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MODULE 7

Design Principles for Whole School Sustainability

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Whole school sustainability is an integrative approach that focuses on environmental, social, and economic dimensions within the educational context. It aims to create a culture of sustainability that permeates all areas of school life, from curriculum and operations to community engagement.

Learning Objectives

- Introduction
- Getting Started with Green School Buildings
- What Does a Successful Green School Look Like?
- The DNA of Whole School Sustainability
- Teaching projects and problem-based learning
- Green School Management, Aesthetics, and Efficiency
- Design Principles for Whole School Sustainability
- Policy, Safety, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Green Schools
- Green Building Basics and Cost Benefits
- Healthy Ecosystems for Learning

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INTRODUCTION

- Systems thinking: Views schools as interconnected systems influenced by students, staff, curricula, infrastructure, and community stakeholders.
- Curriculum integration: Integrates sustainability concepts across disciplines, fostering critical thinking and connecting sustainability to everyday life.
- Continuous improvement: Involves ongoing evaluation and enhancement of sustainability practices.
- Sustainable infrastructure: Design and maintain school facilities to minimize environmental impact and maximize resource efficiency.
- Effective leadership: Creates policies, assigns responsibilities, and fosters a culture of sustainability within the school.
- Leadership and governance structures: Involves creating policies, assigning responsibilities, and fostering a culture of sustainability.

SYSTEMS THINKING

- Recognizes a school as a complex system involving curriculum, community, governance, and the environment.
- Involves educating students about waste management, adjusting purchasing practices, and engaging with local recycling facilities.
- Aims to create a culture of sustainability that permeates all areas of school life.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Involves all relevant parties—students, staff, parents, and the community—in sustainability efforts.
- A practical example of stakeholder engagement is the establishment of a sustainability committee.
- Stakeholder engagement is likened to a symphony orchestra, where each musician plays a different role.

CURRICULUM INTEGRATION

- Involves embedding sustainability concepts across various subjects and grade levels.
- Helps students understand the relevance of sustainability in multiple contexts.
- Example: incorporating lessons on renewable energy sources into physics curriculum.

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CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

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- Emphasizes the need for regular assessment and reflection on sustainability initiatives.
- Example: implementing an annual sustainability audit to evaluate practices and identify areas for growth.

INNOVATION AND FLEXIBILITY

- Refers to the capacity to adapt and incorporate new ideas and technologies into sustainability practices.
- Example: piloting a new solar energy system for real-time monitoring of energy consumption and generation.
- Example: trialing different waste reduction strategies and adjusting based on which method proves more effective in engaging students.

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