“Link between Ebbe's Time Travel method, reflection, and sustainability”

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ABSTRACT

The Time Travel Method is an innovative pedagogical method that fosters experiential learning through historical immersion, role-playing, and storytelling. It empowers learners to actively engage with history, critically analyse the present, and make informed decisions for a sustainable future. By integrating reflective practice, this method enhances critical thinking, social justice awareness, and inclusivity. It facilitates an understanding of past actions, enabling individuals to identify sustainable and unsustainable practices. Reflection strengthens decision-making by aligning present actions with long-term sustainability goals. This approach cultivates strategic foresight, encouraging learners to anticipate challenges and contribute to societal progress. Unlike traditional education methods, Time Travel emphasizes active participation over passive knowledge transfer. It fosters empathy, global awareness, and critical self-assessment, which are essential for sustainability. Education must not only impart knowledge but also inspire responsible action. By bridging history and future aspirations, the Time Travel Method emerges as a transformative method in education. It ensures that learning is dynamic, empowering individuals to build a just, humane, and sustainable world. This paper presents a discussion on the links of Time Travel, reflection and how it focuses on building a better future, which has received little attention. It argues that reflection should be given more prominence since it shows strong and direct links to sustainability.

Key words: innovative, progressive pedagogical method, experiential learning, role playing, story-telling, active learners, life-long learners, critical thinkers, reflective practice, sustainable development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education means studying in order to obtain a deeper knowledge and understanding of a variety of subjects to be applied to daily life and create a better tomorrow. Education is not limited to just knowledge from books, but can also be obtained through practical experiences outside of the classroom. Education is something that’s not only needed on a personal level, but also on a global level, as it’s something that keeps our world safe and makes it a more peaceful place. Education tends to teach people the difference between right and wrong, equality, building a just and humane society. At the economic, social and environmental levels, quite serious inequality and injustice is taking place. The gap between the haves and have-nots is getting wider; some rich countries exploit poor countries more and more. Concerns of how to manage and create a better future with a new digital world emerging is becoming a challenge; increased online teaching which is replacing contact classes; advanced machinery and specialised chemicals is now dominating farming. Additional challenges that threaten our future is misuse of local and world resources (human, financial and natural). Achieving a more equitable and sustainable future requires a mindset shift at all levels—individual, community, national, and global [1]. Throughout the world, people are looking to education to pave the way for a more just social order on the grounds that education instils in the young crucial humanitarian values such as equity, tolerance and peace. Progress in education is taken to be essential for sustainable development, environmental protection, improvement in maternal and child health and participation in democratic social and political processes[2]

Dorgu [3] highlights that there are several teaching methods to use in the classrooms, it is left for the teacher to use the ones most appropriate for the lesson. These methods if properly used will enhance teaching and learning and bring about desired changes in the students. While the teacher’s task is to ensure that learning is effective, one major way to achieve this is the use of appropriate teaching methods. Students need to acquire knowledge, develop critical thinking skills, and gain necessary life skills to become active and productive members of building a just and humane society. Students learn in many different ways. Gilakjani [4] emphasises that some students are visual learners, while others are auditory or kinaesthetic learners. Students

can prefer one, two, or three learning styles. Because of these different learning styles, it is important for teachers to incorporate in their curriculum activities related to each of these learning styles so that all students are able to succeed in their classes. While we use all of our senses to take in information, we each seem to have preferences in how we learn best.

Time Travel is fundamentally an educational method and resonates with the principles of social transformation, human rights, inclusivity and social justice, all of which underpin the curriculum. It allows learners to be actively involved, strengthening their skills and depth of knowledge and understanding. The method facilitates the emergence of, and respect for, indigenous knowledge systems. It is sensitive to issues of diversity, poverty, inequality, race, gender and language. The method is basically to present a context which would place the history in its correct perspective. This would require a situation to be created. In writing a scenario, the identification of the theme or topics and key questions should be linked to the curriculum and be age and grade appropriate. Thus, scanning the key topics in the curriculum, for example, should be one of the early processes. This would logically lead to locating its relevance and timing in the year plan and in the teaching plan. Each Time Travel has a goal and a definite outcome has to be achieved. The teacher develops a lesson plan which incorporates the practical expression of the topic in a Time Travel event.

The Time Travel event needs to be integrated within the larger framework of knowledge consolidation, alongside reflections and connections to contemporary issues. It is an active, learner-centred approach grounded in experiential learning, where reflection and action play key roles. This paper explores the intersection and links of time travel, reflection, and sustainable development. It also suggests that Time Travel method stands out as a robust, progressive and holistic teaching approach that fosters a mindset of continuous learning, motivating individuals to regularly assess their practices and pursue new knowledge to enhance their sustainability efforts over time for the future and beyond.

2. DEFINING THE TIME TRAVEL METHOD

2.1. … is a **participatory** method that emphasizes the use of cultural heritage to address contemporary issues for community transformation.
2.2. …is an **innovative and creative educational method** in learning which enhances learner- development and empowers local communities.
2.3. **…connects local heritage**, physical places and people's stories, **with the current realities of communities**.
2.4. …uses **past information** to create a **better future**.
2.5. **…gives meaning** to local sites and stories for people of today.
2.6. …is **about life**; the past, today and the future.

2.7. …is **relational,** it is a way of being with learners, teachers, lecturers from different backgrounds who learn from one another through the sharing of ideas and together create learning.

2.8. …is **reflectional,** as it gives space for reflection on today's issues in a local historical context. Reflection is the bridge between what "happens" and how it applied in life.

2.9. …is **experiential**; a method of educating through first-hand experience. Skills, knowledge, and experience are acquired outside of the traditional academic classroom setting, and may include internships, studies abroad, field trips, field research, and service-learning projects. You learn by using all your senses.

2.10… is **transformational,** as it allows an individual to develop a new change perspective [5].

3. TIME TRAVEL METHOD AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Experiential learning first immerses learners in an experience and then guides them to reflect on it, fostering the development of new skills, attitudes, and ways of thinking. This approach incorporates various techniques, including role-plays, games, case studies, critical incidents, simulations, socio-drama, story-telling and values clarification exercises. In experiential classrooms, students engage with real-life scenarios, experiment with new behaviours, and receive constructive feedback in a supportive environment. These activities bridge the gap between theory and practice, enabling students to analyse and apply their learning to real-world situations effectively [6].

3.1 Imbedded in the Time Travel method is a process where students "learn by doing" and by reflecting on their experience. Learners are essentially embedded in experiential learning. Experiential learning is a dynamic and transformative educational approach grounded in the theories of Kolb, Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget and others. It emphasizes active engagement, reflection, and the integration of theory with practice. By immersing learners in hands-on experiences and reflective processes, this approach fosters personal growth, social responsibility, and the development of essential skills across diverse fields. Experiential learning empowers individuals to take an active role in their education, enhance critical thinking, and contribute meaningfully to society, unlocking the full potential of learning to inspire, empower, and drive positive change [7]. This approach immerses learners in hands-on activities that move beyond the traditional classroom setting, allowing them to engage directly with real-world experiences. Gaffney and O'Neil (2019) argue that by shifting the focus from teaching to learning, experiential education fosters the skills and mindset necessary to support sustainable development," [8].

3.2 The Philippines, in cooperation with UNICEF (1994) in their Multigrade Teacher's Handbook, published by the Bureau of Elementary Education, Department of Education, Culture, and Sports strongly highlighted that children learn best from experience [9]. This is as indicated below.

- Children learn by doing i.e., using their hands; using all their senses; curiosity and discovery skills; exploring their environment of people, things, places and events. A child learns best by actively engaging with their appropriate environment.

- They learn from first-hand and concrete experiences as well as vicarious forms of experiences, (e.g., storytelling, listening to another person). This form of learning process allows learners to observe, gather and record their observations, to reflect, analyse and interpret and make sense for themselves, and to arrive at solutions for current and future challenges.

- Children learn much more when they are actively engaged. It has been found that whenever a child is actively engaged with people, things, ideas and information, it promotes mental activity and critical thinking. This form of active learning also helps them to reflect, interrogate, integrate new knowledge with what they already know.

3.3 Prithishkumar and Michael (2014) emphasises that students have diverse learning styles, which influence how they absorb and process information. This variety in learning preferences requires teachers to adapt their instructional approaches to meet students' needs effectively. When working with a large group of learners with different learning styles, it is essential for educators to be well-prepared to transition from traditional teaching methods to experiential learning for a more engaging and effective learning experience [10]. Presenting information through multiple modalities such as those in the Time Travel is essential for effectively addressing diverse student learning preferences. This is explained in the Theory of Multiple Intelligences which highlights the different ways students absorb and process information, including linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, bodily-kinaesthetic, and naturalistic intelligence. By embracing multiple intelligences, educators can create an inclusive learning environment that values diverse abilities, fosters engagement, and supports the holistic growth and development of every student [11].

3.1 FORMS OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING TECHNIQUES USED IN TIME TRAVEL

The key techniques of the Time Travel method are **role-playing** combined with **storytelling** The use of these techniques goes beyond traditional history lessons by allowing students to **"live" the past**, fostering deep engagement and emotional connection with historical narratives It focuses on the idea that children are active rather than passive learners.

3.1.1 Role-Playing and Historical Immersion:

- Learners take on the roles of historical figures, communities, or everyday individuals from the past.
- They participate in carefully researched **historical, scientific, geographical scenarios**, where they make decisions and face challenges similar to those experienced by real people in that era.
- The role-play approach promotes the learner's communication skills and active engagement in the teaching and learning process. This method transforms students from passive receivers of information into **active participants** in history [12].

3.1.2 Storytelling as a Teaching Tool:

● Stories spark interest, helping students remember characters and key issues. By recalling concrete elements or people from the story, they can easily reconstruct the narrative. When learning is personally relevant, it encourages deeper thinking and enhances the ability to apply new knowledge effectively [13].

● Teachers and facilitators **frame history as a living story**, rather than a series of disconnected facts and dates. Storytelling brings ideas, theories, and textbook concepts to life by adding a human element to otherwise dry information. It allows teachers to effectively convey knowledge, principles, and values in a more engaging and memorable way [14].

● It is a valuable tool for **building emotional connections**, encouraging self-reflection, and promoting empathy and mutual understanding. By learning from the experiences of others, individuals can reshape their values—either strengthening their beliefs or challenging them—**to create a more compassionate and inclusive world** [15].

The Time Travel is a powerful educational method that immerses students in the past through role-playing, storytelling, and experiential learning. By actively engaging with history in this way, learners develop a deeper understanding of historical events, critical thinking skills, and a stronger connection to values and leadership.

4. THE TIME TRAVEL METHOD PROMOTES ACTIVE LEARNER - CENTERED AND LIFE LONG LEARNING TEACHING APPROACH

Learner-centred approach is a dynamic approach to teaching that is increasingly being more encouraged in all spheres of education. It is also being noted that learner-centred teachers do not simply employ a single teaching method. This approach emphasizes a variety of different types of methods that focusses on what the students are learning. There are several links of Time travel as a learner centred approach as indicated below:

► In a learner centred approach "teachers play an important role in creating an environment that fosters students' learning, accommodates different learning styles, and motivates students to accept responsibility for learning" [16].

► "Teachers create a learning environment encouraging students to actively engage in and take ownership of their learning experiences, an environment which inspire students to think deeply about how they might apply what they are learning to their future practice" [17].

► Learner-centred approach “make students mindful of what they are doing, question why they are doing it, and expose them to alternatives” [18].

► Students - centred learning “develop better understanding, reasoning, and problem-solving skills and connect better to knowledge since they are given an independent platform to experiment, explore and reason with problems” [19].

► Student-centered learning “is an approach in which they construct knowledge, and their individual differences, interests and needs are taken into account; more than one sense is addressed and high-level thinking skills are improved” [20].

► Bishop, Caston and King (2014) explains one of the advantages of changing to a learner centred environment. They highlight that “when teachers put students into small groups it promotes a deeper level of learning” (p49). “It is important to understand that as teachers, we are here to coach and to help instil the love of learning in students so that they may become life-long learners and positively impact our world” (p60) [21].

Learner-centered approach in teaching leads to emancipatory knowledge construction which involves critically examining those social, political, and institutional structures which have led to social injustices and inequities [22]. Emancipatory knowledge promotes freedom of knowledge construction among students that enable students to challenge existing knowledge towards self-development. This will enable the students to create a better life and resist any form of social and political oppression in their daily lives, Analysis of emancipatory pedagogy as a tool for democratic classrooms [23].

5. THE VALUE OF REFLECTION IN TIME TRAVEL

This paper focuses on **reflection as one of the crucial steps of learning in every Time Travel**. It must be pointed out that, without reflection, learning cannot simply occur. The Time Travel method is not about how to “memorize and recall” information of the particular topic. The crux of the Time Travel is the process of reflection which focuses on connecting, integrating, and synthesizing experiences, ideas, information, thoughts, and feelings with real-life application. What does the learner reflect on? Reflection is like a bridge whereby the learner critically thinks about his/her experiences of the past and, present and a decision on which aspects can be applied in life to create a better future. Reflection is essential in helping learners develop their critical thinking skills before, during and after every Time Travel. The value of reflection must be emphasised.

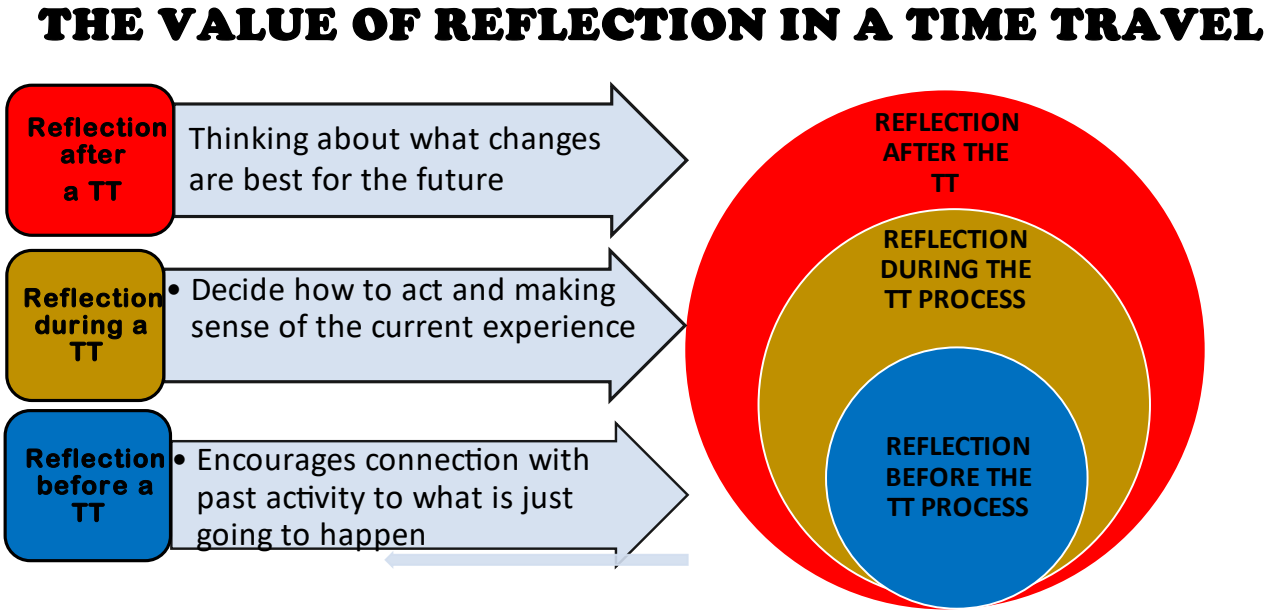

Figure 1: Value of reflection in a Time Travel

Reflection is the last stage and is considered one of the most important part of the Time Travel process. At this stage, the entire Time Travel Team and all participants sit in a semi-circle to discuss what they have learnt. This is also an important step to assimilate, gather, collate and capture what the learners have learnt from their past and how they want to recreate and build a better future based on fairness, social justice, non-discrimination, non-sexism and non-violence. It is important to connect this discussion to the key questions of the chosen topic. The reflection is preferably done in groups of two and two/three and so everybody can speak his/her mind. At the end there is a common session of reflection. Learner reflection after a lesson using the Time travel method is highly valuable for sustainability because it encourages critical self-assessment, leading to deeper understanding, personal responsibility, and a commitment to making long-term changes in behaviour and decision-making, which are crucial for addressing environmental and social sustainability challenges.

The Time Travel Method encourages critical reflection, stimulating the ability to analyze experiences through questions and transform them into valuable learning opportunities. The reflective practice model provokes some quite involved responses, and is fairly probing, but provides a robust framework for experienced learners and practitioners to examine their own thoughts, feelings and actions.

Using Gibbs reflective cycle

Reflective Practice was developed by Gibbs, Dewey, Kolb, Piaget, Dewey, Schön, Argyris, Mezirow, Korthagen and others. It encourages people to think about the experiences they had of a specific situation, event or activity such as a Time Travel programmed in a more systematic way. By using this cycle, it makes people think about their experience, activity or Time Travel event in more detail way which makes them aware of their own actions and also be better able to adjust and transform their behaviour so that they become responsible citizens. Gibbs reflective cycle is used to provide a framework of understanding for examining

and reflecting on the experiences during a Time Travel event by using the 6 different stages [24] explained below:

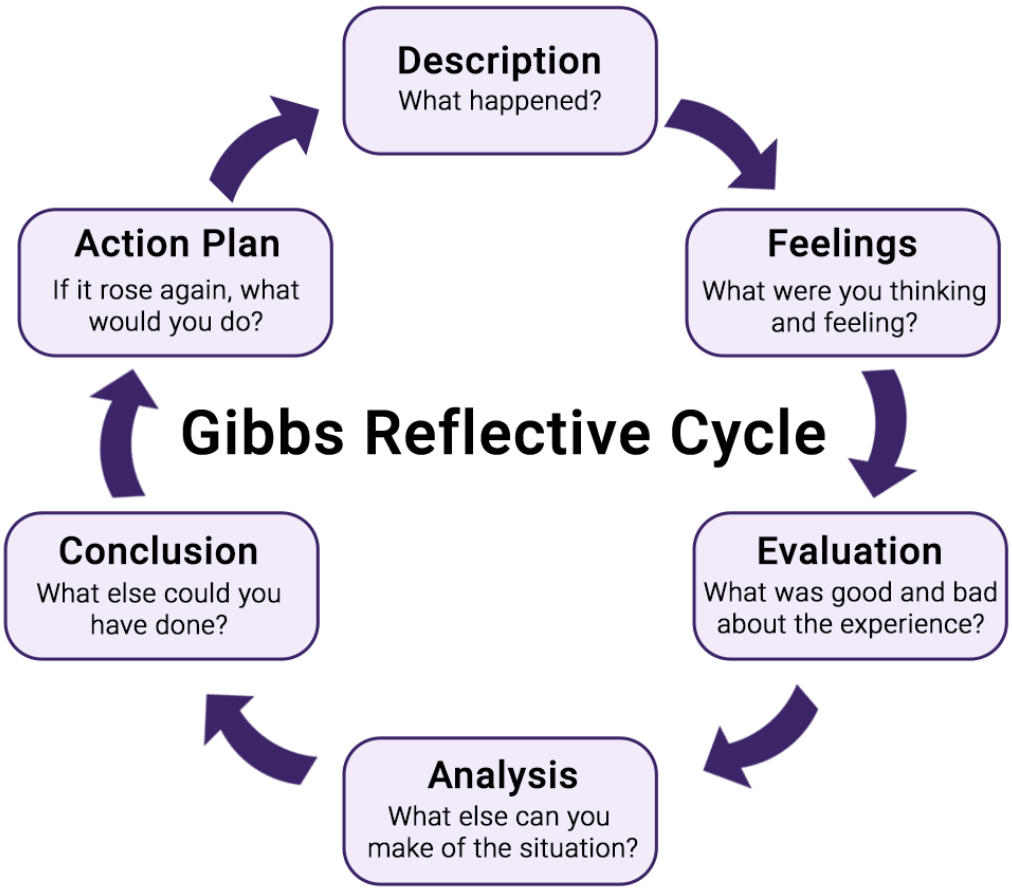

Figure 2: Gibbs Reflective Cycle, 1988

Description

The learner has a chance to describe the story in detail. The main points to include here concern what happened in the Time Travel event.

Some helpful questions which can be used during the reflective process:

- *What were the main incidents in the Time Travel event?*
- *How is it linked to the curriculum goal? (This is where the teacher's role is most important and leads this process and sets tasks for follow up.)*
- *When and where did it happen?*
- *Who were the ones present in the Time Travel?*
- *What did the learner and the other participants do in the Time Travel?*
- *What was the outcome of the situation?*
- *What part did the learner play in the Time Travel?*

Feelings

The learner can explore any feelings or thoughts that they had experienced and how these may have impacted them. All five senses are used by the participants during a Time Travel programme.

Some helpful questions which can be used during the reflective process:

•What were your feelings before, during and after the Time Travel event?

•What do you think other participants were feeling about the situation?

•What do you think about the situation for the future?

Evaluation

The learner has a chance to evaluate what has worked and what has failed in the situation. Learners evaluate what was good or bad during the Time Travel Participants must try to be as objective and honest as possible. To get the most out of your reflection focus on both the positive and the negative aspects of the Time Travel. The evaluation questions must be in relation to the goals set out in the Lesson Plan.

Some helpful questions which can be used during the reflective process:

- *What was positive and/or negative about the Time Travel experience?*
- *What did you and other participants contribute to the Time Travel in a positive or negative way?*

Analysis

The analysis step is where the learner has a chance to make sense of what has happened in the Time Travel. The learner has a chance to extract meaning and build knowledge from it. The learner must target the different aspects and explain why it worked or didn't work. Those that were poorly undertaken should be removed or replaced.

Some helpful questions which can be used during the reflective process:

•Why did things go well during the Time Travel event?

•Why did the activities, tasks or process not go as expected?

•What sense or meaning can I make of the situation?

•What knowledge from my own experience or from others sources are there that can help me understand the situation?

Conclusions

Here the learner can make conclusions about what happened in the Time Travel. This is where the learners summarize their learning and highlight what changes could be made to their actions that would improve the outcome in the future. The Time Travel experience is practical and links the section in the curriculum to everyday life. All learner intelligences are involved, equally. This enhances the self-confidence of learners.

Some helpful questions which can be used during the reflective process:

- *What did I learn from this specific Time Travel?*
- *How could this have been a more positive situation for everyone involved?*
- *What skills do I need to develop further?*

Future Action

The learners then need to decide what they do differently in a similar or related situation in the future. The learners don't only plan what they would do differently, but also how they will make sure it happens. They will put things into Practice. For example, developing a successful action plan with specific, measurable, realistic and time-related goals. Sometimes just the realisation is not enough, but taking actions to accomplish a better future is more meaningful and worth it.

Some helpful questions which can be used during the reflective process:

- *If I had to do the same activities, tasks or process again, what would I do differently?*
- *How will I develop and equip myself with the required skills I need?*
- *What activities can I involve in to enhance my personal learning abilities?*

(This section has been adapted from Gibbs, 1988. Learning by Doing; University of Edinburgh: Reflection Toolkit)

6. THE THREE PILLARS OF SUSTAINABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A widely recognized definition of sustainability comes from the Brundtland Commission's 1987 report, indicates that sustainability is "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." [25] The pillars of sustainability can be understood through a Venn diagram with three overlapping circles representing environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

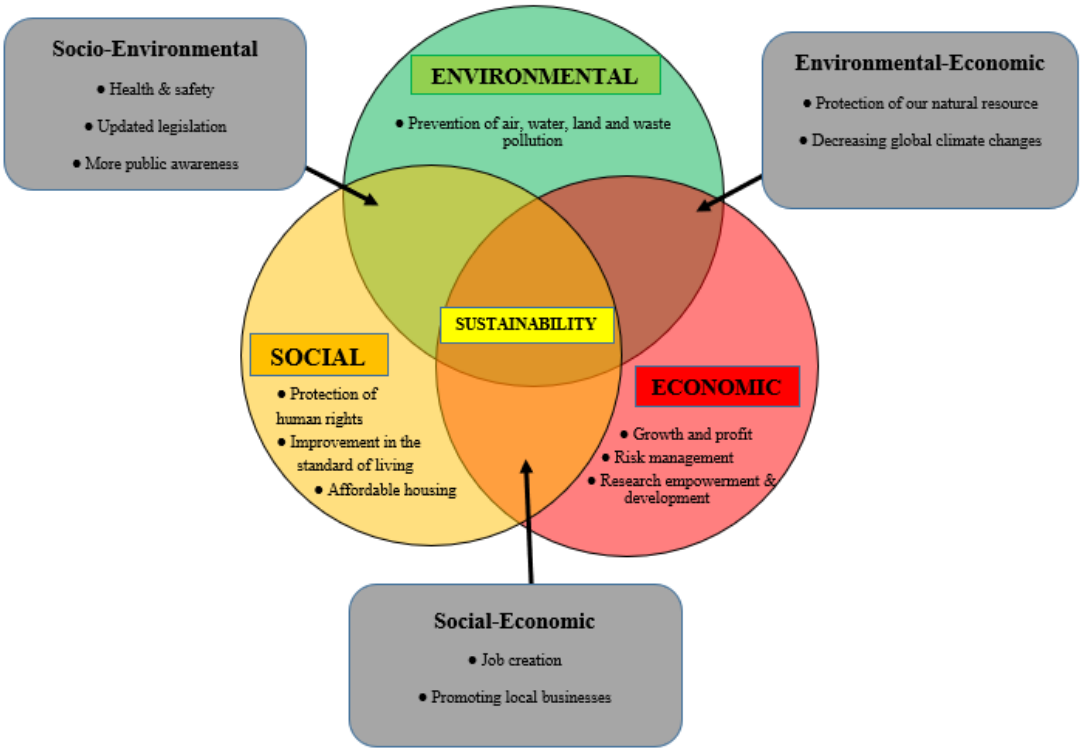

Figure 3: Three Pillars of sustainability and sustainability development

Environmental sustainability focuses on conserving natural resources and minimizing ecological harm, while social sustainability emphasizes human rights, equity, and community well-being. Economic sustainability

ensures long-term economic growth without depleting resources or harming social structures. The intersection of these three spheres represents the ideal state of sustainability, where environmental protection, social equity, and economic development coexist harmoniously. This integrated approach is essential for ensuring a balanced and sustainable future for generations to come and can be achieved when all three pillars: societal [26, 27, 28], environmental [26, 27, 28], and economic [26, 27, 28], are integrated, equally engaged and its benefits shared to all.

Some examples of environmental sustainability are reducing pollution, recycling, utilising non-renewable resources efficiently, preserving fauna, flora and marine life. Some examples of social sustainability are eradicating poverty, upholding human rights, providing housing for citizens, maintaining health and safety, improving living conditions and creating opportunities for employment. Examples of economic sustainability are maintaining investments, good leadership/governance and risk management.

There is a desperate call and collaborative action needed amongst the local, national and international communities to ensure sustainability. Good quality education is an essential tool for achieving a more sustainable world. UNESCO (2014) defines education for Sustainable Development as transformed education which enables individuals to gain the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values needed to create a sustainable future. It involves integrating key sustainable development issues, such as climate change, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity, poverty reduction, and sustainable consumption, into teaching and learning. This approach also promotes participatory teaching and learning methods that inspire and empower learners to change their behaviour and take action for sustainability [29].

There is a general agreement that achieving sustainable development **requires a shift in mind set toward active, participatory, and experiential learning methods that engage students and significantly enhance their understanding, thinking, and ability to act.** Education for Sustainable Development equips people with the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and behaviours to live in ways that benefit the environment, economy, and society, encouraging responsible choices that contribute to a better future for all [30]. Time travel method succinctly encapsulates this type of education for sustainable development which is provided to students using the experiential and reflective approach that seeks solutions and provides and action plan to create a better future.

7. LINKS BETWEEN EBBE'S TIME TRAVEL METHOD, REFLECTIVE PRACTICE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Reflective practice is not a linear process but is an integrated continuous process, It is a robust way of learning, particularly in the context of the Time Travel Method, which emphasizes understanding past experiences, present actions, and future implications. When integrated with sustainability, reflective practice becomes a powerful tool to foster sustainable thinking and behaviour in the following way:

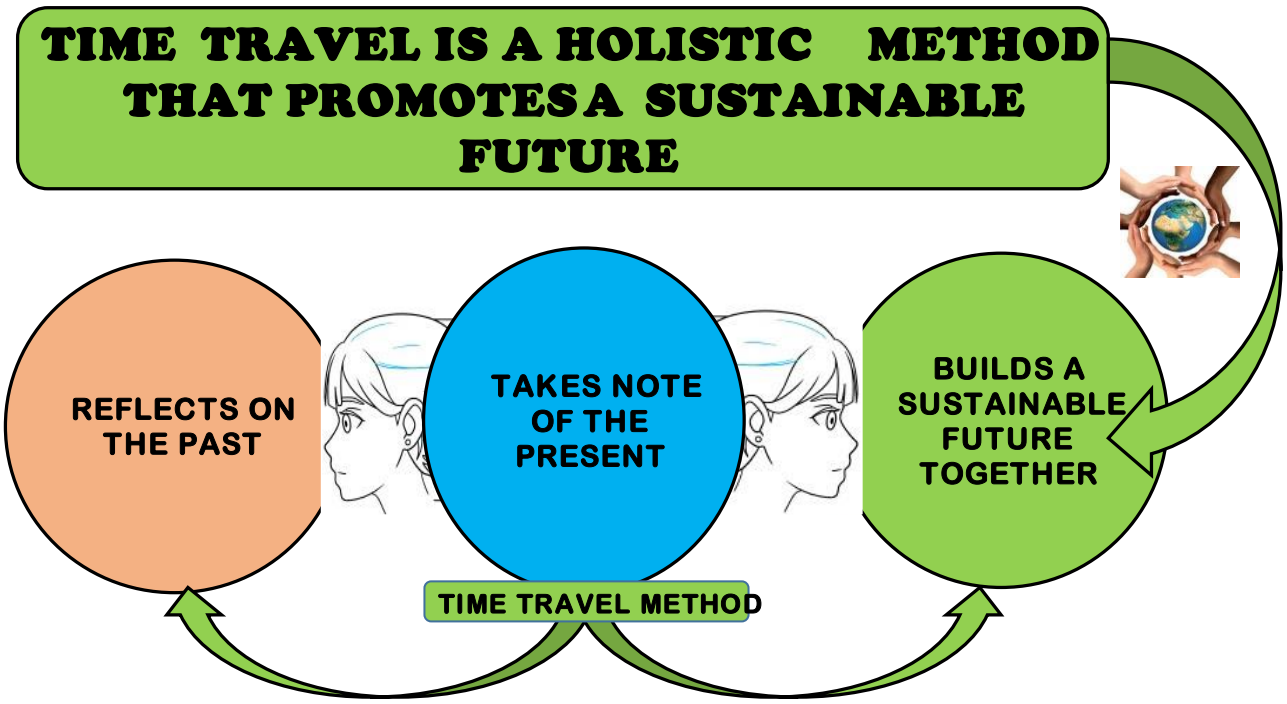

Figure 4: Time Travel promotes sustainable development

7.1 Deeper understanding of the past

7.1.1 Understanding past experiences

Time travel creates a reflective practice which encourages individuals to look back at past decisions and actions, particularly those that have impacted the environment and society. By analysing what worked and what didn't, learners can identify sustainable and unsustainable practices. Through reflection, past mistakes, such as unsustainable resource use, can be acknowledged and used as a learning opportunity. This fosters a deeper understanding of the consequences of actions and the importance of sustainable practices. Reflection helps participants analyse historical events and practices, distinguishing between sustainable and unsustainable choices. Sustainability requires deep reflection on past resource use, environmental impact, and social structures to avoid repeating mistakes that harm the planet.

7.1.2 Identifying sustainable and unsustainable practices – By studying past decisions, individuals recognize what worked well for long-term environmental and societal well-being and what led to negative consequences.

7.2 Informed decision-making in the present

7.2.1 Analysing the present

Reflective practice involves critically evaluating current actions and their sustainability. This includes questioning whether current practices align with long-term sustainability goals. By reflecting on current practices, individuals and organizations can make more informed decisions that prioritize sustainability, such as reducing waste, conserving resources, and promoting practices which are humane and just. With this historical knowledge, individuals and organizations can make better choices today, avoiding past mistakes and adopting more responsible practices. Understanding how

past societies handled resource management, social conflicts, or economic challenges encourages learners to think critically about making informed decisions and sustainable solutions for the future.

7.2.2 Alignment with sustainability goals

Reflection in the Time Travel ensures that actions taken in the present contribute and align to long-term environmental, economic, and social sustainability goals. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is universal and calls for action by all countries – developed and developing – to ensure no one is left behind. It requires partnerships between governments, the private sector, and civil society. The Sustainable Development Goals can still be realized with a strong commitment, partnership and cooperation of all stakeholders at a global level as well as the involvement of students in Time Travel method of learning at a local level.

7.3 Strategic foresight for the future and beyond

Reflective practice helps in planning for the future and beyond by considering the long-term impact of present actions. This strategic foresight is crucial for sustainability, as it ensures that actions taken today contribute positively to future generations. Reflecting on the past and present can inspire innovative thinking and provide solutions for future challenges, particularly in sustainability. This might involve developing new technologies, policies, or practices that are more sustainable. Therefore, Time Travel creates a solid platform for reflective practice which enhances the ability to anticipate future challenges and opportunities, enabling proactive planning to develop a more sustainable future.

8. CONCLUSION

The Time Travel Method, with its reflective practice component, serves as a powerful catalyst for promoting sustainable development. This approach empowers learners to engage with the past, critically analyse the present, and make informed decisions that pave the way for a more sustainable future. Education plays a pivotal role in shaping this future, as it goes beyond merely fostering economic growth and individual success—it must be a force for positive change and collective well-being for the future [31].

Not all teaching methods support sustainable development. Many focus solely on knowledge transfer without fostering critical thinking or action needed for sustainability. While traditional education has often focused on formal learning structures, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) requires a broader, more inclusive approach that extends beyond the classroom [32]. Extending teaching beyond the classroom has a great potential in shaping future leaders! Therefore, teaching students how to approach complex, interconnected issues in and out of the classroom—like sustainability—will equip them to think critically and act with responsibility, both locally and globally. Providing them with the tools to understand the consequences of their actions and decisions will ensure that they are prepared for leadership roles. It's not just about knowledge; it's about fostering the ability to find creative, effective solutions that balance immediate needs with long-term sustainability [33].

To promote sustainable development, education must encourage reflection, global awareness, and active participation in and out of the classroom. Teaching methods like Time Travel, which emphasize reflection and thinking of possible solution for the future, are crucial in shaping a sustainable future. Hence, the Time Travel methodology is a progressive, innovative method that facilitates this shift, enabling learners to reflect on their experiences, take ownership of their actions, and actively contribute to a sustainable tomorrow. Through this approach, education becomes a dynamic, holistic process that is essential for nurturing both individual growth and global sustainability.

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