Reflexive thought and action
- Collaborative learning
- Making connections
- Learning as inquiry
- Empowerment, transformation and emancipation

3

Transformative

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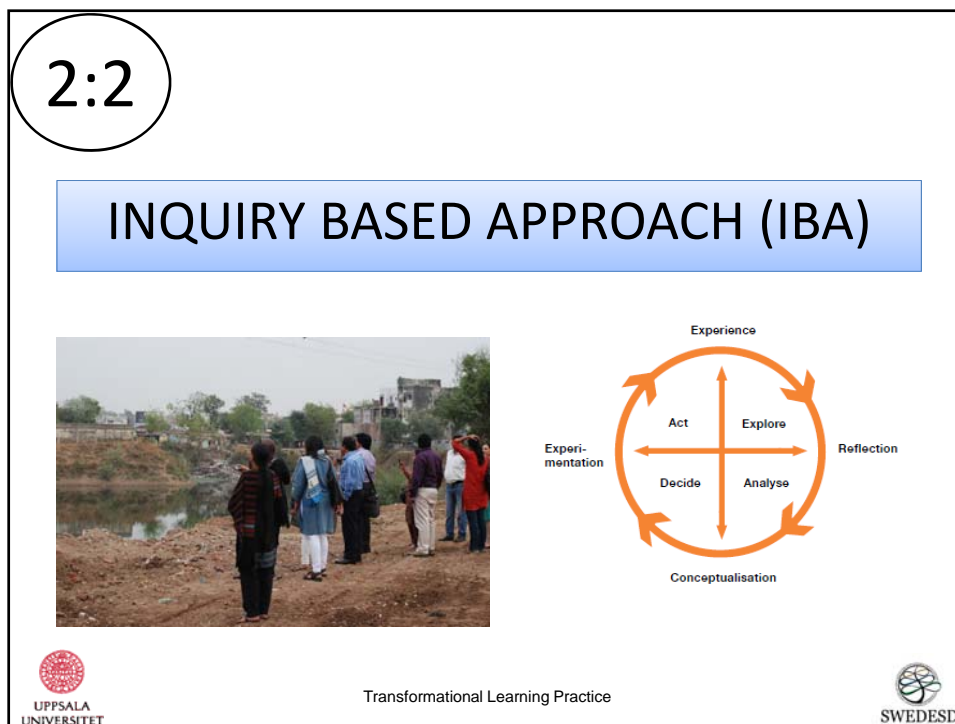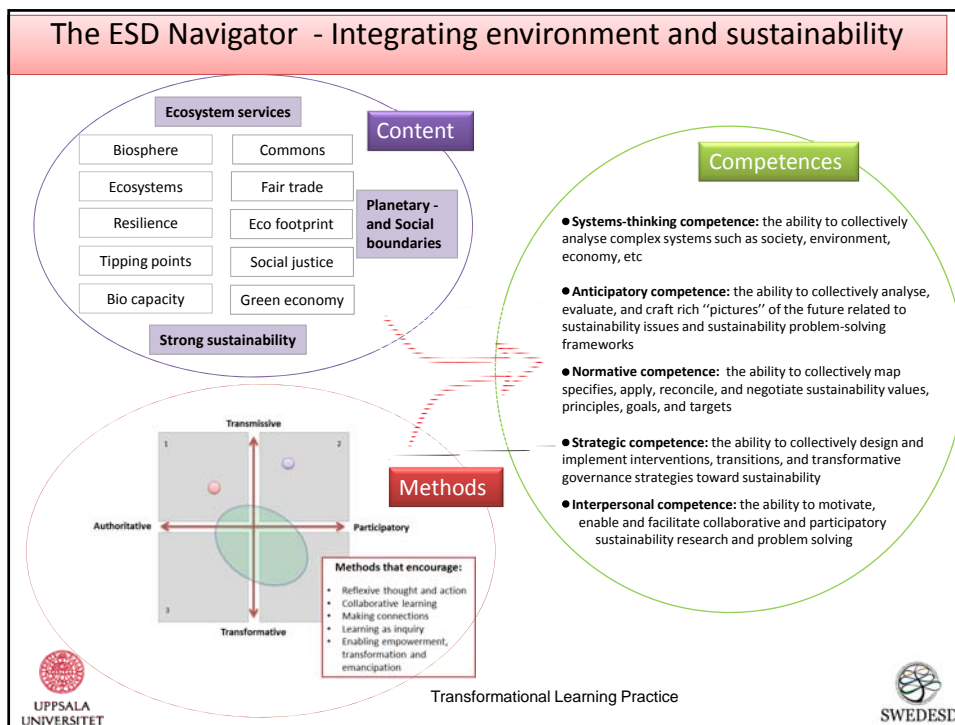UPPSALA
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Effective pedagogy enables Action

1. Encouraging reflexive thought and action

2. Facilitating collaborative learning

3. Making connections

4. Learning as inquiry

5. Enabling empowerment and emancipation

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The ESD Navigator - Integrating environment and sustainability

Ecosystem services

Biosphere	Commons
Ecosystems	Fair trade
Resilience	Eco footprint
Tipping points	Social justice
Bio capacity	Green economy

Strong sustainability

Content

Planetary - and Social boundaries

Methods

Competences

- **Systems-thinking competence:** the ability to collectively analyse complex systems such as society, environment, economy, etc

- **Anticipatory competence:** the ability to collectively analyse, evaluate, and craft rich ''pictures'' of the future related to sustainability issues and sustainability problem-solving frameworks

- **Normative competence:** the ability to collectively map specifies, apply, reconcile, and negotiate sustainability values, principles, goals, and targets

- **Strategic competence:** the ability to collectively design and implement interventions, transitions, and transformative governance strategies toward sustainability

- **Interpersonal competence:** the ability to motivate, enable and facilitate collaborative and participatory sustainability research and problem solving

Transmissive

Authoritative — Participatory

Transformative

Methods that encourage:
- Reflexive thought and action
- Collaborative learning
- Making connections
- Learning as inquiry
- Enabling empowerment, transformation and emancipation

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2:2

INQUIRY BASED APPROACH (IBA)

Experience

Act — Explore

Experimentation — Reflection

Decide — Analyse

Conceptualisation

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What is the IBA?

Cyclical learning process in multi-stakeholder teams revolve around inquiries.

An inquiry is a question that enables both learning and changes on the ground.

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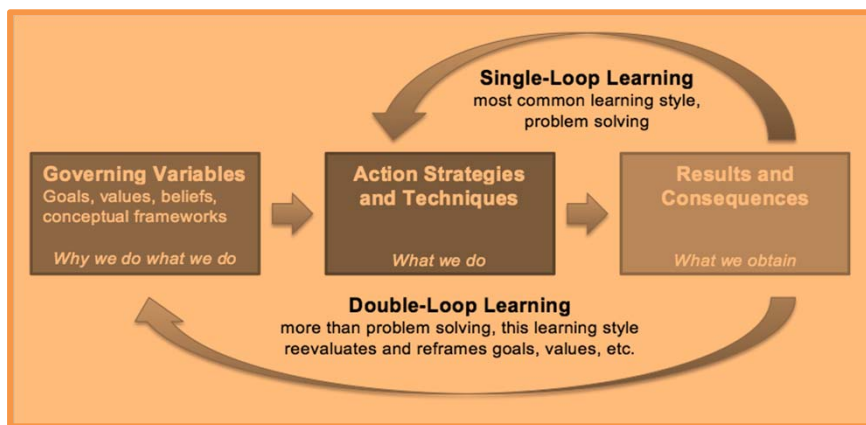## An example of a Strategic Inquiry from Ahmedabad, India

"How can we improve the quality of life in informal settlements around lakes and ponds in Ahmedabad?" (SUS 2011)
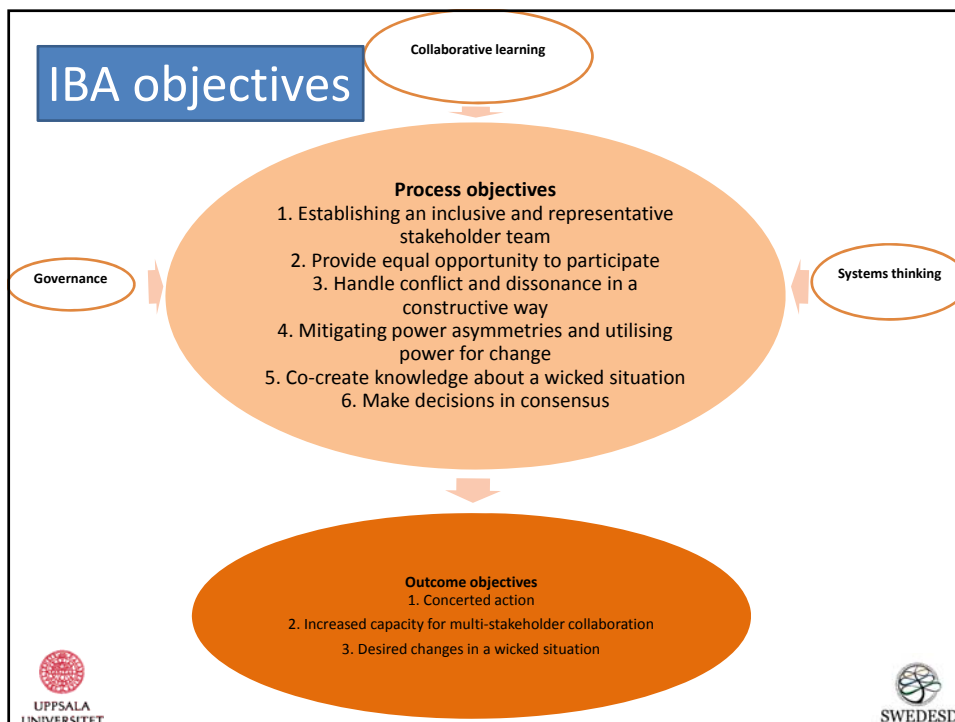

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IBA is a collaborative process which enables double loop learning

Single-Loop Learning
most common learning style,
problem solving

Governing Variables
Goals, values, beliefs,
conceptual frameworks

Why we do what we do

**Action Strategies
and Techniques**

What we do

**Results and
Consequences**

What we obtain

Double-Loop Learning
more than problem solving, this learning style
reevaluates and reframes goals, values, etc.

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IBA objectives

Collaborative learning

Governance

Systems thinking

Process objectives
1. Establishing an inclusive and representative stakeholder team
2. Provide equal opportunity to participate
3. Handle conflict and dissonance in a constructive way
4. Mitigating power asymmetries and utilising power for change
5. Co-create knowledge about a wicked situation
6. Make decisions in consensus

Outcome objectives
1. Concerted action
2. Increased capacity for multi-stakeholder collaboration
3. Desired changes in a wicked situation

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Test beds for IBA

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3

How does this integrate into the Global Action Programme on ESD

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The GAP has two objectives:

OBJECTIVE 1

To reorient education and learning so that everyone has the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that empower them to contribute to sustainable development – and make a difference;

OBJECTIVE 2

To strengthen education and learning in all agendas, programmes and activities that promote sustainable development

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3:1 Reorienting education and learning

1. At SWEDESD we are a centre of an ESD community of practitioners / we act as a focal point for a social network of practitioners and implementers of transformative and social learning processes. This community of ESD practitioners and thinkers strives to

- Articulate a paradigm that facilitate quality and relevant education

- Create social change processes through collaborative learning,

- develop and implements new tools for addressing learning and social change

- bring together the practitioners who have and who need the knowledge and skills

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Reorienting education and learning

2. We articulate a new paradigm of learning: as mentors/facilitators of transformation

- blending mentor/facilitator and participants/student into partners in mutual transformation.

- relation based learning processes fostering mutual personal development.

- Acquisition of new competences through life experiences

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Reorienting education and learning

3. We offer practical opportunities to dialogue and communicate transformative experiences

The Change Project Approach and Inquiry Based Approach

- to empower/encourage individuals who value life-long learning

- to bring transformative learning to the attention of educational institutions & organisations, government and NGOs.

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3:2 Strengthening education and learning

1. We develop & implement new tools:
SWEDESD provides ways for people to develop to their full potential – offering opportunities for life-long learners/transformers

- Through the Change Project Approach and Inquiry Based Approach
  - collecting concrete knowledge and sharing it
    - within their institutions (intra),
    - between and among national, regional and global institutions (inter).

- The SWEDESD ESD community is the reference point in terms of transformative learning for practitioners and their leaders.

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Strengthening education and learning

2. We bring together practitioners and people interested:

- The SWEDESD ESD community is a hands-on, supportive, creative and current network of practitioners supporting each other

- The SWEDESD ESD community provides opportunities for people to meet and participate in a non-hierarchical circle of learners

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The GAP will focus on five priority action areas

Focus area 1
Advancing policy;

Focus Area 2
Integrating sustainability practices into education and training environments (whole-institution approaches);

Focus Area 3
Increasing the capacity of educators and trainers;

Focus Area 4
Empowering and mobilizing youth;

Focus Area 5
Encouraging local communities and municipal authorities to develop community-based ESD programmes

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SWEDESD is strong in three and gaining momentum in the other two

Focus area 1
Advancing policy;

Sweden 3 June and 27 August / Ministries of Education and SADC Secretariat

Focus Area 2
Integrating sustainability practices into education and training environments (whole-institution approaches);

Focus Area 3
Increasing the capacity of educators and trainers;

Focus Area 4
Empowering and mobilizing youth;

Youths in schools and out of school youths

Focus Area 5
Encouraging local communities and municipal authorities to develop community-based ESD programmes

A transformation is a metamorphosis its more than just a transitional change

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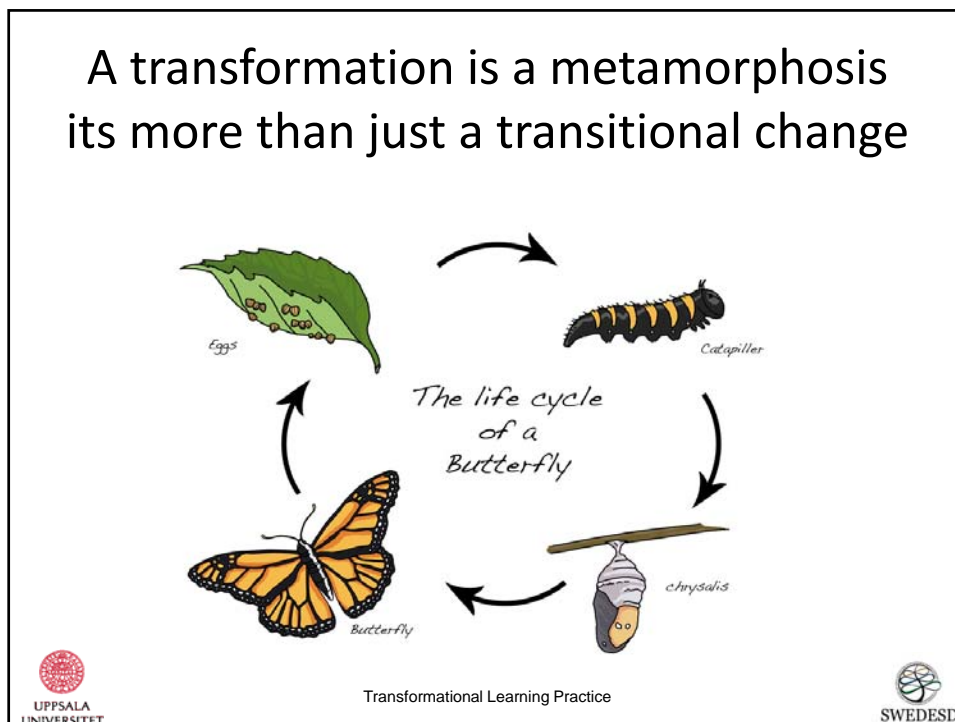
THANK YOU

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