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The development of ESD competences during the teaching and learning of the topic cell biology among Life Sciences pre-service teachers at a South African university

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ABSTRACT

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is the contribution of the world's education to sustainable development, and more importantly, a sustainable world. To achieve a sustainable world, people need to learn their ways out of unsustainability through the development of sustainability competences, which themselves are developed through education (education for sustainable development competences). This study sought to investigate a selected lecturer's practices in the development of ESD competences during the teaching and learning of the topic Cell Biology among Life Sciences pre-service teachers. Data were generated using lesson observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis of the course outline. Qualitative data analysis was used to deductively analyse the data. Findings indicate that the lecturer uses a socio-cultural learning perspective to develop ESD competences. They further indicate that student initiative and participation, and interactive learning materials provide the lecturer with opportunities to adequately develop ESD competences. On the other hand, there are challenges including limited space and time, and lack of adequate e-resources that affect the development of ESD competences. The recommendation is that ESD be incorporated holistically and interdisciplinary into the curriculum and that a socio-cultural learning approaches be used as a medium to develop sustainability competences.