

Climate education and controversial sustainability issues in the science classroom

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In this lecture, I will present the results of a project that identified traditions of teaching dealing with controversial sustainability issues in lower secondary education in Sweden, with specific attention for natural sciences teachers.

Through a national survey we found that the way teachers approach and teach about controversial issues can be classified in relation to four general teaching traditions within sustainability teaching in compulsory education: the Fact based – science oriented, the Fact based – against values, the Normative and the Pluralistic. These results will be compared to a survey done in Belgium in higher education regarding teaching about climate change, where approximately the same traditions were found. In the presentation I will describe the differences and similarities between these four different ways of handling controversial sustainability issues in teaching, including examples from interviews regarding teachers' didactical reflections, judgements, and experiences.

The results of the project will be used as a background for discussing the pros and cons of each of the traditions as well as exemplifying a didactical typology for how to handle, in teaching, the argumentative dimension of controversial sustainability issues.