

Nature's new hybrid:

The ecology of an educator as businessperson
Special Topic in Ecology Through Action Research

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Abstract

Nature's new hybrid: The ecology of an educator as businessperson

documents one educator's journey to explore what it means to educate through a small business involving the harvest and sale of an organic soil conditioner made from earthworm castings. Although the author assumes that all businesspersons are educators whether they fully realize it, the intentional exploration of how to educate for sustainability through a small business is a new intersection of study. This topic is of interest to those who identify themselves as educators and businesspersons and, more generally, for those who are interested in how multiple roles in life may be integrated.

Through the process of action research cycles, the author explores how potential clients relate to sustainability, how to create deeper meaning for the word sustainability by crafting a personal definition, and how to explore sustainable behaviors through a focus group. The author concludes that, in order for a business to educate, it must actively learn from the community it serves. The business and community must become partners in order to sustain the business and foster community. In addition, creating a business strategy that doubles as an education strategy is a crucial step towards becoming a business that educates for sustainability.

“Begin where you are and such as you are...”

H.D. Thoreau

Businessperson as educator appears to be a virtually unclaimed identity. There is a growing body of literature on the topics of education for sustainability and sustainable business design. However, research that explores how to educate consciously through a business is in its infancy and I want to take part in creating a dialogue amongst educators and businesspersons.

Businesses are mass messengers of information and ideas. Therefore, businesspersons are educators—regardless of what we perceive our role to be. The importance of this double agent role stems from the growing change in how businesspersons, and therefore businesses view their role in the world ecosystem. The growing revelations surrounding corporate behaviors and environmental accountability have compelled many businesses to pay more attention to the triple bottom line (people, planet, profit). There is a connection between the privatization of water sources by Coca-Cola and the potential for 5.5 billion people to experience water shortages in the next 20 years (Corporate Accountability International, 2006, Campaigns section, para 3). There is a connection between the sale of cigarettes by Philip Morris and the increase in human lung cancer rates. There is a connection between the low price of a Wal-Mart toy and the low wage of a factory worker in China. What we do ends up being what we say, regardless of whether we say it or not.

I recently started a small business, Wormjava. I am a worm farmer and my business involves the harvest, packaging, and sale of earthworm castings—a

beneficial organic soil conditioner. Because this is a new venture for me, I have a unique opportunity to do some serious soul-searching as I enter into this new role as a businessperson. This exploration is a step beyond the growing trend toward corporate social responsibility (CSR), which should be built in to any business plan. My journey is about corporate educational responsibility, which is about more than year-end giving to a charitable organization. This is about the heart of my business, which is ecological education. I have a product: liquid and solid earthworm castings, but how is this product a platform for education?

“The true purpose of business is to add value” (Cohen & Warwick, 2006, p. xvii). All businesses do this, but the recipient of this value differs from business to business. Is value added to the community, the employees, the environment, or only the shareholders pockets? Some businesses may place disproportionate value profit by selling a cheaply produced product at great cost to the people and planet. This approach leads businesses to make more of a killing than a living (Copperrider as cited in Smith, 2005, p. 193). In my case, I am using the earthworm castings to support my mission of building awareness of consumption and helping humans reconnect to the cyclical flow of natural systems.

I wrote this article for my fellow educators who are thinking of starting a business, or have perhaps already started one. I also wrote this for the businessperson who is finally admitting that she plays the powerful role of educator and wants to explore more about what this means for her.

Through this article I illustrate how to personalize the “5 Whys” process in order to illuminate the deeper meaning of my questions. The article also offers an option on how to graphically map action research cycles. This article includes documentation on alternative methods of facilitating a focus group and coding processes for a survey and video recording. This article offers an honest first step (however wobbly) into the intersection of educator and businessperson and will hopefully invite more questions surrounding this topic.

“Where we see things in business we don’t like, we can be a part of the solution by choosing how and where we work, and by creating the work ourselves.”

D. Smith

History and context

I never intended to become an educator. Being told that a teaching certificate was a good thing to have in my back pocket only repelled me from the profession. I was not content living my life out of my back pocket. I did not want to pursue a career in education because it was thought of as the smart, safe, predictable route for women. I suffered at the hands of many women teachers who traveled that route. I did not want to follow in their footsteps. Whether these women felt called to teaching or forced into it is another question. Regardless, I veered off onto the scientific path (the path where I was sure to find smart and self-actualized people) during my college years. In my mind, the field of education was for oppressed girls who learned how to teach, but not how to create or do. I wanted to do and leave the teaching to the oppressed.

The truth is, I was scared to death of science. Chemistry was an unsolvable hybrid Sudoku/crossword puzzle. Biology smelled bad, and Physics involved taking the fun out of bouncing a ball or riding a train. I really had no idea what I was doing when I decided to major in Environmental Earth Resources. I just knew that I liked all three words and they seemed to go well together. As cold as many of those late-night lab reviews were, it was in those very labs that I learned to love the puzzles of science through mineralogy and environmental science. It was here that I discovered my knack for explaining science in an inviting way to non-science folk.

It took me four years to realize that many of my scientific male professors were quite adept at doing, but fell short in teaching. I still believed that becoming a classroom teacher was a last resort for me, but I wanted to wade in both worlds somehow. Searching for a balance, I proposed to the dean of the geology department that instead of analyzing scientific articles for my independent study, I create a geology unit for a fifth grade class in a local urban school. This was the first step in creating my own path as an educator.

Since then, I have been an outdoor educator in California teaching packaged curricula. I have initiated sustainable programs for adults in academia in Texas. I have educated about environmental study abroad programs as an admissions counselor. I have taught middle school science in the Marshall Islands. I have created and delivered presentations on current science & technology at a museum, and helped design teen training programs at an aquarium. Most recently, I have created and delivered lessons focused on

vermiculture for a K-5 school as well as an after school program for middle school students in Boston.

During the past eight years, I have danced in and out of the classroom as an educator. Perpetually struggling with the powers that be, I am hesitant to dig my feet in too deeply at any one institution. While they provide me with space and financial support to grow as an educator, these agencies, organizations, schools, and classrooms are not my niche. Admittedly, I am too outwardly passionate, assertive, independent and self-directed to sustain my long term well being in these environments. The idea of “spending entire days in someone else’s office doing someone else’s work” does not suit me (Lamott, 1994, p. xii).

I have carried a certain amount of guilt surrounding my inability to submit to authority. I am only now beginning to discover that I have qualities of an entrepreneur and I have only worked for others because the current educational and economic systems encourage this. 100 years ago, 90% of the U.S. population was self-employed. Today, 90% of the population is employed by organizations, so my guilt stems only from the fear of going against the “current” flow (Smith, 2005, p. 1). To be sure, these systems are necessary, but not necessarily for everyone or for any one person’s entire career. In my opinion, the typical workplace supervisor and the cubicle are designed to replace the typical classroom teacher and desk. I am choosing not to be a part of this system and to be a part of bringing back a new wave of self-employed “ecopreneurs” (Schick, Marxen, & Freimann, 2002, p.60).

Creating meaningful work for myself involves a new path made from reused or recycled bits from my life experiences. I can mix my experience in science and education, my entrepreneurial instinct, my creativity and persistence, my imperfections and fortés, and my growing ecological consciousness to weave a new life story.

“You shall no longer take things at second or third hand...nor look through the eyes of the dead...you shall not look through my eyes either...you shall listen to all sides and filter them for yourself.”

W. Whitman

Significance

I cannot possibly know the impact this project will have for me or for others. I recently had the honor of hearing Maya Angelou speak at a women’s conference in Boston, MA. She approached the podium and began singing “This Little Light of Mine.” She spoke of the need for each of us to take time out and develop our light. When she was a young, poor, pregnant black woman, she never would have predicted being asked by the United Nations to write a poem for the world fifty years later. (M. Angelou, personal communication, December 6, 2006).

This action research process is a part of developing “my light”, which she encourages each of us to do. I contribute my exploration to the world’s “offering tray” of knowledge. Even if the work of exploring new ground ends up lost on everyone else, it has made all the difference for me, and I am not insignificant.

It is simple to ask questions that we think will be answered easily and soon. It is comforting to ask close-ended questions—to ask questions that end your questioning. Asking questions of others is one thing, but asking questions of myself is proving to be a more challenging interview. I am only at the beginning of heeding Rainer Maria Rilke’s advice to love and live those questions; even the ones that make me itch and squirm (Rilke, 1994, p. 35).

This project is personally significant because it gives me the space to look at myself, why I do what I do and, more importantly, how I decide to do it. I hope that this exploration leads me to a better idea of what I want for myself and for my business. Forecasting is a traditional way of planning for a business. By looking at the present conditions, limitations, technologies, etc., I can forecast problems in the future in order to avoid them. I am more interested in backcasting, which asks me to look at where I want to be in the future and what I need to do now in order to get there (Robèrt, 2002, p.102).

This project is one of the few that is exploring the intersection of ecological education and sustainable business. I hope that developing my light through this exploration will incite more questions from others who find themselves in similar situations. Considering the likelihood that many people find themselves on more than one path in life, my exploration might encourage them to ask where, how, and why these paths are interconnected.

“Shall I not have intelligence with the earth? Am I not partly leaves and vegetable mould myself?”

H.D. Thoreau

Research Purpose

This exploration stems from my history as an educator and my desire to create a business that is ecologically conscious. Borrowing from the Toyota Production System principles, the “5 Whys” exercise helps me to explore the purpose of my research (Liker & Meier, 2006, p. 342).

Why do I want to explore how my educational practice is expressed through my business? I want to explore how this is done because I feel that my experience in education can greatly contribute to my new path as a business owner.

Why do I feel that my experience/practice in education can contribute to my business? My past experience is useful because I feel that all business owners are educators, whether they know it or not. I want to be a conscious business owner by acknowledging that I am also an educator and integrating what I have learned with what I am learning.

Why do I feel that it is important to be a conscious business owner? It is imperative to be aware because businesses have a major influence on the direction of society and cultures. If I can communicate the importance of sustainable practices through Wormjava, then it can be an effective catalyst for change.

Why do I feel that sustainable practices are important? I see the end result of unsustainable and mindless practices: pollution of all of our earthly resources (including our own bodies), unequal distribution of resources and wealth, waste production on unfathomable scales, and the list continues. This

happens due to a misunderstanding or lack of understanding about the cyclical processes of natural systems. When we act on our misunderstanding, we find ourselves working against nature rather than with her (Smith, 2005, p.186). Shifting to a more cyclical way of thinking about the world will improve our chances (as well as future generations of all species) of experiencing a healthier and more hopeful world.

Why do I feel that it is important to ensure a healthier planet for future generations? This is crucial because life is not just about me. I am neither the beginning nor the end. I am a small, although not insignificant, participant in this world and I choose to be aware of this.

I do not believe that humans want to be unhealthy, nor do I believe that I have a right to degrade the future of other beings. I believe it is my responsibility to be mindful of this earthly system of which I am part; to consider what I take and what I give. Realizing that I do not live in a vacuum is what empowers me to act. I am an integral part of everything else.

Research Question

How do I educate for sustainability through my business, Wormjava?

“You are looking outward and above all you should not do now...there is only one single way. Go into yourself.”

R.M. Rilke

Bracketing, Assumptions & Biases

The sanitized and quarantined part of my mind wants to believe that true bracketing can be done. However, the cacophonous and unbridled section

(known as the rest of me) is not buying it. Even in traditional research, how can we possibly ensure that we are suspending our personal perspectives? The very best I can do as an honest human researcher is to lay everything out on the table—my assumptions and my biases so you, the reader can see the variety of potential debris that might fly off this personal action research rocket.

I am empowered by the words of teacher-researcher, Jeanne Henry when she encourages me to see my subjectivity not as a source of data contamination, but rather a means of informing my practice. I am admitting that I am “consciously human and consequently fallible” (Henry as cited Hubbard & Power, 1999, p. 202).

Assumptions

1. There are individuals who are willing to engage with me in these cycles.
2. I will be able to continue building my business as I conduct this research.
3. I am offering a valuable service.
4. Most business owners are not aware of their roles as educators and would not agree that they were educators if asked.
5. Many business owners do not understand what being sustainable looks like.
6. There are no current models of action research questions that are similar to mine.

7. This action research will benefit my education and the operation of my business.

Biases

1. I feel that I might not be as effective an educator as I would be in a place where people identify themselves as students.
2. I am at a slight disadvantage because I do not fit the mold of a typical action/teacher researcher and cannot conduct action research in a classroom.
3. Issues surrounding sustainability are important to me, especially education.
4. Businesses have a responsibility to the greater community and environment, and should play a role in promoting equity, quality, and sustainability.
5. I cannot fulfill my desire to run a sustainable business through another organization and have an interest in creating the work myself.
6. I believe that business owners are educators.
7. Sustainability is misunderstood or not understood.
8. I value small, local, environmentally minded businesses.
9. I need to find meaning in my work.

We must get rid of the life we've planned so as to have the life that is waiting for us."

J. Campbell

Strategy/Methodology

In the beginning, I thought my strategy for exploring these questions would involve the following steps:

- ❖ Seek out business owners with an interest in sustainability.
- ❖ Seek out potential clients.
- ❖ Survey both groups of people through e-mail.
- ❖ Learn more about how people think about and/or relate to sustainability.
- ❖ Create a business model based on my findings and literature review.
- ❖ Build a network of individuals who seek to educate through their business.

Reading through these bullets is a bit mortifying. How could it possibly be so simple? Even as I write this, I am still not sure what my exact strategy has been over the past few months as it evolves with every new discovery.

Therefore, my real strategy involves the following:

- ❖ Remain open to all questions that arise.
- ❖ Listen closely to others and myself.
- ❖ Read voraciously.
- ❖ Adjust and respond to emerging information.
- ❖ Be brave in creating new knowledge.
- ❖ Be present in the process of discovery.
- ❖ Know that there is always more to learn.
- ❖ Plan realistically.

- ❖ Act thoughtfully.
- ❖ Observe action through different lenses.
- ❖ Reflect regularly.
- ❖ Celebrate the small steps.

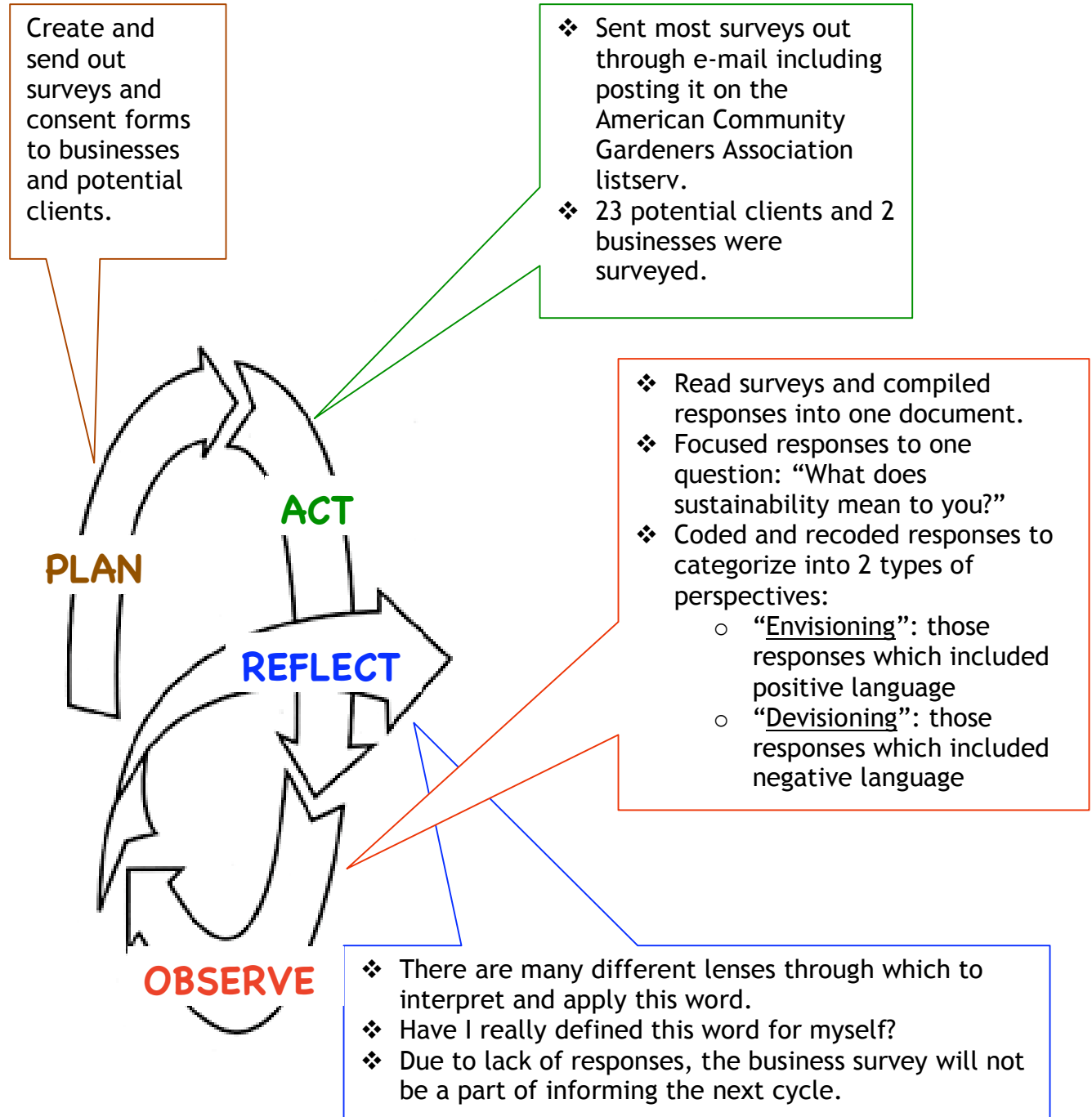
Action research methodology involves cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting with each cycle informing the next. In my process of data collection and interpretation, I decided to graphically represent these cycles. I am a visual learner and graphically depicting my cycles was done towards the end of my research. My intention was to use the cycle “map” as a way to bridge what I did with what I intended to write. However, the process was so educational and mapping it even more so, that I decided to make it the focus of my data collection & interpretation section. All data are qualitative.

“If we are to make a transition to a sustainable future, we must concern ourselves with what leads individuals to engage in behavior that collectively is sustainable, and design our programs accordingly”

D. McKenzie-Mohr & W. Smith

Data Collection & Interpretation*

CYCLE ONE:



* Learning Spiral arrow design modified from <http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/abc/undcur/p50.htm>

Cycle One Summary

Quite frankly, I started with a survey because it was familiar and if I had it to do over again, I would have started by defining sustainability for myself and asked more questions focused on how one thinks a business might play the role of educator. The questions (with responses) in the survey included:

❖ **What is important to you when selecting a home & garden product?**

Given nine choices, the top three most important qualities that are sought out when choosing a product were: environmentally responsible, organic, and locally operated. The three least important qualities were: money-back guarantee, packaging/label, and minority-owned.

❖ **What does sustainability mean to you?**

This question became the focus of moving me into another cycle.

Responses varied from person to person and I categorized each response into “envisioning” and “devising.” Envisioning responses included words like understanding, support, longevity, reuse, resilience, enhances, gently, and survive. Devising responses included words such as low, minimizing, negative, no, not, interfering, and polluting.

❖ **How do you choose new products for your home or garden?**

Receiving recommendations from friends was the most frequent answer out of five choices.

❖ **As a potential client of Wormjava, what would be important for you to learn or know about?**

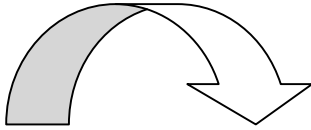
Out of six choices, knowing how the product is created was the most popular answer followed by environmental issues related to the product.

❖ **What is one product that you ENJOY purchasing?**

These answers ranged from lipstick and organic vegetables to tools and chlorine-free toilet paper.

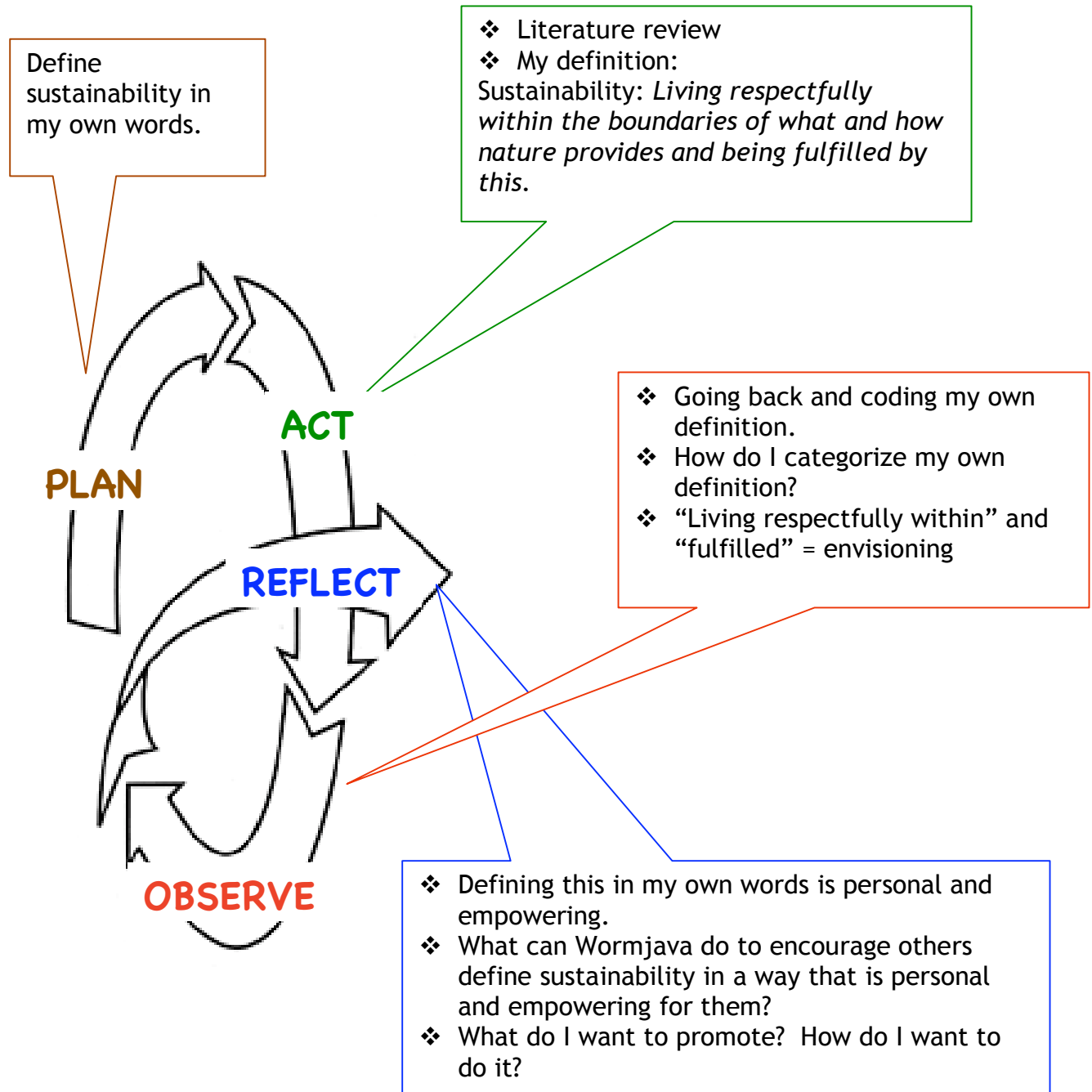
❖ **When you are shopping (market, festival, online, etc.), what is the easiest/best way for you to educate yourself about the product?**

Out of five choices, talking with a person/receiving a demonstration and reading the label were the most common ways in which people educate themselves about a product.



REVISE: How do I define sustainability?

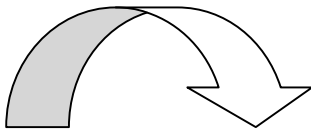
CYCLE (within a cycle) TWO:



Cycle Two Summary:

Although this cycle was short, it was very empowering. It did not occur to me to ask myself what sustainability means before I ask others. In reflecting on my mindset when I sent out the survey, I thought I would be able to create my own amalgam from everyone's definitions. I realized after going through this cycle that deciding on one definition for sustainability is limiting. Why do I need to have just one definition? This further led me to wonder how I could educate through a question: What if everyone did/had this? People would then be given the opportunity to assess their own practices (as sustainable or unsustainable) on a case-by-case basis.

Because I classified my definition of sustainability as "envisioning", I figured that promoting sustainable behaviors through my business in an envisioning or positive way should follow suit. I later realized that this approach falls in line with my business goal of backcasting, mentioned earlier. So how do I begin to do this?

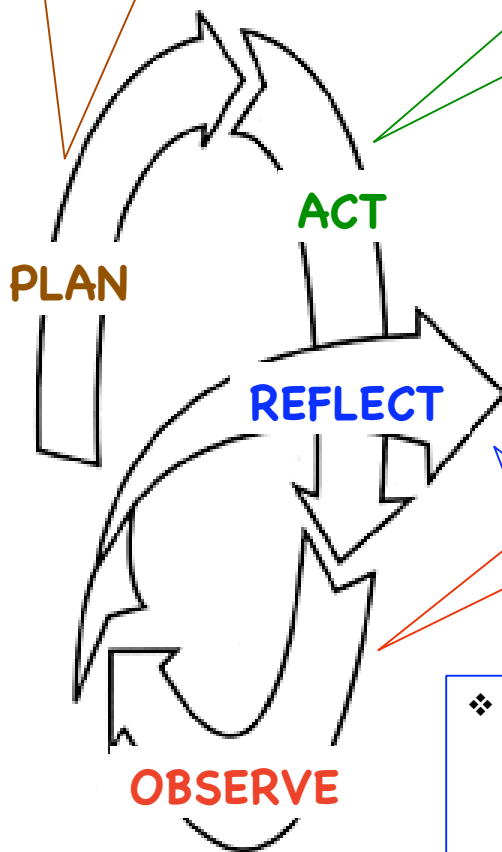


REVISE: How do I positively promote sustainable behaviors through my business? What behaviors do I want to promote?

CYCLE THREE:

- ❖ Focus on 2 questions regarding sustainable behaviors
- ❖ Plan focus groups
- ❖ Literature review
- ❖ Educating about vermicomposting at home?
- ❖ Educating about using earthworm castings?

- ❖ 2 focus groups on different nights
- ❖ Total of 13 participants
- Questions:
 - ❖ What are the barriers and benefits to vermicomposting at home?
 - ❖ What are the barriers and benefits to purchasing earthworm castings?



- ❖ Videotaped both groups
- ❖ Took notes for second focus group
- ❖ Transcribed notes from videos
- ❖ Coded notes from both focus groups
 - A-ha/Important
 - Repeated ideas
 - Group educational moments

- ❖ Experiment with combining 2 community-based social marketing tools based on repeated statements?
 - Basic operational barriers to starting a bin
 - Builds consumption awareness
 - Hosting a community “worm party”

Cycle Three Summary

This cycle evolved from my literature review, namely from the book, *Fostering Sustainable Behavior* by Doug McKenzie-Mohr and William Smith. Due to my readings on community-based social marketing tools in this book, I decided to host a focus group. Although traditional focus groups involve choosing people at random in order to get a variety of perspectives, I was more interested experimenting with people I already knew. I was curious to know how people from different areas of my life and business would interact together. I decided on two questions for the focus group to discuss:

1. What are the barriers and benefits to purchasing earthworm castings?
2. What are the barriers and benefits to vermicomposting at home?

The first question deals directly with the product of my business.

The second question does not involve my business directly, but is an avenue I intend to explore as it deals with providing a service rather than a product.

I conducted two focus groups in order to give people a time option and to experiment with different methods of facilitation. I divided the first group into two teams. One team discussed the first question and the other team discussed the second question. After each team discussion, we came back together as one group and each team shared their findings.

The second focus group, held two days later, was given the option to divide into smaller discussion groups or stay together and discuss both questions. The group chose to stay together. I took notes for the group, played a much more significant role as facilitator, and found myself participating as a member of the group since their questions led to more questions of my own.

These focus groups were subjective in that they knew me, knew my business, and in many cases knew each other. However, that was not a barrier to learning. After transcribing the video tapes from both nights, I coded my notes and highlighted notable statements into three categories (many of which overlapped):

- “Aha”/Important ideas which included statements like, “I believe it’s sustainable (earthworm castings) and I’m all for sustainable living”, “it’s a vehicle for waking people up”, “the hardest thing is to convince people it’s worthwhile (vermicomposting), especially with the disposable society we’ve created over the past 20 years”, and “how do you get non-gardeners to buy into it when they have no use for the byproduct?”
- Repeated ideas which included statements like, “just the associations vermicomposting has with being dirty and smelly”, “We could host a worm party, sort like a Tupperware party”, “the worm bin is a good tool for education at home...like an ant farm, but more productive”, and “makes you aware of how much you consume”.
- Group educational moments which included statements/questions like, “I didn’t know that heat was produced in the composting process”, “There is a huge compost center for yard waste near Forest Hills”, and “Honey, after seeing all of this information in front of us, there’s no reason we shouldn’t buy a worm bin.” There was also a

piece of dialogue that was key in helping me to see the incredible potential of community education:

Person #1: “How are your kids responding to the worm bins (in the classroom)?”

Person #2: “Good. There are different interest levels. It’s a slow process.”

Person #3: “Kids really like to be helpers and adults like to be good stewards. So how do we take this natural inclination and turn it into habit? I don’t know the answer to that.”

Person #4: “I think that’s where story comes in—consciousness raising, but also delightful stories that help kids understand.”

After reviewing the videotapes from both focus groups, I realized that not only could my local community help support my business in the future, but help shape it from the very beginning. This supports an early quote from my literature review: “Smart business leaders know that customers can be the best teachers” (Cohen & Warwick, 2006, p. xxiv). I would generalize it a bit more and say that my fellow community members can be the best teachers. Through coding “group educational moments” in my notes, I am enticed to plan another community focus group. These events clearly have potential to serve as a catalyst for community learning and therefore, community building. It is nothing new to know that we can learn from one another—from our neighbors in particular, but what opportunities do we have to do this? Do we (the local

community) want to meet often and with intention? What role do local businesses play in building community?

Ultimately, this is not just about what Wormjava can do to foster sustainable behavior in the community, but how the community can foster sustainable behavior within Wormjava. This idea of a partnership leads to my next question: How can Wormjava and the local community be mutually beneficial partners in educating for sustainability?

“A work of art is good if it has sprung from necessity.”

R.M. Rilke

Assessment strategy

In the beginning, I felt sheepish about exploring “myself” as I wondered how I would prove its validity, not realizing that the personal exploration of the self is inherently valid. The word, “valid” stems from the Latin, *validus*, which means “strong” or “effective” (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2006). In order to assess the strength or effectiveness of this action research project, I decided to borrow from teacher-researcher, Suzanne Jacobs and ask myself two questions:

1. How is this meaningful for me?
2. How might this be meaningful for others? (Jacobs as cited in Hubbard & Power, 1999, p. 263).

Subject matter aside, the process of action research has been an extraordinary journey of self-discovery and self-trust. This whole idea of trusting in the process and believing that I am doing good work is what makes this work for me. I am just beginning to wrap my head around the thoughts of

author, Charles Peguy that the work, “in itself, for itself, in its very self” has to be well done (Peguy as cited in Smith, 2006, p. 105).

Considering the subject matter, this is valid for my practice because this ongoing exploration helps me get to know myself as an educator as well as a businessperson and how to help those two selves think and work together more seamlessly. If I have learned anything from this program, it is that everything in the world and everything inside of myself is interconnected.

“The comparison of ecologically oriented start-ups with conventional start-ups showed that the most crucial factor for environmental considerations in the start-up process is the entrepreneur herself.”

L. Schick, S. Marxen, & J. Freimann

Conclusion

Finding meaning in this process is a little like digging for earthworms. If you start out with a curious mind on fertile foundation, you most likely find what you are looking for, but the ecology of the place has a lot more to offer than a simple answer. There is a lot of information to sift through—a lot of leaf litter, rocks, and roots. I may have been looking for one thing in particular, but I have uprooted many other gems. In exploring how I educate for sustainability through my business, I have learned how some define sustainability, which led me to try and figure out what the word meant to me. After feeling empowered by personalizing the definition, I then wondered how one might classify their actions as sustainable or unsustainable through a question: “What if everyone did or had this?” Digging on from that point, I asked myself how I could positively promote sustainable behaviors, and it was like lifting up a rotting

log; so many rich (and previously hidden) things to learn from a community of beings.

A couple of friends recently pointed out to me that the evolution of my strategy was also a big part of my learning. They noticed that it seemed to go from business start-up actions to guiding principles. This happened as a result of the process of action research and it serves as sound advice to any business owner or educator. These guidelines help me personally define what it means to be both an ecologically minded educator and businessperson.

Because of the lack of literature related to educating through a business I often felt like a lonesome cowgirl with no one to talk to but the tumbleweed and crickets. I was standing in the ghost town between ecological education and sustainable business. Finding a way to etch a two-way path in the space between is still a work in progress.

Somewhere along the way, I permitted myself to discard the notion of having an end point to the research. My husband noticed my map of action research cycles on the wall one night and said, “That’s a fascinating way of doing things. Theoretically, you could go on forever, right?” (J. Dreyfus, personal communication, December 1, 2006). I also gave myself permission to create some of the knowledge myself, which is significant considering I did not at first view myself wise enough to contribute new information. For instance, the graphic mapping of my action research cycles may help future action researchers see their process in a new way.

Our awareness of interconnections and ecology is swelling and it will not be long before many more of us humans see our many roles in life as interwoven. There is a need for this type of exploration because we are a blended being, not separate from the rest of the world ecosystem, each other, or ourselves.

What a refreshing notion to think that businesses are made up of people. Businesses are communities in themselves and have the power to promote sustainable behaviors with the larger community. Although I am officially a business of one, I could create a list of individuals who have been a light to me in this process, starting with my second grade teacher! And this brings me all the way back around to my assumption that teaching was for the oppressed and for those who could not “do.” Where would I be if my teachers didn’t “do” or create anything? I owe my very heart and mind to each of them, liberated or oppressed, in or out of the classroom. The truth is that anybody can “do”, but those who take time to develop their light find work that is real and meaningful.

“This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine. Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.”

African-American Spiritual

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