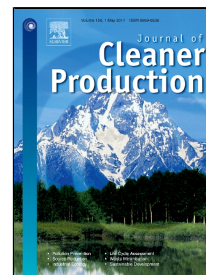


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Teach it to sustain it! Environmental attitudes of Hungarian teacher training students in Serbia



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Teach it to sustain it!  
Environmental attitudes of Hungarian teacher training students in Serbia

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## Abstract

Environmental education plays a crucial role in children's education, familiarizing them with the concept of sustainability and developing their environmental consciousness. Conversely, it also becomes necessary for teachers to live in an environmentally conscious way and to represent the standpoint of sustainable development and its practice. The present research introduces a longitudinal survey of teaching students' environmental attitude values attending University of Novi Sad, Hungarian Language Teacher Training Faculty in Subotica between 2012 and 2015. Three separate environmental attitude measure scales (CHEAKS, RevNEP, ENV) were applied in order to assess the extent to which the undergraduate educational content contributed to the realization of sustainability education. The research results demonstrate that the environmental attitudes of students have significantly increased by the end of their undergraduate education. It has also been concluded that the currently implemented curriculum, which incorporates natural science and methodological elements, contributes the most to the successful development of positive attitudes toward sustainability, as well as the formation of adequate skills and key competences. This study directly facilitates the institution's function and contributes to the professional development of its lecturers and students, as well as establishing a team of researchers focusing on environmental education.

*Keywords:* sustainability education; environmental attitude; teacher training; curricular system

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## 1. Introduction

The concept of sustainability is still ambiguous due to the range of parallel definitions regarding the term itself (Scott, 2015). The difficulty of grasping the essence of sustainability lies in the fact that several scientific fields refer to the same concept with varying interpretations (Bolis et al., 2014). Its definition is highly influenced by ideas and ideologies regarding the relationship of humans and the environment. According to the perception of humanists and anthropocentrists, by protecting the environment, humans protect themselves. The removal of humans triggers the devaluation of nature (Kopnina, 2015b). The Brundtland Committee's report titled "Our Common Future" also follows this principle regarding the definition of the concept of sustainable development; i.e., it entails developmental processes of certain elements of society that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED, 1987). This definition, however, fails to acknowledge that we are obligated to maintain not only the human race, but all living creatures (Oakley et al, 2010; Kopnina, 2015b). Every component and system of the Earth participates in the regulation and balancing of the planet in order to sustain its current life processes. This complex system of regulations ensures the function of biospheric balance. Thus, sustainability should not be viewed exclusively

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