The TED Talk by the educationalist Ken Robinson “Challenging Educational Paradigms” has been the starting point of my many class discussions with sustainable design students. Robinson asks his audience to imagine an education system designed for the needs of the twenty-first century; one where the previously undervalued skills of innovation and creativity take center stage to meet the challenges of the C21st. He presents a contemporary world deprived of suitable education and asks us to think about a new educational paradigm in which young people grow and develop without the biases that shaped the needs of industrialization. This, he argues, would mean that creative problem solving is not merely a useful strategy but the primary goal of young people’s education.

I teach sustainable design to student architects, interior designers, planners, and real estate developers. Engineering students have sometimes strayed into my classes curious about its methods. Students in my sustainable design classes, young people who have for the most part been successful in educational systems, but are looking for alternative ways of living, resonate with his arguments and easily adopt his criticisms. Robinson’s description of an industrial model of the day - the ringing bell of the factory announcing a change in lessons; pupils molded in ways devoid of uniqueness and for the needs of an
automated world; the stifled failure of talented creative individuals - all find a truth with those critical of the unintended environmental consequences of industrialization.

In this paper, I explore pedagogical methods in sustainable design. Firstly, I examine regenerative design philosophy, and its call for transformation; secondly, I discuss pedagogy in education for sustainable development; and thirdly, with reference to the transformative aspiration of regenerative design, I propose the framework for a regenerative educational paradigm.

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Andrea is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Architecture at Iowa State University where she teaches a class on Green and Sustainable Architecture and is a studio instructor. Since completing her doctorate in 2005 on the work of Luce Irigaray she has been working on issues of gender, and sustainability in the built environment. Most recently she has presented papers at conferences and organized “Thinking Love” at the University of Bristol in June of 2016 and “To Be Born: Genesis of a New Human Being” at the University of Sussex in February 2017. In 2019 she was a research fellow at CRASSH The University of Cambridge, UK and her most recent publication is a book chapter in Towards a New Human Being, a collection of works edited by the philosophers Luce Irigaray, Mahon O’Brien and Christos Hadjioannou.