



Between Discourse and Practice: Regenerative Pedagogy in Future-Oriented Social Science Education

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ABSTRACT

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This study examined how regenerative pedagogy is enacted in social science general education and explored the tensions between future-oriented teaching discourse and actual classroom practices. Anchored in global calls for transformative and sustainability-oriented education, the study focused on how instructors interpret and implement regenerative pedagogical principles in everyday teaching. Using a qualitative design, the study drew on semi-structured interviews with social science instructors from a public higher education institution. The data were analyzed through thematic analysis across five domains of regenerative pedagogy: course design, classroom practices, sustainability integration, creative strategies, and reflective teaching practices. The findings reveal that while instructors express strong support for future-oriented, participatory, and sustainability-focused education, their classroom practices remain largely content-driven, assessment-oriented, and compliance-based. Regenerative elements are present but uneven, often emerging as optional creative tasks, localized dialogic moments, or informal reflective adjustments rather than as integral components of course design and assessment. Institutional constraints, heavy content requirements, administrative workload, and student readiness challenges further limit the consistent application of regenerative pedagogy. The study identifies a persistent discourse–practice gap in future-oriented social science education and argues that regenerative pedagogy operates along a spectrum of enactment rather than as a fixed condition. The findings highlight the need for greater alignment between pedagogical ideals, assessment systems, and institutional structures to support the systemic development of regenerative and future-oriented teaching practices.

KEYWORDS:

Regenerative Pedagogy, Transformative Learning, Social Science Education, Sustainability Education, Qualitative Research, Higher Education

1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education is increasingly expected to prepare students for complex social and environmental challenges associated with the 21st century. Global policy frameworks and academic discourse have emphasized the role of education in promoting sustainability, ethical responsibility, and futures-oriented thinking. Initiatives such as Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) call for teaching approaches that foster systems thinking, anticipatory learning, and social responsibility rather than the simple transmission of disciplinary knowledge (UNESCO, 2018; Sterling, 2021).

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Within this context, the social sciences are often positioned as a key site for cultivating critical awareness, civic engagement, and reflective judgment about societal issues.

Despite these policy directions, classroom practices in higher education frequently remain content-centered and assessment-driven. Gocotano et al. (2021) note that sustainability initiatives are often implemented as formal requirements or symbolic curriculum adjustments, with limited transformation of pedagogical approaches. In many institutions, future-oriented education is reflected in course objectives and institutional rhetoric, yet everyday teaching practices continue to follow traditional lecture-based models (Seatter & Ceulemans, 2017). This situation creates tension between the discourse of transformative education and the realities of classroom enactment.

Regenerative pedagogy has emerged as a response to this tension. Rather than treating sustainability as an additional topic, regenerative approaches emphasize relational learning, systems awareness, creative inquiry, and reflective practice (Wahl, 2016; Sterling, 2021). These approaches seek to move beyond compliance-based sustainability education toward deeper forms of transformative learning.

However, empirical studies examining how these orientations are enacted in social science general education remain limited. Much of the existing literature focuses on policy frameworks, curriculum integration, or conceptual models, with less attention given to instructors' everyday classroom practices.

This study addresses this gap by examining how regenerative pedagogical practices are enacted in social science general education classrooms and identifying the tensions that emerge between future-oriented teaching discourse and actual instructional practices. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. How are regenerative pedagogical practices enacted in social science general education?
2. What tensions or gaps emerge between future-oriented teaching discourse and actual classroom practices?

II. METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative research design to examine how regenerative pedagogical practices are enacted in social science general education. It was drawn from a larger explanatory-sequential mixed-method study, with the present article focusing solely on the interview data to provide an in-depth account of instructors' classroom practices. The design aimed to generate contextual and interpretive insights rather than statistical generalizations.

It was conducted in a public higher education institution in Northern Luzon that offers social science general education courses across multiple colleges and campuses. These courses are handled by instructors from various disciplinary backgrounds to provide a diverse instructional context.

The participants were selected using purposive sampling. Only instructors who were currently teaching social science general education courses and who consented to participate in the interview were included. Instructors handling only discipline-specific major courses without general education loads were excluded.

A total of 15 instructors participated in the qualitative phase. The selection followed a maximum

variation sampling strategy to capture diversity in academic rank, teaching experience, disciplinary background, employment status, and generational cohort. This approach ensured a wide range of pedagogical perspectives and teaching contexts.

Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews using a researcher-developed interview guide. The instrument was designed to explore instructors' pedagogical practices across five domains of regenerative pedagogy: (1) course design, (2) classroom practices, (3) sustainability integration, (4) creative strategies, and (5) reflective teaching practices.

The interview guide was anchored in the literature on regenerative education, futures thinking, and transformative learning. It underwent content validation by the thesis advisory committee and was pilot-tested with two instructors not included in the main sample to ensure clarity and alignment with the study's objectives.

After securing institutional approval and informed consent, one-on-one interviews were conducted with the selected instructors. Interviews were held either face-to-face or through online synchronous platforms, depending on participant availability. Each session lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes and was audio-recorded with permission. The recordings were transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy of the data.

Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity were strictly observed throughout the research process in accordance with institutional ethical guidelines.

The interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis. A combination of deductive and inductive coding was employed. Deductive codes were derived from the five predefined domains of regenerative pedagogy, while inductive coding allowed additional themes to emerge from participants' narratives.

To support systematic interpretation, practices were categorized according to their alignment with regenerative pedagogy: conventional practices, emergent regenerative practices, and fully aligned regenerative practices. This approach enabled the study to describe both the presence of regenerative elements and the gaps between pedagogical discourse and actual classroom enactment.

The analysis focused on identifying recurring patterns, tensions, and variations across participants' accounts, consistent with the qualitative aim of generating contextual and interpretive insights rather than statistical generalization.

III. RESULTS

This section presents the qualitative findings on how regenerative pedagogical practices are enacted in social science general education. The analysis generated five major thematic domains. Across these domains, the findings reveal a recurring tension between future-oriented teaching discourse and the realities of content-driven classroom enactment.

Content Design under Institutional and Disciplinary Constraints

It emerged as a domain strongly shaped by institutional requirements, disciplinary expectations, and instructors' personal teaching philosophies. Across interviews, most participants described the syllabus as the primary reference point for planning, often linked to compliance with accreditation and documentation requirements rather than as a flexible pedagogical guide.

Several instructors characterized the syllabus as an institutional mandate rather than a practical classroom tool:

Nagpapasa lang ako pero hindi ko naman natatapos lahat... kailangang magpasa pero hindi usually naitatanggal. (I submit them, but I do not really complete everything. I submit because it is required, but it is not usually applied.)
-Respondent B

Kitkitan gamit during accreditation nu masursurot metlang tay syllabus wenna saan (They really checked during accreditation whether the syllabus is being followed or not.)
-Respondent I

Nu dadduma, idealistic unay ti syllabus... agipasa nak kase kailangan agipasa. (Sometimes, the syllabus is too idealistic. I submit because I am required to submit) -Respondent G

...For compliance lang ti ububraen dagitay dadduma nga instructors (Some instructors only do it for compliance). -Respondent J

While the syllabus functioned as a formal structure, many instructors described negotiating its requirements in practice. Adjustments were often made due to time constraints, class disruptions, or student comprehension levels.

I am more into quality over quantity. Mas doon ako sa level of understanding ng mga students

kaysa nacovert mo nga lahat pero nagmarathon ka naman just to finish it. (I am more into quality over quantity. I focus more on the level of understanding of the students rather than covering everything but rushing through the lessons just to finish them.) -Respondent I

Beyond institutional constraints, course design was also influenced by disciplinary expectations. Several instructors framed their teaching as content-driven and teacher-centered, particularly in concept-heavy subjects such as history, philosophy, and ethics.

I tend to be teacher-centered. My students listen, take notes, and absorb the information.
-Respondent C

Teaching history is very content-heavy. One hour is not enough for a topic. Ti pinagisuro iti history ket dapat ammom agirelate iti other discipline. (Teaching history is very content-heavy. One hour is not enough for a topic. Teaching history also requires relating it to other disciplines.) -Respondent J

...kasla pyramid nga bago ka makapan jay tip na, dapat maawatam pela jay makinbaba. Isu, I tend to become teacher-centered when it comes to topic like those because I have to feed them with information before they can synthesize and criticize and assess if my judgments, interpretations, thoughts and opinions are correct. (It is like a pyramid. Before you reach the top, you need to understand the foundation. That is why I tend to be teacher-centered in topics like these because I need to feed them with information before they can synthesize, criticize, and assess whether my interpretations and judgments are correct.) -Respondent F

Despite these constraints, some instructors intentionally connected lessons to students' programs, interests, and lived experiences.

Iti napansin ko, narigat nga awaten ti ubing tay topic unless makita da tay significance of the subject to them. Isu nga iti araramidek, ikarkarigatak nga iconnect ti most activities nga ititedko iti program da tapno maappreciate da ti subject. (I noticed that students find it difficult to appreciate the subject unless they see its significance to them. That is why what I do is I make sure to connect most of the activities I give

to their degree programs for them to appreciate the subject.) -Respondent H

If you stick as an idealist or nakasentro ka lang iti bagbagim [as an instructor], I think, you cannot really administer the lessons well. [Hence], I need to design the topics based of course in the syllabus ngem I need to adjust that based on the needs of the students. (If you are too idealistic or too centered on yourself as an instructor, you cannot really deliver the lesson well. That is why I design the topics based on the syllabus but adjust them based on the needs of the students.) -Respondent G

At the more flexible end of the spectrum, course design was shaped by instructors' personal beliefs about teaching and learning.

I am flexible when it comes to that. Unang-una, ang pinakagoal ko sa klase is to capture the attention of the students. Tay excited da nga agshare and agparticipate. Sabi ng isa kong mentor, once motivated na ang mga students, it's already 50% of the learning process. (I am flexible. My main goal is to capture students' attention, where they are excited to share and participate. My mentor said, once students are motivated, that is already 50% of learning process.) -Respondent I

When I am designing the course assigned to me, I do not strictly following a rigid structure. I find it too technical or scripted. I prefer a more flexible course design where I can feely adjust so that I can have a more natural flow of discussion. -Respondent A

Course design reflected a tension between institutional compliance, disciplinary content demands, and instructors' efforts to make learning more meaningful and responsive. While many participants expressed regenerative intentions, such as contextualization, flexibility, and learner responsiveness, these practices were often constrained by rigid syllabi, heavy content requirements, and standardized assessment structures.

This pattern reflects broader trends in higher education where sustainability and transformative orientations are frequently incorporated at the level of discourse or content, while pedagogical structures remain largely transmissive (Seatter & Ceulemans, 2017; Gocotano et al., 2021).

Barnett & Coate (2005) and Taylor (2017) also note that instructors often operate within externally imposed frameworks, negotiating meaning and flexibility in practice rather than through formal structural change.

From a regenerative perspective, Sterling (2019) noted that such adaptive practices represent early stages of transformation, where educators reinterpret formal structures to prioritize student understanding over strict coverage.

The findings suggest that course design among participants was in a transitional state wherein it is no longer purely transmissive, yet not fully aligned with regenerative pedagogical principles.

Controlled Participation and Emerging Dialogic Practices

Classroom practices among instructors revealed a spectrum ranging from instructor-controlled discourse to more dialogic and reflective interactions. While many participants expressed the value of student participation, classroom interaction was frequently shaped by concerns over content accuracy, student readiness, and passive learning behaviors.

Several instructors described maintaining strong authority over classroom discussions, particularly in content-heavy courses or in classes with low participation. In these contexts, the teacher remained the primary source of knowledge.

In SOCSO 01 [Readings in Philippine History], I always hold the authority of knowledge as I am the one discussing the lesson most of the time. Idi umuna, I tried to be student-centered ngem idi makitak nga saan da agresrespond kase ti naited kenyak nga loads ket dagitay nakakapsot, kapilitan nga sisak agdisdiscuss. For years, saan nak pay nakaencounter ti estudyante met ketdi nga agquesquestion nu ana man iti idisdiscuss ko or my references. (In SOCSO 01 (Readings in Philippine History), I always hold the authority of knowledge because I am the one discussing the lesson most of the time. At first, I tried to be student-centered, but when I saw that they were not responding, and because the students assigned to me had low academic capacity, I was forced to do most of the discussing. For years, I have not encountered a student who questions what I discuss or the references I use. -Respondent J

I still hold the authority of knowledge as their instructor whenever when I enter my classes.

What I observe kase from my pervious and current classes right now is that when I show that you do not know the answer, the students will treat you as incapable. Easy-easy'n da ka. (I still hold the authority of knowledge whenever I enter my classes. What I observe from my previous and current classes is that when you show that you do not know the answer, students will treat you as incapable. They will take you lightly.) -Respondent L

I like it to be a student-centered instructor ngem, I observed nga teacher-centered nak mostly. (I like to be a student-centered instructor, but I observe that I am mostly teacher-centered). -Respondent D

These accounts indicate that classroom interaction often remained instructor-directed, with participation regulated by the teacher to maintain lesson flow and conceptual clarity.

Despite this control, several instructors reported being open to student ideas, though within certain boundaries. Student perspectives were welcomed, but instructors retained the authority to redirect or correct responses when necessary.

I always take [their opinions] into consideration, but I also share my own point of view. I do not dismiss their statements. In fact, I welcome them as opportunities to widen my own perspectives as well. However, if the answers are off-tangent, I guide the back to the track. -Respondent A

I always tell my students that they are free to share their opinion regarding a certain matter and since I am their instructor, I will guide them if necessary. I will correct them frankly, especially on the objective parts. -Respondent F

I always take the opinions of my students regarding history, but I see to it that the objective part of history is corrected when the students if it wrong like dates and facts. Regarding their opinions. I allow them to express their interpretation and that will be part of our point of discussion later. -Respondent J

This suggests a form of guided openness, where dialogue is encouraged but remains structured around the instructor's interpretation of correctness and relevance.

A recurring challenge across cases was student passivity. Several instructors described classes where

students showed little initiative or relied heavily on lecture materials.

Kaslang ti ububraen da langenen ket agururay da lang ti powerpoint'n, review'n da sarsarili da. And sometimes, it feels like us teachers are just there standing, speaking about facts, and then, agururay da latta powerpoint mon nga maiupload [mVLE], review'n da, nu jay rineview da ket awan idjay inbagam, ket sika nga teacher ti inpaexam mo ket dagitay tinawtaw mo idjay sango or mismo nga klasem ket agreklamo da. But, that is not the intention of learning. Learning is supposed to challenge what you know and what you are knowing yet. Nu ana iti insurok kenka, word-for-word, ket makitak mismo jay exam test paper, saan ka nga sinurwan, pinagmemorize ka lang. (They just wait for the PowerPoint. They review it on their own later. If what appears in the exam is not exactly what was on the slides, they complain. But that is not the intention of learning. Learning should challenge what you already know, not just memorization.) -Respondent F

To address this, instructors implemented structured forms of participation, such as recitations, fixed activity schedules, or guided discussions.

Since, I am teaching college [students], I put premiums on my recitations to my students to elicit 'yung kanilang mga opinions or their takes on some matters and on what they have read on the topic. (Since I teach college students, I put importance on recitations to elicit their opinions and perspectives based on what they have read.) -Respondent H

These strategies were often reactive, aimed at stimulating engagement in otherwise passive classroom environments.

Some instructors, however, described more flexible facilitation styles. In these cases, authority shifted depending on student readiness and class dynamics.

...when the class can and able, the I will step back and I let [the students] do it on their own. I serve as a facilitator. -Respondent H

I am a flexible teacher. Hindi ka pakikinggan ng mga students if you are too rigid. What I noticed from my students is that when I listened to them, they will follow more. (I am a flexible teacher.

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Students will not listen to you if you are too rigid. What I noticed is that when I listen to my students, they are more willing to follow.)
-Respondent J

At the more dialogic end of the spectrum, a few instructors framed classroom interaction as a space for reflection, inquiry, and shared meaning-making.

Teaching is not something you give them... it is understanding what kind of learning they need. -Respondent F

Since my subject is Understanding the Self, you listen more than you talk. May mga heart-to-heart talk related sa topic. Dito ko nailalabas 'yung totoong sila. (There are heart-to-heart talks related to the topics. That is where students show who they really are.) -Respondent K

When a student questions the textbook or my statements, I like it because that [is] an indication that they are thinking. I am more interested when my student have a lot of questions doon ko din nararamdaman na interesado sila. (...that is how I know they are interested.) -Respondent C

Across cases, classroom practices did not fall into a single model. Instead, they existed along a continuum from instructor-controlled discussions to more dialogic and reflective interactions. Many instructors encouraged participation, but this was often structured, guided, or conditional, especially in response to passive students and heavy content demands.

This pattern reflects broader observations in higher education, where teaching often oscillates between authority and openness. Biesta (2016) noted that instructor-led discourse remains common in content-heavy courses, particularly when student engagement is low.

At the same time, research on transformative and sustainability-oriented education highlights the importance of dialogic learning spaces that support inquiry, reflection, and shared meaning-making (Mezirow, 1997; UNESCO, 2021; Sterling, 2019).

The findings suggest that while participatory and reflective practices are present, they are uneven and situational. Classroom interaction remains partly transmissive, with regenerative elements emerging primarily in flexible or dialogic teaching moments.

Uneven and Context-Dependent Sustainability Integration

Sustainability integration across courses varied widely, ranging from minimal references to more ethical and future-oriented discussions. While most instructors acknowledged the importance of sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the depth and consistency of integration depended on disciplinary alignment, student readiness, and instructors' own familiarity with the framework.

At the most minimal level, some instructors described sustainability as a requirement embedded in the syllabus rather than as a guiding pedagogical principle. In these cases, SDGs were treated as checklists or implicit references rather than as central organizing ideas.

It is very hard to integrate SDGs in Readings [in Philippine History]. Nu ana lang ti adadjay SDGs Addressed idjay syllabus 'n, isu lattan. Saan nak agpakpakarigat nga inayon ti SDGs idjay klasen. Hindi siya connected sa content ng klase. (It is very hard to integrate the SDGs in Readings in Philippine History. Whatever SDGs are already indicated in the syllabus, those are the only ones I follow. I do not make extra effort to add SDGs in the class. It is not really connected to the content of the subject.)

-Respondent J

Ngem nu inkabil ko ti macroperspective, looking at the entire course ket adda met iti mahit na nga two or three SDGs. I am treating them as a checklist ngem saan amin ket maipasok ko, like sagegesaek or pilitek nga ipasok, saan met. (If I look at the topics from a micro perspective, there are very few, or sometimes none, that fit. But if I look at the course, from a macro perspective, there are about two or three SDGs that apply. I treat them as a checklist, but I do not force them to fit.) -Respondent E

...Siguro kung mayroon lang sa Readings [in Philippine History], implied na lang siya at hindi expressly na binabangit ang mga SDGs. (Most of the SDGs are in SOCSO 03. If they are in Readings in Philippine History, the SDGs are only implied and are not explicitly mentioned.)

-Respondent G

These accounts suggest that sustainability was often acknowledged formally but not deeply embedded in lesson design or classroom interaction.

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A more common approach involved selective integration, where instructors connected sustainability themes only when they aligned naturally with specific topics. This strategy was seen as a practical way to avoid forcing abstract global goals into lessons that were perceived as historically or conceptually distant from contemporary sustainability issues.

I relate the SDGs depending on the specific topics that I am teaching [...] There are some topics lang naman na covered by the SDGs but I do not forcibly connect the SDGs into each lesson or topics. -Respondent K

The main challenge is a historical barrier. The courses focus on history, while SDGs lean toward contemporary issues. We only touch on them when relevant to the topic. -Respondent A

In these cases, sustainability functioned as a contextual addition rather than a consistent pedagogical lens.

Some instructors, however, used sustainability as a framework for discussing social realities and ethical concerns. Instead of focusing on the SDGs as formal goals, they connected lessons to issues such as inequality, justice, environmental protection, and cultural preservation.

In SOCSO 03 [The Contemporary World], it is easy to spot or integrate SDGs because it deals with the present world. So, SDGs can relate to that. In fact, there is a separate unit before final examination on sustainable development where we tackle social and global issues like corruption, injustices, poverty, and education. -Respondent G

All encapsulating ti integration ti SDG jay subject. Like, adda poverty reduction idjay [which is] very massive. Adda gender [equality], topics like very inherent ti division of labor ti indigenous cultural communities idjay, adda pay tay sustainable cities kumangan sa dijay, water something, because indigenous cultural communities are inherently towards nature [and] cultural preservation. (The integration of SDGs in my subject is all-encompassing. There are topics on poverty reduction, gender equality, sustainable cities, water, and environmental conservation. These are inherent in discussions about indigenous cultural communities, especially because they are closely tied to nature and cultural preservation.) -Respondent D

In these classrooms, sustainability served as an ethical framing for understanding contemporary social issues rather than as a formal policy checklist.

A smaller number of instructors moved toward future-oriented approaches, encouraging students to imagine possible futures and their roles within them.

I have an activity where the students will present their respective propaganda in class. Most of them are related in SDGs naman. I give them visioning exercises where I allow them to imagine "What do they think will happen after 50 years given the present condition?" or "If you will be a politician someday, what you will do for the community? -Respondent G

These practices positioned students as future actors, linking course content to anticipatory thinking and ethical decision-making.

Despite these emerging practices, instructors also identified several constraints. These included limited familiarity with the SDGs, perceived mismatches between sustainability goals and disciplinary content, and low levels of student awareness or motivation.

Hindi ko gaanong master what are the 17 SDGs unless I am reading it or handling something nga cue. (I do not really master all 17 SDGs unless I am reading them or handling something that cues me to recall them.) -Respondent K

As per challenges naman, adda dagitay SDGs nga totally not related to Philosophy, isu nga talaga nga awan. Unless adda dagitay medyo asideg kenyanan. Maimention dagitoy SDGs usually as an example or discussion, maibaga lang, although saan ko nga ibagbaga during discussion nga "Ohh, this is SDG 1" something like that. (As per challenges, some SDGs are totally not related to Philosophy, so they really do not apply. Unless they are closely related, I only mention them as examples during discussion. I do not explicitly say, "This is SDG 1," or something like that.) -Respondent E

One of the challenges I face in connecting lessons to the lessons with the SDGs is lack of student readiness. Often, students are not aware of the SDGs, and they also lack due diligence in completing tasks. -Respondent C

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In these cases, sustainability integration appeared uneven and context-dependent. While some instructors used it as an ethical or future-oriented lens, others treated it as a checklist or topic-specific addition.

Consequently, this pattern reflects a transitional stage where sustainability is present in discourse but not yet consistently embedded in classroom practice. Similar trends have been observed in higher education, where sustainability is often incorporated selectively or symbolically rather than as a transformative pedagogical framework (Barth & Rieckmann, 2016; Lozano et al., 2021; Sterling, 2019).

The overall findings suggest that sustainability integration is emerging but remains fragmented, shaped by disciplinary boundaries, institutional expectations, and varying levels of instructor confidence and student engagement.

Peripheral but Emerging Use of Creative and Future-Oriented Strategies

Creative strategies were present across classrooms, but their use was generally selective, situational, and instructor-dependent. While many participants recognized the value of imagination, engagement, and future-oriented thinking, creative approaches were often treated as optional additions rather than as central components of course design.

Several instructors reported using creative thinking primarily through questioning or discussion rather than through structured activities. In these cases, imagination and future-oriented thinking were embedded informally in recitations or reflective prompts.

Sa history, nagapafearless forecast ako, What will happen next given our past? More on sa Q&A, during recitation, not integrated as an activity. Other than that, wala na. (In history, I do fearless forecasting by asking what will happen next based on our past. This is usually done through question-and-answer during recitation. It is not integrated as a formal activity. Other than that, there is none) -Respondent B

I incorporate 'what if' scenarios, but it is more part of discussion, not a separate activity. - Respondent J

I sometimes integrate creative thinking strategies in my lessons but not all the time. Not necessarily futures thinking, but more on reflective thinking. I encourage students to

reflect on their life and society, not necessarily to predict the future. -Respondent A

At the other end of this spectrum, some instructors reported relying almost entirely on lectures, with little emphasis on creative or imaginative tasks.

I do not usually use creative strategies in teaching. I just give pure lectures and computations as activities. I send them articles in the group chat for them to read. -Respondent C

These accounts suggest that creativity was often peripheral, appearing as occasional prompts or reflections rather than as systematically designed learning experiences.

For many instructors, creative activities were primarily used as tools for engagement and motivation. Cultural showcases, icebreakers, and interactive tasks were intended to sustain attention and make lessons more enjoyable.

For them to appreciate culture, I want them to immerse themselves into different cultures, so ang ginagawa ko ay rinerequire ko sila to do cultural showcase with the touch of cultures of different countries. (For students to appreciate culture, I want them to immerse themselves in different cultures. That is why I require them to do a cultural showcase that incorporates elements from different countries.) -Respondent G

Whenever I prepare activities, I want them to be engaging so students will not get bored. I have tried already incorporating creative teaching strategies in my classes. It is more prominent in PI 01 [Life and Works of Rizal] and SOCSO 01 [Readings in Philippine History]. -Respondent F

In Unit 1, since pag-eestablish ng foundation and perspective about knowing "Who am I" as a core question, nagbibigay muna ako ng ice-breaker activities to set and activate their mood like nakakatuwang experiments na related din sa kanilang psychological aspects and perspectives. Once na nakuha ko na ang mood nila, icoconnect ko 'yung core idea sa pagtransition sa lesson. (In Unit 1, since the goal is to establish a foundation and perspective around the core question "Who am I," I first give icebreaker activities to set and activate their mood. These include fun experiments related to their psychological aspects and perspectives.

Once their mood is established, I connect the core idea and transition into the lesson.)

-Respondent K

Creativity functioned mainly as a strategy to improve participation rather than as a structured method for cultivating anticipatory or transformative thinking.

A smaller group of instructors demonstrated more explicitly future-oriented creative practices. These included case studies, situational analyses, and hypothetical scenarios that encouraged students to imagine consequences and propose solutions.

I encourage my students to write case studies so that students can recommend or address issues, not only today but for the future as well.

-Respondent G

I am incorporating creative teaching strategies or visioning exercises. In fact, in SOCSC 03 [The Contemporary World], I give my students case analysis, situational analysis for them to think critically and reflectively, not just memorizing facts because they are useless if they could not apply to the situation. -Respondent H

[...] I give them hypothetical situations where students will apply what they have learned from that lesson. -Respondent K

These practices connected course content to real-world problems and possible futures, positioning students as decision-makers rather than passive recipients of knowledge.

Despite these efforts, instructors consistently identified structural and contextual constraints that limited the sustained use of creative strategies. Time pressure, content coverage requirements, limited resources, and student readiness were frequently cited.

There are instances where I need to drop some activities because of time constraints because of so many activities and class suspensions. Kung gipit na sa oras, I prioritize finishing all the topics, so nasasacrifice minsan ang mga activities na ito. (There are instances when I need to drop some activities because of time constraints caused by many activities and class suspensions. When time is limited, I prioritize finishing the topics, so these activities are sometimes sacrificed.) -Respondent M

Sometimes, it's the students' lack of critical thinking. Kahit na nagprepare ka at nageffort sa mga strategies, balewala kase hindi kayo nagjajive ng wavelength kumbaga. It is hard to make them reflective or future-oriented if they themselves struggle to think critically or apply lessons to real life. (Sometimes, the problem is the students' lack of critical thinking. Even if you prepare and exert effort in using strategies, it does not work if you are not on the same wavelength. It is hard to make them reflective or future-oriented if they themselves struggle to think critically or apply lessons to real life.)

-Respondent A

Some of them are not giving extra effort in the subject. Ang line of thinking nila, this is only a minor subject, they do not give much effort usually sa subject as compared to their major subjects. May mga ilan na nagbibigay ng effort sa subject, pero ang ilan, nafefeel mo talaga na they are just there for compliance. (Some students do not give extra effort to the subject. Their mindset is that this is only a minor subject, so they do not exert as much effort compared to their major subjects. Some students do exert effort, but with others, you can really feel that they are just there for compliance) -Respondent C

I don't know in other colleges pero may mga times na wala akong magamit na projector and I observe that most students are visual learners. So, it is beneficial sana if all teachers are given projectors when teaching. Sa klase ko, hindi ako madalas nakakagamit ng projector, so what I usually do it pinapakita ko na lang ang laptop ko and hindi lahat ng students nakikita kung ano ang nasa laptop. (I do not know about other colleges, but there are times when I do not have a projector, and I observe that most students are visual learners. It would be beneficial if all teachers were provided with projectors. In my class, I rarely get to use one, so I just show my laptop screen, and not all students can see it.)

-Respondent K

These constraints often pushed instructors to prioritize lecture-based instruction and content coverage over more experimental or creative approaches.

At the more regenerative end of the continuum, a few instructors described creative strategies as rooted in their teaching philosophy and professional identity. For these

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instructors, creativity was tied to critical thinking, expression, and personal meaning-making.

Kung hindi natin sila turuan paano maging independent and critical thinkers, I do not think that they will be capable of anything. (If we do not teach students how to think critically and independently, I do not think they will be capable of anything.) -Respondent I

I allow Ilokano, Filipino, or English so they can express their opinions more comfortably.
-Respondent K

When I am giving creative activities, I see to it that it helps students connect lessons to their own lives. Not only that is entertaining to them or spark their interest, but I make sure that there is practicality in there. -Respondent A

Across cases, creative strategies appeared uneven and situational rather than systematically integrated into course design. Many instructors expressed openness to creative and future-oriented approaches, yet these practices were often optional, discussion-based, or dependent on individual teaching beliefs.

This pattern reflects broader findings in higher education, where creative pedagogy is frequently limited to low-risk or occasional activities rather than embedded systematically in instruction (Craft, 2005; Beghetto, 2013).

From a futures education perspective, scenario-building and imaginative exercises are essential for developing anticipatory competence, yet these require intentional design and institutional support (Inayatullah, 2013; Wiek et al., 2011).

The overall findings in this theme suggest that creative strategies are present but peripheral. While some instructors employ future-oriented tasks and reflective activities, creativity is not yet a consistent organizing principle of classroom practice.

Reflection as Informal, Experience-Driven, and Situational Practice

Reflective teaching practices among participants were largely informal and embedded in everyday classroom experiences. Rather than following structured reflective models, instructors described reflection as a reactive and situational process shaped by student feedback, classroom challenges, and personal teaching philosophy.

Many instructors reported that reflection was triggered by student evaluations or classroom encounters that signaled mismatches between teaching intentions and student reception. Feedback on pacing, voice, or interaction patterns often prompted adjustments in instructional delivery.

I have received negative feedback [from the previous semesters] from qualitative evaluation. Some said I talk too fast, and they find it hard to keep up; others said I only entertain some students. -Respondent A

Mahina daw ang aking boses. Hindi daw naririnig sa likod Though aminado naman ako doon. Pero kaya kongi modulate ang boses ko. Syempre, kapag derederetso ang klase ko, talagang hihina ang boses ko. (They say my voice is weak, that it cannot be heard at the back. I admit that, but I know how to modulate my voice. Of course, when my classes are continuous, my voice really gets weak.)
-Respondent B

Late akong nagbibigay ng outputs, I mean feedback on their worksheets or returning their outputs. Syempre, hindi ko naman agad-agad magagawa because I also have other responsibilities to do. (I give outputs late, meaning feedback on their worksheets or when I return their outputs. I cannot do it immediately because I also have other responsibilities)
-Respondent K

In response to such feedback, instructors described modifying their teaching approaches, such as slowing down lessons or intentionally inviting quieter students to participate.

[...] After that, I tried to slow down [and] check if the students understand what I am discussing before proceeding to the next lesson. I also call those less students to give them opportunities. Uray nabayag da nga sumubat usually, ananusak nga ururayen iti sumbat da. Siguro mabain da lang talaga. (After that, I tried to slow down and check whether students understood what I was discussing before proceeding to the next lesson. I also started calling on quieter students to give them opportunities. Even if they take a long time to respond, I try to patiently wait. Maybe they are just shy) -Respondent A

Beyond technical adjustments, reflection also emerged as a process of professional self-questioning and identity

formation. Some instructors described moments of doubt about their role, while others reflected on teaching as a source of fulfillment and purpose.

Gapo ta saan nak met nga [education] graduate, there are times that I question myself if this profession is for me. I do not still consider myself as a self-actualized one. All I can say is teaching is a very fulfilling duty or profession. (Because I am not an education graduate, there are times when I question whether this profession is for me. I do not consider myself fully self-actualized yet, but I can say that teaching is a very fulfilling profession.) -Respondent G

There was an instance in my class in Gender and Society where I handled criminology students when I was still working in another state university, saan na kano kayat nga ti boss nak ket babai. And then, at the end of our course in Gender and Society, ti kunana ket "Sir thank you ta binaliw mo ti perspective ko. Adda latta biases ko sir but I am now trying to combat my own instinct and biases regarding how I view women." (There was a time in my Gender and Society class when I handled criminology students. One student said he did not like women being leaders. At the end of the course, he told me, "Sir, thank you for changing my perspective. I still have biases, but I am now trying to challenge them.") -Respondent F

These accounts suggest that reflection extended beyond classroom techniques into deeper considerations of professional identity, mission, and impact.

At the same time, instructors noted that reflective efforts were often shaped or constrained by institutional and administrative demands. Paperwork, extension work, and compliance requirements were described as competing with time for instructional improvement.

[...] Designations. This semester, I am part of the extension project and admittedly, It consumes almost all my time. Instead nga makafocus nak klase, ado ti ikamakamak nga saan nga related ti pinagklasek. (...Designations. This semester, I am part of an extension project, and it consumes almost all of my time. Instead of focusing solely on teaching, I handle many responsibilities unrelated to my classes.) -Respondent G

To be honest., the TOS hinders my academic freedom. Like kadijay structure, for example, you are presented a better way to present the question, makatulong kenyak dijay. Ngem dijay ubram gamin nga agpavalidate and make them perfect, it is a waste of time. Siguro nu ti lang ubraek ket agaramid nak exam, checken-yo, isubli yo kadakami tapno maiyurnos-yo, then after that, dakayo ti mangcompute tay percepercentage nan, baka I will adopt it religiously. (To be honest, the Table of Specifications (TOS) hinders my academic freedom. For example, in terms of structure, sometimes you are already presented with a better way of constructing a question, which would actually help me. But the process of validating it and making everything "perfect" becomes a waste of time. Maybe if my only task were to create the exam, then you check it, return it to us for revision, and then you compute the percentage afterward, I would adopt it more willingly and consistently.) -Respondent D

Reflection was also influenced by perceptions of student readiness and participation. Several instructors described adjusting their expectations or strategies in response to passive or underprepared students.

They dislike so many activities, so what I do is I just give video clips, documentaries, simple modules for them to read in advance. -Respondent J

...for example, in writing essays, realistically speaking, I still have college students who do not know how to write an essay. -Respondent K

In these situations, reflection functioned as a practical response to classroom realities rather than as a structured pedagogical routine.

Despite these constraints, some instructors described reflection as an ongoing process embedded in daily teaching. Adjustments were made continuously based on student responses, program contexts, and classroom momentum.

Usually, reflection covers the remaining time of the class. It is fine with me because it is still learning kahit hindi siya nakaindicate sa syllabus, basta related sa topic namin. (Usually, reflection takes up the remaining time of the class. That is fine with me because it is still learning, even if it is not indicated in the

syllabus, as long as it is related to our topic.) - Respondent G

If you spend a lot of hours with students, you get to know them. -Respondent F

When there are disruptions or learning loss, I compensate by giving learning materials for them to read, then we will have 30-minute Q and A for me to gauge nu adda naadal da. Nu adda, we move on. As much as possible, I don't do quantity over quality nga detay agmarathon lesson nak. I make sure still nga dijay mesa nga period, adu latta nga maadal da. I follow, but I make sure that the most important competencies are provided. (When there are disruptions or learning loss, I compensate by giving learning materials for them to read, followed by a 30-minute question-and-answer session to gauge what they have learned. If they have learned enough, we move on. As much as possible, I avoid quantity over quality or rushing through lessons. I make sure that within a given period, students still learn a lot. I follow the syllabus, but I make sure that the most important competencies are provided.) -Respondent F

These accounts indicate that reflective practices were present but largely individualized and informal. Reflection was often triggered by specific incidents, feedback, or classroom conditions rather than by systematic or collaborative reflective processes.

Similar patterns have been observed in higher education, where reflective teaching tends to be embedded in personal routines rather than structured institutional practices (Schön, 1983; Brookfield, 2017). Without formal support systems, reflective practices may remain situational and corrective rather than transformative (Sterling, 2019).

Thus, reflective teaching is a common but uneven practice. While instructors regularly adjust their teaching based on experience and feedback, reflection is rarely structured or sustained as a central pedagogical process.

Cross-Theme Synthesis: The Discourse-Practice Gap

Across the five themes, a consistent pattern emerged between instructors' stated pedagogical intentions and their actual classroom practices. While many participants articulated future-oriented, reflective, and student-centered ideals, their enacted teaching practices were often shaped by institutional constraints, disciplinary expectations, and student-related challenges. This produced a recurring tension between discourse and practice.

At the level of course design, instructors expressed intentions to prioritize meaningful learning, flexibility, and student relevance. However, their designs were frequently structured around rigid syllabi, accreditation demands, and content-heavy requirements. Although some participants negotiated these constraints by adjusting pacing or contextualizing lessons, the syllabus often functioned more as a compliance document than as a flexible pedagogical guide.

A similar pattern appeared in classroom practices. Many instructors described valuing dialogue, participation, and reflective discussion. Yet in practice, classroom interaction remained largely instructor-centered, particularly in content-heavy subjects or classes perceived as passive. Participation was often structured or conditional rather than fully dialogic, with teachers maintaining control over the direction and correctness of discussion.

In sustainability integration, instructors expressed awareness of social responsibility and the importance of future-oriented thinking. However, sustainability concepts were frequently treated as checklist items, selectively inserted into lessons, or only addressed when naturally aligned with the topic. Only a small number of instructors consistently used sustainability as a guiding ethical or future-oriented framework.

Creative strategies followed a similar trajectory. While instructors recognized the importance of imagination, engagement, and future-oriented activities, creative practices were often optional, discussion-based, or used primarily to sustain student interest. Structural limitations such as time constraints, rigid assessment systems, limited resources, and student readiness often prevented creativity from becoming a central pedagogical approach.

Reflective teaching practices revealed the same tension. Instructors regularly reflected on their teaching, but this reflection was informal, reactive, and individual rather than systematic or collaborative. Reflection was often triggered by negative feedback, classroom challenges, or personal doubts, and was frequently constrained by administrative workload and compliance requirements.

Overall, these findings suggest that regenerative and future-oriented pedagogical ideas are present in instructors' discourse but only partially realized in practice. Across themes, instructors demonstrated awareness of dialogic learning, sustainability, creativity, and reflection. However, these orientations were uneven, conditional, and often subordinated to institutional expectations, disciplinary traditions, and perceived student limitations.

The overall pattern indicates a transitional pedagogical condition. Teaching practices were no longer purely transmissive, as many instructors incorporated reflective questions, contextualized examples, and participatory activities. Yet these practices were not consistently integrated into course design, assessment, or institutional structures. As a result, regenerative intentions remained fragmented and situational rather than systemic.

This cross-theme analysis highlights the central finding of the study: future-oriented and regenerative pedagogical discourse is present among social science instructors, but its enactment is constrained by structural, cultural, and pedagogical factors, producing a clear gap between what instructors say about teaching and what occurs in the classroom.

IV. DISCUSSION

This study examined how regenerative pedagogical practices are enacted in social science general education and identified the tensions between future-oriented teaching discourse and actual classroom practices. The findings revealed a consistent pattern across themes: instructors articulated progressive, reflective, and future-oriented ideals, yet their everyday teaching remained shaped by institutional, disciplinary, and student-related constraints. This produced a clear discourse–practice gap, where regenerative intentions were present but only partially enacted.

The Discourse-Practice Gap as a Transitional Pedagogical Condition

Across course design, classroom practices, sustainability integration, creative strategies, and reflective teaching, instructors demonstrated awareness of principles aligned with regenerative pedagogy. These included flexibility in lesson pacing, dialogic discussions, ethical framing of social issues, imagination-based activities, and ongoing reflective adjustments. Such practices suggest that instructors are not operating within purely transmissive models of teaching.

However, these regenerative elements were often fragmented, situational, or conditional. Institutional structures such as rigid syllabi, mandated assessments, technical documentation, and time pressures limited instructors' ability to consistently enact future-oriented approaches. Disciplinary expectations also reinforced content-heavy instruction, particularly in history and philosophy courses, where instructors felt compelled to prioritize conceptual grounding before encouraging dialogue or imaginative thinking. Additionally, perceived student passivity, weak foundational skills, and instrumental views of education further pushed instructors toward teacher-centered strategies.

This condition reflects what Biesta (2016) describes as the oscillation between control and openness in teaching. Educators must simultaneously ensure knowledge transmission while creating spaces for student agency. The findings suggest that instructors in this study were navigating this tension, resulting in a transitional pedagogical condition: teaching practices were no longer purely transmissive, yet not fully regenerative.

Regenerative Pedagogy as an Emergent Rather than Fully Realized Pedagogical Orientation

The results support Sterling's (2019) argument that educational transformation rarely occurs through immediate structural change. Instead, regenerative orientations often emerge first at the level of classroom practice, where instructors experiment with reflective, participatory, and imaginative strategies even within restrictive institutional contexts.

In this study, regenerative elements appeared most strongly on: (1) contextualized and relevance-oriented lesson planning, (2) dialogic and reflective classroom interactions, (3) ethical framing of sustainability issues, (4) future-oriented creative tasks, and (5) informal, experience-based reflective teaching.

These practices align with regenerative education's emphasis on relational learning, systems awareness, and anticipatory thinking (O'Sullivan et al., 2019; UNESCO, 2021). However, their uneven implementation indicates that regenerative pedagogy has not yet become a coherent instructional paradigm. Instead, it exists as a set of isolated practices embedded within largely traditional structures.

This finding echoes Lozano et al. (2021), who observed that sustainability-oriented teaching in higher education often remains fragmented when institutional systems, particularly assessment and curriculum structures, continue to privilege conventional models of instruction.

Institutional Structures as Mediating Forces

One of the most consistent findings across themes was the mediating role of institutional structures. Syllabi were often treated as compliance documents rather than pedagogical tools. Assessment systems remained exam-centered, even when instructors experimented with participatory or creative activities. Administrative workload and technical documentation requirements further limited opportunities for reflective and innovative practice.

These conditions reflect what Barnett and Coate (2005) describe as curriculum as compliance, where institutional requirements shape the formal structure of

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teaching, while pedagogical meaning-making occurs informally within classroom practice. Similarly, Hargreaves (2001) notes that intensification of academic work reduces the time and energy available for reflective and transformative teaching.

From a regenerative perspective, these findings support O'Sullivan et al. (2019), who argue that transformative pedagogy cannot be sustained through individual effort alone. Institutional environments must provide structural conditions that support reflective, participatory, and future-oriented teaching.

Student Readiness in Shaping Pedagogical Decisions

Another key factor shaping the discourse–practice gap was instructors' perception of student readiness. Many participants described students as passive, instrumental, or lacking foundational skills, which led them to adopt more teacher-centered approaches.

This reflects Kahu's (2013) understanding of engagement as relational and context-dependent. Teaching practices are shaped not only by instructor beliefs but also by students' dispositions, motivations, and learning environments. Biesta (2016) similarly emphasizes that teaching involves responding to learners as they are, not as idealized participants in progressive pedagogies.

In this study, instructors often expressed regenerative intentions but adjusted their practices in response to perceived student limitations. This suggests that the discourse–practice gap is not solely institutional but also relational, emerging from the interaction between instructor ideals and student realities.

Regenerative Pedagogy as a Spectrum of Enactment

This study contributes to the literature by reframing regenerative pedagogy not as a binary condition, either present or absent, but as a spectrum of enactment across classroom practices. The findings reveal three broad orientations.

At one end are compliance-oriented practices, characterized by syllabus driven course design, checklist-based sustainability integration, and exam-centered assessment structures. These reflect institutional and disciplinary expectations that prioritize coverage, documentation, and standardized evaluation.

At the middle of the spectrum are adaptive and transitional practices, where instructors attempt to contextualize lessons, encourage conditional dialogue, and use creativity primarily as a tool for engagement. These practices show pedagogical flexibility, but they remain shaped by structural constraints and uneven student readiness.

At the more regenerative end are dialogic classroom interactions, future-oriented visioning tasks, and reflective, identity-driven teaching approaches. These practices emphasize shared meaning-making, anticipatory thinking, and ethical reflection, indicating the presence of regenerative orientations in everyday teaching.

This spectrum suggests that regenerative pedagogy develops incrementally through practice rather than through immediate systemic transformation, and that its enactment is shaped by institutional, disciplinary, and relational contexts.

By conceptualizing regenerative pedagogy as a continuum, this study extends existing work by Sterling (2019) and O'Sullivan et al. (2019), which primarily focus on theoretical models of transformation, by providing an empirical account of how regenerative orientations appear in social science general education classrooms.

The findings further suggest that the central challenge in implementing regenerative pedagogy is not the absence of awareness or intention among instructors. Rather, the gap lies in the alignment between pedagogical ideals, institutional structures, assessment systems, and student readiness. Many instructors already demonstrate reflective, participatory, and future-oriented intentions, yet these are often constrained by rigid syllabi, compliance-driven assessments, administrative workload, and uneven learner preparation.

For future-oriented social science education to move beyond discourse, regenerative principles must therefore be embedded not only in teaching strategies but also in course design, assessment practices, and institutional policies. This requires viewing syllabi as flexible pedagogical frameworks, aligning assessment with reflective and future-oriented outcomes, providing institutional support for creative and dialogic teaching, and creating structured spaces for collaborative reflection among instructors.

Overall, the study demonstrates that regenerative and future-oriented pedagogical discourse is present among social science instructors, but its enactment remains uneven and constrained. The discourse–practice gap reflects a transitional condition in which instructors negotiate between institutional expectations, disciplinary norms, and regenerative aspirations.

Rather than indicating failure, this gap may represent an early stage in the evolution of regenerative pedagogy in higher education. The presence of reflective, dialogic, and future-oriented practices suggests that the foundations for regenerative transformation already exist within classroom practice; what remains is the alignment of

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institutional structures and pedagogical systems to support and sustain these emerging orientations.

V. CONCLUSION

This study examined how regenerative pedagogical practices are enacted in social science general education and identified the tensions between future-oriented teaching discourse and actual classroom practices. The findings revealed that instructors demonstrate clear awareness of reflective, participatory, and future-oriented teaching ideals.

Across themes, many participants attempted to contextualize lessons, encourage dialogue, integrate ethical issues, use imaginative activities, and reflect on their teaching. These practices indicate that social science instruction is no longer purely transmissive. However, the enactment of regenerative pedagogy remains uneven and conditional, shaped by institutional requirements, disciplinary expectations, assessment structures, and student readiness. As a result, a discourse–practice gap persists, where transformative ideals are articulated but only partially realized in everyday teaching.

Rather than indicating a lack of commitment among instructors, the gap reflects a transitional pedagogical condition. Many instructors operate between traditional and regenerative orientations, negotiating institutional compliance while attempting to make learning meaningful and future-oriented.

Regenerative practices appear most strongly in localized and instructor-driven decisions, such as flexible pacing, dialogic discussions, contextualized activities, and reflective teaching adjustments. However, these practices are not yet structurally supported by institutional systems, particularly in areas such as assessment, syllabus design, and workload distribution. This suggests that regenerative pedagogy in social science education is emergent but not yet systemic.

The study contributes to the field by conceptualizing regenerative pedagogy as a spectrum of enactment rather than a fixed condition.

Instructors move along this spectrum depending on institutional constraints, disciplinary demands, and student contexts. This perspective highlights that pedagogical transformation is gradual and relational, requiring alignment between instructor beliefs, institutional structures, and learner realities.

For future-oriented social science education to move beyond discourse, several interconnected directions emerge from the findings. Syllabi need to be treated as flexible

pedagogical frameworks rather than purely compliance documents, assessment practices must align with reflective and future-oriented learning goals, and institutions should provide structured faculty development on sustainability, futures thinking, and regenerative pedagogy.

At the same time, reducing excessive technical workload, developing shared repositories of creative learning activities, supporting collaborative reflective spaces, and addressing student readiness and motivation are necessary conditions for sustained change.

Bridging the discourse–practice gap requires coordinated efforts at both the classroom and institutional levels. While instructors already demonstrate emergent regenerative practices, lasting transformation in social science education will depend on aligning pedagogical ideals with supportive structures, assessment systems, and institutional cultures that value reflective, participatory, and future-oriented learning.

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VII. DISCLOSURE

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