

1842-1923

Q Methodology *for the Anthropocene*



THE WHY AND HOW OF EDUCATIVE POSSIBILITY

Outline

1) Setting the scene

- The Anthropocene
- Ecological Reflexivity (Dryzek & Pickering, 2018)
- Perspectives on Q Sorting (Wolf, 2022)

2) Mason's Philosophy of Education

- Definitions and Background
- Education is the Science of Relations
- The Three Instruments of Education
- Mason and Stephenson: The how and why of educative possibility



3) Case Study: Implementing the SDGs

- When collaborating with others to help your community--What capabilities do you think are most important?
- Two Analyses: Locating the skills and abilities valued in sustainability science

4) So What?

- Implications for the Q Sorter?
- Implications for the Q Researcher?
- Co-producing research



Earth has changed.

and so must we...

Recognise...and Respond

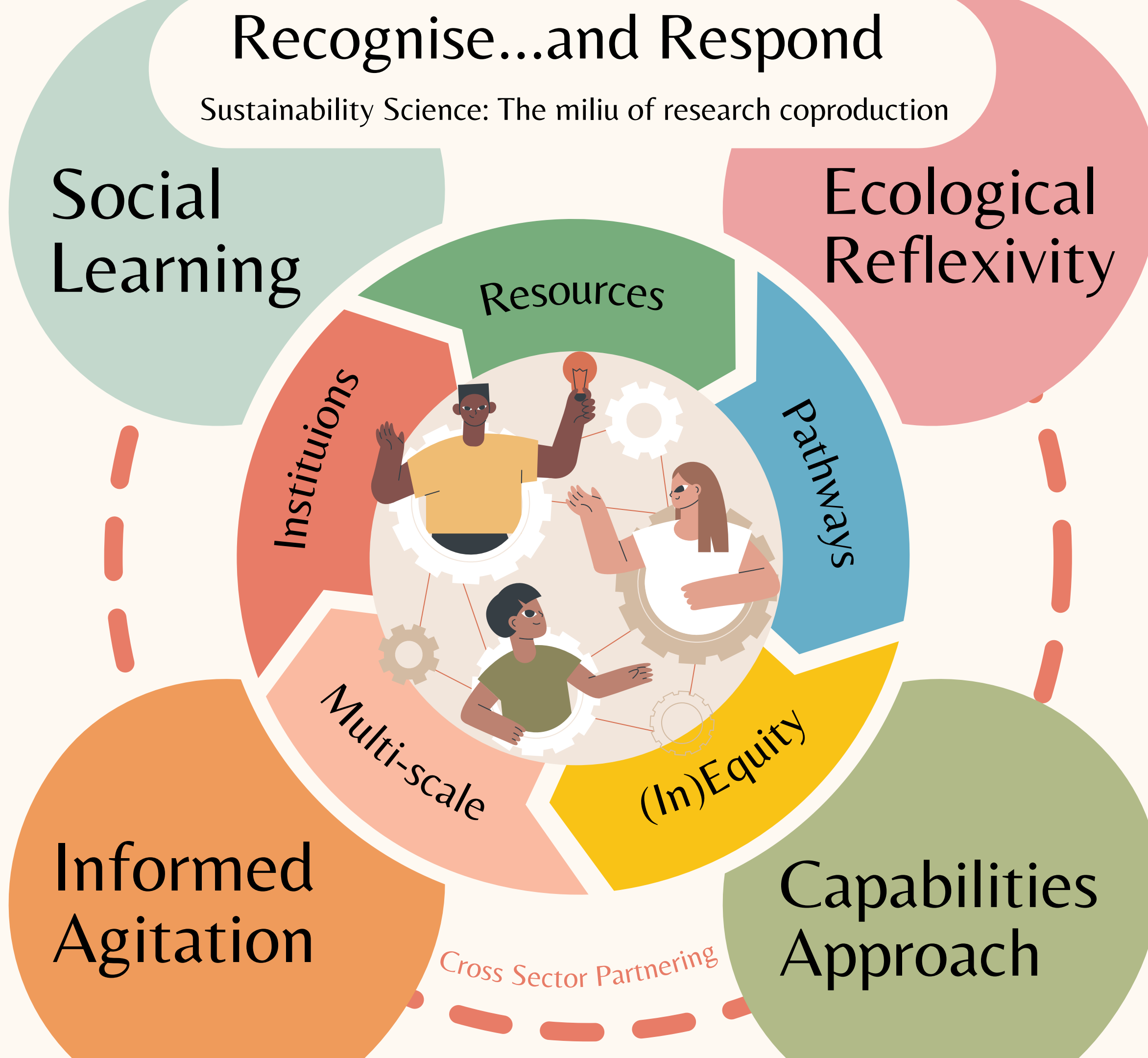
Sustainability Science: The milieu of research coproduction

A change in understanding that goes beyond the individual to become situated within wider social units or communities of practice through social interactions between actors within social networks.

(Reed et al, 2010)

The arousing of public concern about an issue, through the means of knowledge sharing, research, and deliberation for the purpose of bringing about action.

(Clark & Harley, 2020- from Sen)



The capacity of structures, systems, and sets of ideas to question their own core commitments, and if necessary change themselves, while listening and responding effectively to signals from the Earth system.

(Dryzek & Pickering, 2018)

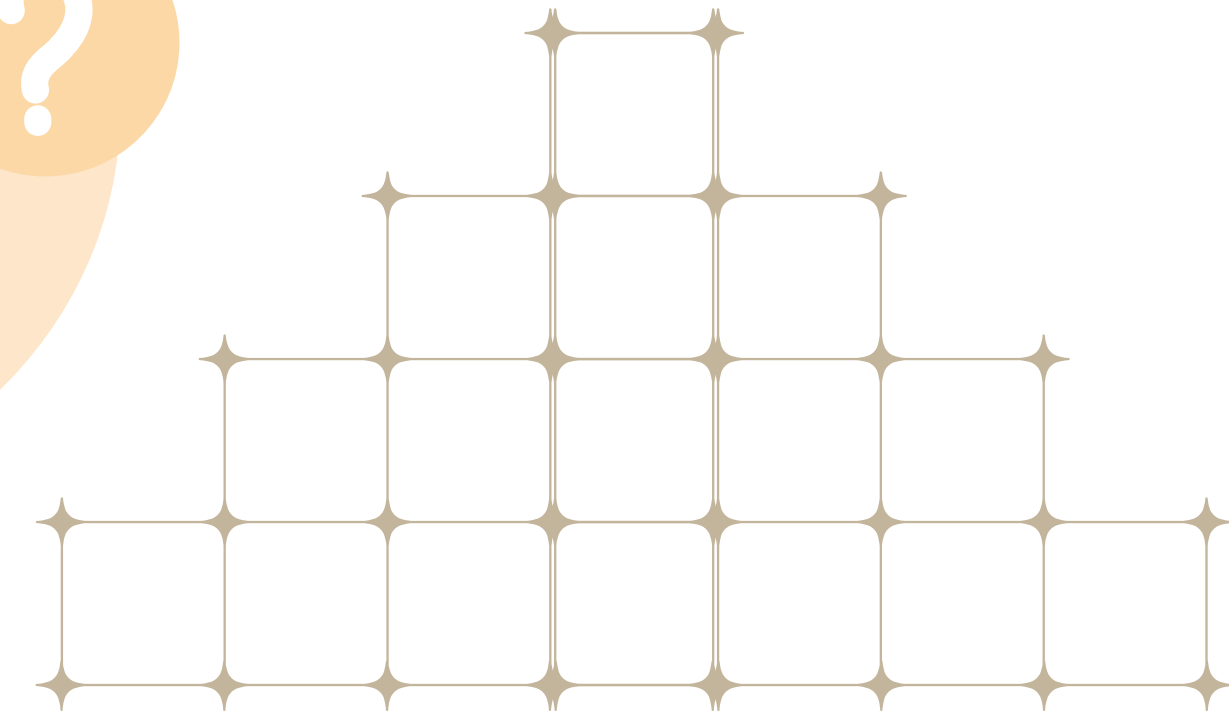
Sustainability as fairness: enhancing human well-being to more equitably meet the needs of both current and future generations...its pursuit should treat humans, in Amartya Sen's phrase "not as patients whose interests have to be looked after, but as agents who can do effective things."

(Clark & Harley, 2020)

Perspectives on Q Sorting (Wolf, 2022)

Full methodological engagement?

‘I do not seek to elevate Q sorting to some superior standing relative to other components of Q methodology. Rather, I maintain that attention to points of tension and cracks arising within a scientific practice edifice revealed by scrutinising Q sorting can strengthen the foundations.’ (p. 255)





Q Methodology was developed as a set of theories and tools towards the scientific study of subjectivity. The main intent of Stephenson in its development, and other key methodologists in its progression was not to change or shift thinking.

However, this paper opens the possibility that a Q Methodological Study—and particularly the process of Q sorting itself—could have educative and formative impacts, even beyond the sorter. If this is the case, then consideration of these aspects could open new and fruitful avenues for the scientific study of subjectivity and for future trajectories of the Anthropocene.

Charlotte Mason

In Brief

- 1842-1923, Ambleside, UK
- Anglican education reformer & social entrepreneur
- A complete philosophy and method of education based on "natural law" and the "born personhood" of all people
- Lifelong learning 'For the seven ages...'
- Aimed at the public good to form "the basis of national strength"
- Education is the formation of the whole person, not just formal instruction



The Science of Relations

Mason theorised that ideas were the food upon which the mind feeds, and that when ‘living mind meets living mind’ new thoughts occur—and at times, even original thinking . These ideas must be in a form that is digestible to mind, and when mind acts on the idea, it assimilates it.

Appetite
(Stephenson: Play Theory of Communication)



Knowledge proper and fitting
(Stephenson: Concourse Theory)

A WIDE feast
(Stephenson: intentionality in Quiddity College)

Assimilation
(Stephenson: Consciring, or abductive thinking as learning...a ‘loosely cognitive and creative function’ (Wolf et al, 2015))



”

Now, thought breeds thought. It is as vital thought touches our minds that our own ideas are vitalized in the contact, and out of our ideas comes our conduct of life. That is why the direct and immediate impact of great minds upon his own mind is a necessary factor in the education of a child. (Mason, 1910)

“



”

In like manner, though all analogies are misleading and inadequate, the only fit sustenance for the mind is ideas, and an idea too, like the single cell of cellular tissue, appears to go through the stages and functions of a life. We receive it with appetite and some stir of interest. It appears to feed in a curious way. We hear of a new patent cure for the mind or the body, of the new thought of some poet, the new notion of a school of painters; we take in, accept, the idea and for days after every book we read, every person we talk with brings food to the newly entertained notion. 'Not proven,' will be the verdict of the casual reader; but if he watch the behaviour of his own mind towards any of the ideas 'in the air,' he will find that some such process as I have described takes place; and this process must be considered carefully in the education of children. (Mason, 1925, p. 40).

“

”

Upon Mason's death, one school principal captured the Science of Relations as the theory explaining how prejudice is created in children, when 'an opinion is imposed on them'.

It is in this way that the world becomes filled with men and women whose minds run in grooves and work on conventional lines,--the stereotyped as opposed to the individual. Thought is, I suppose all will allow, the greatest force in the world, and of each world-citizen is required this duty:--to contribute to the thought of the world, if not in actual original ideas, at least in the power of original thinking, for on thought all action depends and all achievements are based. It is by the friction of mind with mind that thought is produced. The illuminating idea, the vivid suggestion, quicken our minds and awaken our latent powers of thinking.

(Faunce, in Mason 1923 p 165-166)

“



The Three Instruments of Education

Undergirding Mason's work were core principles, the most important was the 'born personhood' of all people, and especially of children. This principle resulted in practices that did not 'hinder, offend, nor despise' personhood. This left three instruments for use by an instructor—or in our case, a researcher.



Play Theory of Communication

Communication-pleasure is always self-enhancing, and this gives us hope for the future of entertainment. Thus, from a consideration of subjective play we find ourselves involved in elaborations upon convergent selectivity, and from these we reach into existential psychology. And is it not agreed in existentialism that one should exist before one becomes petrified by social forms? From a mass society of really existing individuals one might indeed find new forms of society arising. (p. 206).



Mason & Q Methodology:

The how and why of educative possibility.

While both Stephenson and Mason had well-developed and articulated philosophical stances containing their practices, it is for those bequeathed the farm to plow the field.

The view of Q Methodology from the Science of Relations and the Three Instruments of Education shapes a kind of methodological overlay

Consider these possible avenues in nascent form...



HOW?

1. Attending to the ‘instruments of education’ in study design
2. Theorising the ‘science of relations’ in the context of concourse theory

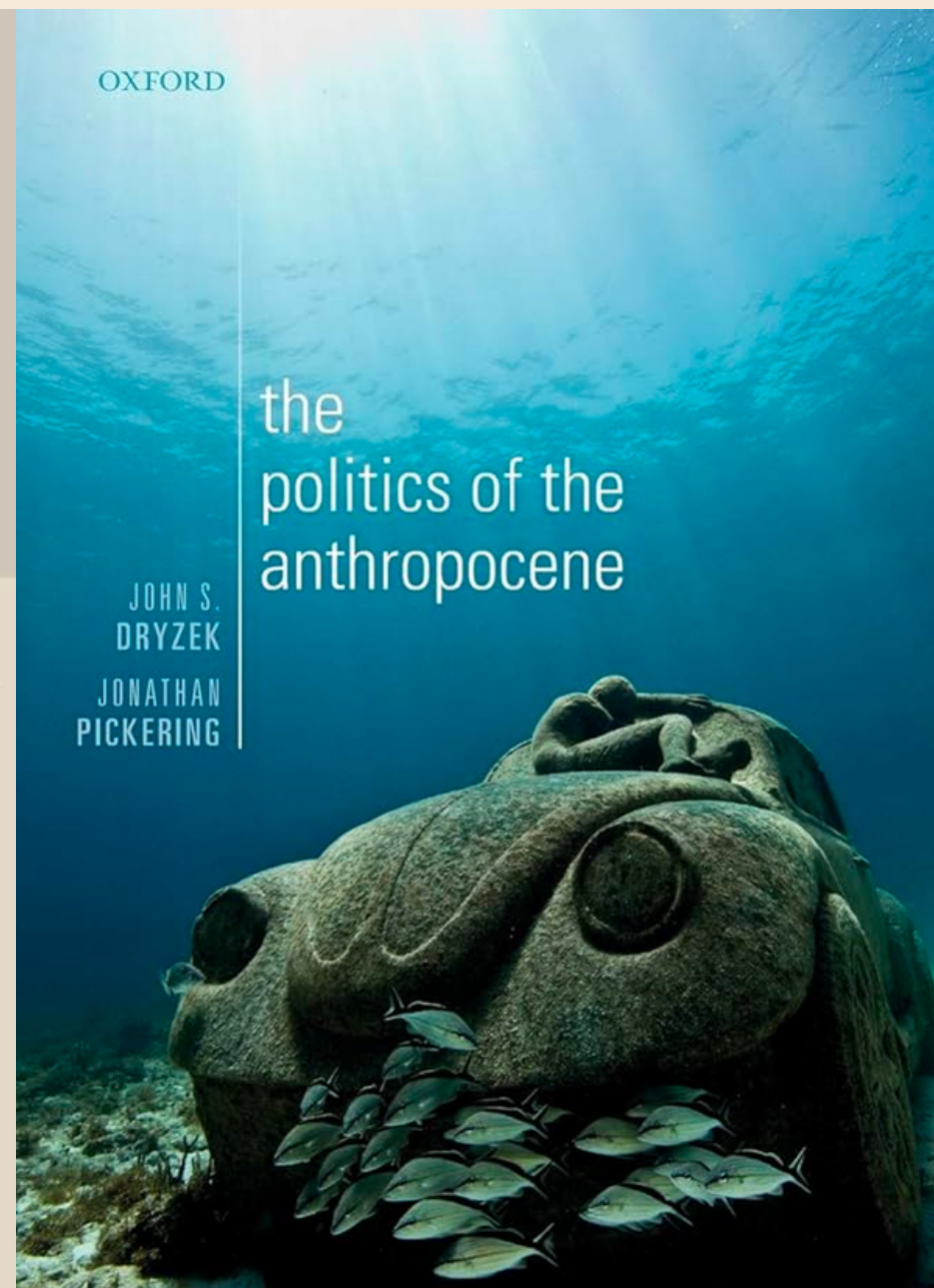
WHY?

1. Through a methodological overlay that perceives personhood as primary
2. To locate living ideas in the self-referential moment

DISCURSIVE DEMOCRACY

*Politics, Policy, and
Political Science*

JOHN S. DRYZEK



Prototyping the educative potential of Q

The work of John Dryzek in early Q history (1990) and currently (2017) draws critical attention to the process of Q Sorting and its emancipatory possibilities, as well as the broader importance of deliberation towards ecological reflexivity (2018). However, what most studies appear to overlook is how attending to the educative (though informal) aspects of Q offers at least two possibilities. First, an emergent nexus of coproductive and participatory research, and second, novel pathways for the science of operant subjectivity.



Ecological Economics
Volume 131, January 2017, Pages 353-360



Methodological and Ideological Options

Deliberation as a catalyst for reflexive
environmental governance ☆

[John S. Dryzek](#) ✉, [Jonathan Pickering](#) ✉

Q Methodological Study

- Conditions of Instruction: When collaborating with others to help your community--What capabilities do you think are most important?
- Two Analyses: Viewpoints & locating the skills and abilities valued in sustainability science

Implementing the
SDGs: Partnering for
the Goals (SDG 17)

TRANSFORM
The World



THE GLOBAL GOALS



University of
CUMBRIA

LANCASTER
CITY COUNCIL

Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

Three Viewpoints

VIEWPOINT-1

The Convener

- Demonstrate the value of shared decision-making
- Identify and engage external stakeholders
- Identify roles and expectations for those with specialist knowledge

Least Important

- Recognise the interrelationship between the issue being addressed and wider concerns
- Respond to relevant problems that are beyond the immediate context

VIEWPOINT-2

The Connector

- Communicate effectively so that others understand
- Engage with others
- Build trust by being open and relatable

Least Important

- Commit to a bigger project despite personal misgivings
- Acknowledge the legal or regulatory requirements facing other sectors.

VIEWPOINT-3

The Chair

- Coordinate multiple participants to organise meetings
- Support the development of a shared vision
- Act as chair to facilitate participation and inclusion in meetings

Least Important

- Bring together apparently mutually-distrustful groups to align their efforts
- Respectively question knowledge claims

Sustainability Science
Capabilities (SSC)
Viewpoint, Dominant
Factor Viewpoint, and SSC
Sort Compared

*Italicised statements were
more strongly favoured by the
SSC Viewpoint*

**Bold statements were more
strongly favoured by the
Dominant Viewpoint**

Statement #	Statement	SSC	Dom	Diff	SSC Sort
9	<i>Recognise the interrelationship between the issue being addressed and wider concerns</i>	6	-4	10	4
44	Demonstrate the value of shared decision-making	-5	4	9	0
42	Respond effectively to questions from partners, public, and media	-6	3	9	-5
12	<i>Acknowledge the legal or regulatory requirements facing other sectors.</i>	3	-6	9	-2
21	<i>Analyse and explain power dynamics</i>	4	-4	8	1
45	Identify and engage external stakeholders	-2	5	7	5
41	Negotiate agreement about the allocation and distribution of shared financial resources	-4	3	7	-1
35	Support the development of a shared vision	-3	4	7	-2
46	Coordinate multiple participants to organise meetings	-5	1	6	-3
18	Communicate effectively so that others understand	0	6	6	-1
10	<i>Respond to relevant problems that are beyond the immediate context</i>	1	-5	6	5
40	Identify roles and expectations for those with specialist knowledge	-1	4	5	4
36	<i>Facilitate an experimental collaborative approach</i>	3	-2	5	6
17	Build trust by being open and relatable	0	5	5	-1
11	<i>Appreciate the capacity limitations of other organisations</i>	2	-3	5	-2
31	Manage conflicts of interest	-2	2	4	1
4	<i>Work for the collective good before responding to individual interests</i>	5	1	4	2
3	<i>Demonstrate innovative thinking and creative problem-solving</i>	4	0	4	3

Coproducing
knowledge &
action... maybe
there is more going
on?

What is inside
'Aladdin's cave'
that could be
useful for Q?

How could it be of
use in
Anthropocene
conditions?

So
What?

Journal of Tropical Futures
OnlineFirst, June 26, 2023
© The Author(s) 2023, Article Reuse Guidelines
<https://doi.org/10.1177/27538931231170509>

Sage Journals

Conceptual Paper

**A conceptual review of Sustainable Development
Goal 17: Picturing politics, proximity and
progress**

Joanna Stanberry ¹ and Janis Bragan Balda ²

Joanna Stanberry

Postgraduate
Researcher

Initiative for Leadership and Sustainability
Institute of Science and Environment

joanna.stanberry@gmail.com

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/joannastanberry/>



University of
CUMBRIA

