Raising Sustainability Awareness: Engaging the Whole Institutional Community

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ESD at UWE

Context/history (already set by Prof. Longhurst)

WHAT NEXT?

‘More of the same will not do’

Extend the ‘circle of the committed’

HOW?
Presentation outline

1. Learning resource project
2. Project evolution
3. Transferable lessons/practice
VISION: To raise the sustainability awareness of our whole institutional community

- Who is our institutional community?
- What is sustainability in the context of our institution?
- What qualifies as awareness?
Need for a common baseline

Generic learning resource
Key elements

1. Appropriate for ANY level student
2. Appropriate for all disciplines
3. Entirely self-directed
4. Online delivery via Blackboard (VLE)
5. Approx. 20 hours to complete
6. Multi-choice test to demonstrate understanding
Learning outcomes

‘Students’/Users will develop:

• Awareness of core principles of sustainability
• Ability to understand language of sustainability
• Appreciation for importance of sustainability
• Appreciation of the relevance of knowledge from other disciplines to creating innovative solutions to complex sustainability challenges
Project principles

• Collaboration
• Consultation
• Inclusivity
  – Whole UWE community
  – Staff and students contribute
  – Staff and students learn together
  – No jargon

• Community
• Academic robustness
• Pedagogical integrity
WHERE TO START?

Talk
How? (Approach)

Me to ‘them’

‘Here’s our idea’… ‘Sustainability is about’…
‘How does that sound to you?’

What is already happening? Where?
To what extent? By/to whom?
Response

- Not what I do?
- Too busy?
- Not interested?
- Not relevant?
- Not my responsibility?
Project process

- Agreement of framework
- Steering group
- Departmental, faculty and institutional consultation
- Library and TEL support
- Student advisory panel
- Continuous testing
Guiding principles for the resource content

• Key elements of sustainability
• Considerations of scale
• Personal connections and collective action
• Responsibility, citizenship and stewardship
• Relevance to discipline yet interdisciplinary
• Locally relevant where possible
Emergent issues

• More happening than has previously been recorded: How to capture?
• Uncertainty over definitions of sustainable development/sustainability
• Lack of staff knowledge
• Need for clarity/bigger picture
More issues

• Explicit sustainability content?
• Do we need a common lexicon?
• Professional bodies
• Uncertainty
• Identity
Have we made any progress?

✔ More activities
✔ More staff
✔ More students
Resource framework

• Principles of sustainability
• Lifestyles
• Households
• Communities
• Workplace
• Organisations
• Global sustainability
Themes of ‘universal’ relevance

• Respect
• Resources
• Efficiency

• Professionalism
• Systems
Transferable lessons?

**NO SINGLE SOLUTION**

- Flexibility essential
- No quick fix
- Respect and embrace diversity
- Regulation or inspiration? Both
- Who? ‘Leaders’/champions/students/ ‘others’
- Work with existing structures (in the first instance)
• Do our courses represent our values as an institution?

• How to measure progress/success/IMPACT?
What next?

• Core resource finalised 2014
• New ways of sharing practice and ideas
• Further development of explicit sustainability learning opportunities and embedding of sustainability in curricula across all disciplines
• Mapping sustainability at our institution

Feedback/discussion most welcome!