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I am the paradigm shift theory: Explaining students' sustainability outcome comprehension experience

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Students receiving a liberal arts education develop the prosocial outcomes of inclination to inquire and lifelong learning, well-being, leadership, intercultural effectiveness, postconventional moral reasoning, and reflective judgment more effectively than career track institution counterparts. Researchers in efficacy of the liberal arts as well as in sustainability education have expressed the need for descriptive theory to guide further research towards understanding of learners' comprehension experience of these essential outcomes and for developing effective sustainability education. In an effort to describe characteristics most common to the successful sustainability student the presenter found that these characteristics were in essence identical to the prosocial outcomes of liberal arts students. The presenter will explain how through a constructivist grounded theory approach he sought to describe students comprehension experience of sustainability (i.e., prosocial) outcomes. Four central phenomena were synthesized from the data: nature as resolve, fear mastery, paradigm shift, and new normal. These phenomena were used to construct I am the paradigm shift theory which describes students' comprehension experience of sustainability outcomes. The presenter will explain the importance of I am the paradigm shift theory in three areas. First, it provides additional understanding of perspectives on sustainability outcome comprehension hitherto quantitatively explored. Second, it describes the sequential and reciprocal experience of sustainability outcome comprehension. Third, the theory explains the influence of early efficacy and esteem affirmation, motivation and perseverance in outcome comprehension. The presenter will close with a brief discussion of limitations of the study that will include recommendations for further research.

Biography

Ron Chandler is a Lecturer in the Department of Psychology and a Research Mentor for College of Design Construction and Planning at University of Florida. He graduated from Stephen F Austin State University in 1979 with a BS in Aquatic Biology, Texas State University in 1984 with an MS in Limnology and Walden University in 2014 with a PhD in Educational Psychology. He is an Editor for *Psychology and Psychological Research International Journal*. He is also President of Conservation Initiative for the Asian Elephant an NGO/NFP working primarily in India to protect elephants and indigenous people since 2000.

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