



Welcome to the Higher Education Academy's EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Bi-Monthly e-Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 2 (November 2009)

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

UNITED NATIONS

- Reflecting on the DESD: The 2009 Global Progress Report and the Role of HE

SCOTLAND

- Conference: ESD in Scotland's Colleges and Universities – Halfway There?

WALES

- Review of a Curriculum Audit in Wales

SUBJECT CENTRE SPOTLIGHTS

- Environmental Justice in Legal Education
- Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies (LLAS): Teaching Linguistic Field Work and Sustainability
- Teaching Ethics to Bioscience Students: Sustainability and the Environment
- Centre for Bioscience: How to Include SD in Your Teaching
- LLAS: New ESD Web Area
- Engineering, Social Justice and Peace

PROJECT DISSEMINATION

- Regional Reflection: Sustainable Career Guidance – What Does It Mean and How Do we Do It?

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

- Art Design Media

EVENT REPORT

- All Our Futures 2

OTHER

- The Relationship between Learning and Sustainability
- Having a University in Transition
- How Sustainable Is Your Marketing?

MAJOR EVENTS IN THE SECTOR

REMINDERS

- Sustainability in Higher Education Developers Network
- ESD Networks and Regional Networking Days

CONTACT AND FEEDBACK

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the second of our new look newsletters. You may remember that, because of the huge and increasing amount of information we were getting in, we took the decision to produce a weekly bulletin of news, as well as this newsletter, which focuses on fewer issues but in more depth. We think that this revised format is already paying dividends since there has never been any shortage of news to go into the bulletins. This seems to reflect a general increase in SD & ESD activities that are taking place across the HE sector, perhaps the most significant this month being the UNESCO *Review of Contexts and Structures for Education for Sustainable Development*, considered below by Alex Ryan and Daniella Tilbury.

The HE Academy is also significantly stepping up its actions and we have been busy getting our programme of activities off the ground over the last few weeks. This is in addition to the work being done by our Subject Centres, five of whom are featured in the spotlight section of this newsletter, and in units across the Academy. The ESD Team has been planning how to co-ordinate these activities, as well as developing our own plan of work. These include the completion of our learning and teaching framework for ESD; a call for bids for curriculum development grants, which will be around the broad theme of 'interdisciplinarity in

ESD'; an expansion of institutional support work; and the commissioning of some research into first year attitudes to sustainability.

These are just a few of the things that we will be doing during this academic year, so please check future bulletins and newsletters for announcements: including calls for funding bids, and information about major new items on our website.

Joining the Team

In the previous e-Newsletter, we welcomed two members to the ESD Team this academic year, Alastair Robertson and Laila Burton. Now we would like to introduce a third: Jonathan Payens.

Jonathan is a Project Officer at the HE Academy and has his time allocated to various areas, including supporting the ESD Project, JISC TechDis and producing digital images and video for the Academy and its Subject Centres. Jonathan has been working in the Academy's Enhancing Learning through Technology programme for the last 3.5 years. Previous to joining the Academy, he was a learning technologist at a secondary school, and before that was at the University of Hull for seven years developing online Dutch language courses as well as EU-funded technology projects and the NOF-funded ICT for teachers initiative. While at Hull, he was also involved with the CTI for Modern Languages during its change over to the LTSN Centre which is now the Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies (LLAS) Subject Centre. In his spare time, Jonathan is a keen photographer, and works as a Dutch interpreter on occasions. "Having grown up bilingually in Holland helps," he says, "where, interestingly enough, sustainability is embedded into the culture."

We hope you find time to enjoy this year's extraordinarily colourful Autumn!

The HE Academy ESD Project Team

Simon Smith, Stephen Sterling, Heather Luna, Alastair Robertson, Laila Burton and Jonathan Payens

UNITED NATIONS

REFLECTING ON THE DESD: THE 2009 GLOBAL PROGRESS REPORT AND THE ROLE OF HE

By Dr Alex Ryan (Academy ESD Project & Associate Director of Sustainability, University of Gloucestershire) & Professor Daniella Tilbury (Marie Curie Chair in ESD and Director of Sustainability, University of Gloucestershire)

Mid-October saw the release of the UNESCO Global Report on ESD at the UN General Assembly, marking the mid-point of the United Nations Decade in ESD (DESD). This is a seminal document: the first report of global scale issued by a UN agency and a substantial exercise in data collection, which includes regional overviews from sub-Saharan Africa, the Asia-Pacific, the Arab states, Europe

and North America, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Its publication provides an opportunity to set in context and reflect upon activities under way in the increasingly fertile field of ESD across UK Higher Education.

The report was authored by Professor Arjen Wals and completes the first phase of evaluation and monitoring during the DESD, taking the view from 2007-2009. Professor Daniella Tilbury, Director of Sustainability at the University of Gloucestershire, led the process worldwide over the past four years in her role as Chair of the UN Global Monitoring and Evaluation Expert Group in ESD and developed the research framework which was used to collect data for the report. Colleagues and Fellows of the International Research Institute for Sustainability (IRIS) at University of Gloucestershire also played key roles in developing sections of the report, including Professor Overson Shumba, Roel van Raaij and Ingrid Mula. Earlier drafts were presented at the 2009 World Conference on ESD in Bonn and to a range of key bodies for their input. The document thus provides a useful overview of the diverse range of activities and partners actively involved in the DESD.

UNESCO's goal, in adopting a learning-based evaluative approach for the DESD, is to inform and improve opportunities and provision across the globe, documenting progress in learning and change in the pursuit of sustainability. The report concludes that despite the 'existential challenges' faced by specific regions, there are shared themes emerging worldwide. Perhaps one of the most striking features of the evaluation is the considerable progress made at school level, but the continued need for momentum within technical, vocational and HE. One point of interest is the issue of external stakeholders 'pushing integration' into vocational and workplace education; 'market demand' has not always been apparent to HE leaders and, if it is increasing, the evidence should be teased out and more clearly demonstrated.

Mention is made of the crucial role played by international and regional networks and inter-governmental strategies in developing and implementing ESD. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is flagged, together with the Asia-Pacific, as the regions most actively monitoring and applying their DESD strategies. The report notes that national ESD policies tend to connect with broader SD strategies; for the UK, integrated policy-making has been clearly evident in Scotland and Wales, with specific DESD initiatives that unify the educational sector. However, weaknesses in inter-ministerial communication are highlighted at the level of government, hampering the integration of ESD perspectives into SD policy.

Crucially, the report underlines the importance of communication with regard to ESD. It acknowledges the breadth of definitional debate in the field, the necessity that meanings are localised, and the different pedagogic styles in evidence globally (the latter often marked in relation to styles of governance). The variety of ESD platforms is noted as part of this complexity, from prior environmental

education to other 'adjectival' and 'single issue' educational movements. Perhaps most telling for the future development of ESD in HE is the comment that ESD-specific methodological innovation is scarce in teaching and learning, pointing to the need for greater clarity about the pedagogic orientations of ESD, and for sharing of good practice and resources. The report also points to a shift from the earlier focus on formal education to self-determined learning processes across multiple settings. Community-based and social learning is marked as particularly important, under-documented in its impact and unstable in financial terms.

As those working across HE are only too aware, tangible progress in ESD in this arena requires multifaceted approaches: to align with related educational impulses, to draw on the talents of academics, and to tackle structural challenges at disciplinary, organisational and sectoral levels. The report highlights the need for clearer articulation in relation to pedagogy and the importance of establishing ESD as a research field. It provides the context for our various efforts in the coming years, to recognise the subtleties and scope needed in our vision for ESD and its potential for infusion into academic practices.

For further information, please visit <http://www.unesco.org/en/esd/> and <http://www.glos.ac.uk/iris>

UNESCO (2009), *Learning for a Sustainable World: Review of Contexts and Structures for Education for Sustainable Development 2009*, UNESCO, Paris, France.

SCOTLAND

CONFERENCE: ESD IN SCOTLAND'S UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES – HALFWAY THERE?

We are now halfway through the United Nations Decade of ESD. The Decade aims to promote education as a basis for a more sustainable society and to integrate SD into education at all levels and all areas of life.

The Scottish Parliament passed the Climate Change Act in June. This will require wide-ranging and significant responses from further and higher education if we are to meet the Government's targets for a low carbon future.

This conference will consider the contribution that Scotland's colleges and universities are making to the targets in the Climate Change Act and the United Nations Decade of ESD, through activities such as:

- formal programmes of study
- sustainable estates and buildings
- student activities, including working with local communities
- linking academic and extra-curricular activities

The conference will:

- present and reflect upon recent sector reports on ESD in Scotland
- provide a forum in which new ideas and practices can be discussed
- offer students, colleges and universities and national agencies an opportunity to consider possibilities for future work and collaboration

The conference will be of interest to:

- college and university staff involved in SD
- student associations
- volunteering and community organisations
- national organisations with an interest in SD

Registration deadline is Friday 13th November: ipsadmin@sfc.ac.uk

WALES

REVIEW OF A CURRICULUM AUDIT IN WALES

In Wales there is a policy focus on not only ESD but also on Global Citizenship (ESDGC). These two interrelated themes are a priority for the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) and, uniquely, Wales is one of the few world nations with sustainable development at the heart of government.

Set out in the Assembly's Sustainable Development Scheme, *A Sustainable Wales – Learning to Live Differently*, and, subsequently, *Sustainable Development & Global Citizenship – A Strategy for Action* (2006), the document identifies the 'pivotal' role of HEIs within ESDGC and acknowledges them to be "a major catalyst for learning about ESDGC".

A Welsh ESDGC Network Group – comprising the WAG ESDGC 'champion' (Claire Fowler), the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW's Dr Alyson Thomas), representatives from all 12 Welsh HEIs and chaired by the Academy's Senior Associate Professor Howard Colley – has been meeting for some time. The group provides a central forum to discuss key issues cutting across from estates to curriculum design. Two key developments have been the planning of a major conference on ESDGC (2008) and also an audit of the curriculum.

In 2008, HEFCW sponsored a nationwide review of ESDGC in curricula using the STAUNCH (Sustainable Teaching Audit for University Curricula in Higher Education) audit tool developed by the Centre for Business Relationships, Accountability, Sustainability and Society (BRASS) at Cardiff University.

The STAUNCH approach reflects the acceptance by the Welsh Assembly Government of the Brundtland report definition of sustainable development as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. This report recognises three components: environmental, economic and social sustainability and these categories are used in the STAUNCH audit system. It should be emphasized that the audit tool has been developed to assess sustainable development and that information on global citizenship is gained coincidentally in the social component of sustainable development.

For the audit, Welsh institutions were asked to summarise the details of their findings in an annex submitted to HEFCW. This present review, which has been written by Professor Howard Colley, focused on the STAUNCH results reported through the institutional returns for this annex. A thorough and detailed analysis, with a view to producing an academic paper, is to be carried out by staff from BRASS in collaboration with institutional representatives.

This present review also considers the findings of a complementary study presented in March 2009 by SQW Consulting: Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC): Analysis of good practice in Welsh Higher Education Institutions. The SQW Consulting analysis was commissioned by HEFCW and the approach has involved review of documentation, consultation with stakeholders, national and international comparison, and case study visits to Welsh HEIs. The SQW analysis takes a broad perspective of ESDGC, looking beyond the curriculum developments which are the topic of this review.

Download the review at:

http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/aboutus/wales/our_work_wales/esdgc

SUBJECT CENTRE SPOTLIGHTS

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN LEGAL EDUCATION

The UK Centre for Legal Education (UKCLE), Faculty of Laws, University College London, and Warwick Law School invite you to a conference on environmental justice in legal education. The conference will be held on Monday 29 March 2010 at the University of Warwick.

Call for Papers

Short presentations are invited which address one or more of the following themes:

- Mainstreaming environmental justice in the curriculum: highlighting the role of environmental justice in teaching and research;
- Exploring human rights, inequality, negotiation and participation through environmental justice;

- Integrating environmental justice in regulatory and decision-making structures;
- Growing role of the law school in pursuing environmental justice and sustainability;
- Legal practice in academia;
- Legal mechanisms: rationing; indicators, impact assessment;
- Driving forward a new environmental justice agenda: interdisciplinary connections; networks, funding, establishing dialogue between researchers and communities.

Proposals should be submitted to Tracey Varnava (t.varnava@warwick.ac.uk) using the form provided via the link below.

Of interest to:

Academics and others researching and/or teaching in the area of environmental justice; students; third sector organisations.

Confirmed speakers

Professor John McEldowney, School of Law, University of Warwick
 Andrea Ross, School of Law, University of Dundee
 Dr Jane Holder, Faculty of Laws, UCL and UKCLE Consultant for ESD

For details, see: <http://www.ukcle.ac.uk/newsevents/ukcleevent.html?event=712>

LANGUAGES, LINGUISTICS AND AREA STUDIES: TEACHING LINGUISTIC FIELDWORK AND SUSTAINABILITY

Date: 4 December, 2009

Location: The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

An event for both experienced and novice lecturers and students of Field Linguistics. An event to introduce them to knowledge and skills from a wide range of areas in linguistic theory and practice, and to learn about "real world" language problems and solutions. <http://www.llas.ac.uk/events/3303>

TEACHING ETHICS TO BIOSCIENCE STUDENTS: SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Wednesday 9 December 2009, Cardiff University

This event provides an opportunity for colleagues to discuss practice and share ideas on how best to prepare students to deal with issues associated with environment and sustainability. The day will consist of presentations from bioscientists describing the delivery of environmental ethics teaching and practical examples of effective approaches, techniques and methods.

This event will give you the opportunity to:

- Hear views of why it is important to teach environmental ethics and help bioscience students to develop their ethical decision-making skills
- Listen to accounts of practical examples of appropriate approaches, techniques and methods for teaching environmental ethics to bioscience students

The event will also contain a swapshop session, giving you the opportunity to share ideas and practice in a short presentation. Please let us know when you register if you would like to contribute to the swapshop session.

<http://www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/events/cardiff091209.aspx>

CENTRE FOR BIOSCIENCE: HOW TO INCLUDE SD IN YOUR TEACHING

SD is a wide ranging, multi-disciplinary topic, and within some discipline areas it can be difficult to find links to SD. The Academy Centre for Bioscience has produced a sheet that aims to bring together some ideas for introducing ESD into teaching within different bioscience disciplines. This sheet is intended more for those who teach areas where ESD is not an integral part of the discipline, but may also provide some useful ideas for those who already include ESD in their teaching. See:

<http://www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/esd/howto.aspx#esd>

LLAS: NEW ESD WEB AREA

LLAS is pleased to announce its new ESD web area, which now includes links to ten resources, a bibliography, and external links. Items of interest include:

- ESD: Languages and Sustainability by Alison Phipps
- ESD: An African-Asian Languages Perspective by Michael Hutt
- ESD: Human Geography/Area Studies (Agriculture and Rural Development) by Guy Robinson
- Global Issues, Local Responses: Engaging with Environmental Issues through Languages and Area Studies Curricula by John Canning
- Global Perspectives in Area Studies: A Complacent or Creative Response? by Jenny Lunn

Please see: <http://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/esd>

ENGINEERING, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND PEACE

The Engineering, Social Justice, and Peace (ESJP) network is delighted to announce their Sixth Annual International Conference, to be co-hosted with the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (The RSA) in London from August 4th to 6th 2010 in collaboration with the Higher Education Academy Engineering Subject Centre and Engineers Against Poverty.

Please see: <http://esjp.org/esjp-conference>

PROJECT DISSEMINATION

We are pleased to announce the publication of outcomes from the first of our most recently funded mini-projects. We hope they will prove useful to the sector. Feedback, of course, is very much welcomed. We will be particularly interested in comments on such things as:

- how useful is this work to you? In what ways?
- has it led to any new ideas or developments in your work?
- is the format accessible and helpful?
- can you help disseminate this work further?
- what research or capacity-building work would you want the Academy's ESD Project to be doing next?

REGIONAL REFLECTION: SUSTAINABLE CAREER GUIDANCE – WHAT DOES IT MEAN AND HOW DO WE DO IT?

Employability is an aspect of the curriculum which is becoming increasingly important to universities, for reasons related both to individuals and the organisation. Whilst the same can be said of sustainability, the link between the two areas is less explored. Two careers advisers based at Coventry University, Christopher Manley and Lucy Wilson-Whitford, gained funding from the HE Academy's ESD Project to explore how sustainability might be approached within the individual career guidance interaction.

The main focus of this project was on two events for qualified career guidance practitioners, designed to facilitate the exchange of professional ideas regarding the concept of sustainable career guidance, with a view to defining policy development and service delivery within this area. Following this, it was intended that the outcomes of these events would be used to stimulate professional discussion and inform training and development activities.

The first event was designed to introduce the concept of 'Sustainable Guidance' and elicit responses from delegate members. The keynote speaker was Lyn Barham, a Senior Fellow of the National Institute of Careers Education and Counselling with a long-standing interest in issues of sustainability. She outlined the ways in which sustainability was becoming a key theme of governance at national, European and international level, and increasingly reflected by employers. She also explained the concept of 'positive partiality', in which the adviser goes beyond providing objective information and becomes actively involved in the long-term interests of their client. It was argued that an acceptance of positive partiality would legitimise 'sustainable guidance', since an emphasis on sustainability was in the long-term interests of any client. Subsequent discussion revealed some challenging emerging questions about the nature and scope of the career guidance intervention:

- To what extent should the discussion of this issue depend on whether or not the client raises it?

- Could this issue be legitimately considered as an appropriate part of the help advisers are professionally expected to give? Is discussion of the issue impartial or directive?
- Is 'positive partiality' advisable?
- How might the background, values and educational history of clients impact on their understanding of these issues and what their response to them is?
- To what extent should 'values' be discussed within a career guidance interaction?
- How well are the links between sustainability and employability understood? Is enough known about what level of 'sustainability awareness' employers are looking for in recent graduates?
- How are the constraints managed – the time available for the individual interaction (and clients who often come for something specific), the organisational policy (there could be conflicts in certain kinds of organisations), targets, and so on?
- Is it the case that some of the professional ethical requirements as articulated by professional bodies such as the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services, which include impartiality and individual ownership by the client, could be interpreted as not being conducive to a proactive approach to sustainability?

The purpose of the second event then became to define and discuss these questions more cogently, focusing on underpinning professional concepts, such as impartiality, positive partiality, agenda setting and ethics. John Gough, the course director of Coventry University's Qualification in Career Guidance, outlined some of the differing positions of careers advisers based on differing theoretical perspectives. It was argued that it is, in fact, not possible for an adviser to have an entirely neutral discussion with a client and that, therefore, advisers needed to be honest about their understanding of guidance – and that for many advisers an interest in their client would mean that sustainability would be amongst the issues an adviser could raise legitimately. The point was also made that a competent adviser will also raise issues about career choice that may not have occurred to the client with which they are working, in addition to those initially presented. Advisers feel that part of their job role involves raising issues such as financial implications, work-life balance and job security with clients who may not have considered these aspects: Is sustainability not merely another aspect that should be raised where appropriate?

Recommendations:

- Increase the emphasis on helping students consider the ethical implications of career choice. A review of current e-resources revealed very few materials available on this subject. An article by Christopher Manley has been submitted to Prospects, which is the official student-facing website of the Higher Education Careers Services. It is designed to help students consider the sustainability dimension of their career choices. Lucy Wilson-Whitford has commenced a career information article on the role of the sustainability officer

- and related positions, which she is planning to circulate widely.
- Conduct an action research project with students to find out more about what students think and need with regards to this issue, given a dearth of more specific information on student attitudes. A number of approaches would be appropriate, for example, a well-designed questionnaire with an appropriate sample size and/or suitably-structured focus group activities. The report, *Employable Graduates for Responsible Employers*, published by the Higher Education Academy in February 2008, concludes that students do consider 'the social and environmental ethics of an employer before making a career choice' and that they believed that sustainable development and Corporate Social Responsibility should be taught more at universities. The conclusions suggest that there would be value in looking more closely at the role of career guidance within this process – what students wanted and needed from career guidance specifically was not a focus of this report. It is also arguable that the students who attended the focus groups came because they already had an interest in the issues and are not necessarily representative of the student population at large. There is, therefore, scope for building on the conclusions of this research by doing further work with students to identify their guidance needs with regards to the issue and to gain additional information regarding the range of responses there might be from students about the possibility of discussing such issues as part of a career guidance interaction. The results of such a project would give advisers increasing confidence to form productive partnerships with academics and inform curriculum development with regards to this issue.
 - Set up or use a network site to continue to discuss ideas and make suggestions.
 - Approach lecturers who run courses designed to train future careers advisers with suggestions and organise sessions for university days for further education advisers and teachers.

It would be difficult for such extensive projects to be carried out as part of an individual's day-to-day work load; therefore, a project which includes funding for dedicated time, allocated resources and appropriate support would be needed to see these projects through to a successful conclusion.

This report will be available to download from <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/esd> by the end of November.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

ART DESIGN MEDIA

The HE Academy's Subject Centre for Art Design and Media (ADM-HEA) is pleased to invite funding proposals for projects of 12 months duration, which will run from March 2010 to March 2011. One of the three key themes for applications this year, which aligns with ADM-HEA's current strategy, is ESD. This strand aims to assist the development of curricula and pedagogy that will provide students with the necessary skills and knowledge to live and work sustainably. Applications must be submitted by Monday 30 November, 2009. For more details, please see:

<http://www.adm.heacademy.ac.uk/news/subject-centre-news/applications-invited-for-adm-hea-project-funding>

EVENT REPORT

ALL OUR FUTURES 2

The second All Our Futures conference was hosted by the Centre for Sustainable Futures at Plymouth University in September. The title this year was 'All Our Futures 2: Getting real - investing in our future - by design'. This was a move away from the conventional academic conference to provide a site for the local and regional community – business leaders, policy-makers and community activists – to get together with academic researchers, teachers and learners to grapple with the challenges we face together.

The conference brought together an impressive array of world-class keynote speakers from the academy, policy-making, business leadership and design. It was an intense and exhilarating experience, giving the delegates (to judge from the very positive feedback received) an exciting and useful range of information, ideas and experiences to consider.

Planning is already underway for All Our Futures 3, to be held perhaps in early June 2010. The conference team welcome ideas and suggestions from readers. allourfutures@plymouth.ac.uk Tel: + 44(0)1752 588890

OTHER

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEARNING AND SUSTAINABILITY

by Professor Bill Scott, University of Bath

When talking about the relationship between learning and sustainability, I base it on the paragraph set out below. This captures, for me, the core role for learning as a collaborative and reflective process, the inter-generational dimension, the imperatives around social justice, and the idea of environmental limits. This may be a text that I use, but it's not, of course, really mine. It owes much (if not everything) to the past and continuing work of John Foster, Steven Gough and

Paul Vare, and to other colleagues at Bath and elsewhere.

The process that we call sustainable development makes no sense other than as a social learning process of improving the human condition that can be continued indefinitely without undermining itself. In this sense, sustainable development doesn't, instrumentally, depend on learning; rather it's inherently a learning process of making the emergent future ecologically sound and humanly habitable, as it emerges, through the continuous, responsive learning which is the human species' most characteristic endowment.

HAVING A UNIVERSITY IN TRANSITION

by Ben Brangwyn

1. How do you transition/relocalise a transient population?
2. How do you find the labour to transition a huge institution like a university?
3. How do you give students of, for example, international finance, something useful to learn?
4. How can you seed local populations with people who are familiar with the transition principles and can help kick off initiatives in those places?
5. How can you give meaningful work to students so they can be paid to offset their debts to the university?
6. How are universities going to attract students to courses during a period of great uncertainty when it won't be clear how many academic subjects will be relevant in a severely energy-constrained society?
7. How can the university embed itself into the local fabric of the community, adding to the collective resilience?

Join the conversation:

<http://transitiontowns.org/forum/topic/the-3-elements-of-transition-universities-education#post-2246>

HOW SUSTAINABLE IS YOUR MARKETING?

by Stefan Drew

Despite the embedding of sustainability within the curriculum do we truly practice what we preach across the spectrum of our activities? Take, for example, our marketing. The "Prospectus" seems to grow larger each year. In many cases, it is printed on recycled, chlorine-free paper, but whereas many of us worry about food miles, what about your "prospectus miles"?

Paper pulp or paper for recycling is transported to the paper mills; huge amounts of energy are applied to process the paper. It eventually arrives at a printer and the prospectus is printed and bound. The prospectus is then shipped to us and is subsequently taken to a marketing event or posted to a prospective student. The number of "prospectus miles" is high and it is difficult to argue that this is green or

sustainable by any measure.

Of course, it has always been done this way and, for some, that is reason enough to continue. Like many, I actually like to judge my course “by its cover” and there is a certain reassurance to be gained from the look, feel and smell of a prospectus – for yes, like food, we often buy our universities with all of our senses!

However, like it or not, we live in the Google Age. Most people search for information online and, if our marketing is to be sustainable, perhaps the time to reconsider our approach to traditional marketing is now.

At present we spend huge sums on the prospectus, print advertising, mail shots, etc. All these methods are costly, often ineffective, and have large carbon footprints. We can make huge strides in making our marketing sustainable with a little effort.

I would not argue for the demise of traditional marketing but rather for the integration of the traditional with the new. There are marketing methods that can be used to engage employers or students that are lower cost, less polluting and more effective. Sadly, however, much as marketing departments embrace Twitter and Facebook, few understand the full range of opportunities that exist.

Some FHE institutions, albeit too few in my opinion, have started down the sustainable marketing road. One Green Gown winner, Warwickshire College, recently made the decision not to print a prospectus: instead there will be an eight-page booklet and much reliance on an upgraded website. With so many information searches being online, this makes perfect sense – but sustainable marketing offers many more opportunities.

Promoting your offer to employers and young people via Google Maps, Satnav, e-newsletters (valued information letters not sales letters), and via business fora and networks are just a handful of the hundreds of examples of sustainable marketing that, unlike the expensive prospectus or printed advert, are free.

No one argues that these methods are carbon neutral but they do use fewer resources and, at a time when UK postal strikes threaten, mitigate against our marketing materials being “in the post”.

With so many people “Googling” for information, our greatest marketing asset has to be our website. However, few websites work as efficiently as they might and would benefit greatly from effective Search Engine Optimisation (SEO). SEO aims to get you up the search lists and found before your competitors and SEO companies charge a fortune for this service. One alternative is to use your IT department to improve your position on the search pages. Sadly, in my experience, IT people tend to see the challenge as being one of technology and

miss the point that websites are about people and their needs.

The answer is simple and less costly: with minimal tuition, it is possible to get your web pages on "Page One of Google" with nil expenditure in a matter of days, if you follow a few simple rules. This is made so much easier by the fact that most HEIs, and indeed businesses, make little attempt to master this basic process.

Likewise, few use the most effective advertising medium ever invented: Google Adwords. Whereas newspaper advertising is paid for up front, is very expensive and carries no guarantees of success, Adwords are only paid for when someone responds to them, costs pence and are highly effective when properly run.

There is an opportunity for all of us to practice sustainability in our marketing, save money, avoid the ramifications of postal strikes and better engage with both employer and prospective student. Sustainable marketing is worth considering.

College and Trainer Marketing Ltd
<http://www.StefanDrew.com>

MAJOR EVENTS IN THE SECTOR

Are We There Yet? Journeys of Student Engagement in Sustainability

Cheltenham

Tuesday 3 November 2009

This national forum to share good practice and explore opportunities for improving student engagement in sustainability within higher education is a collaboration between University of Gloucestershire and University of Bradford.

Venue: University of Gloucestershire, Francis Close Hall Campus.

For details, contact Seek Pang: 01242 715378 or spang@glos.ac.uk

Route Map for Sustainability and Responsibility in Higher Education Institutions

University of Westminster

11 November 2009

10.15-16.

For details of this interactive workshop, please e-mail Anja Mclean mcleana@westminster.ac.uk

Systemic Change in an Age of Stupid: Lessons from Switzerland

Cheltenham

Friday 4 December 2009

Rolf Jucker from the Swiss Foundation for Environmental Education will be speaking at this International Research in Sustainability (IRIS) seminar.

Venue: University of Gloucestershire, Fulwood House, Room FW015, Park Campus. Refreshments will be provided.

To RSVP, contact Seek Pang: spang@glos.ac.uk

Higher Education and the Sustainability Challenge

London

Thursday 10 December 2009

The HEFCE Consultation continued... For details, please see:

http://www.insidegovernment.co.uk/environment/sustainability_higher_education/

Sustainable Development in the Higher Education Classroom: Perspectives from Area Studies and Development Studies

Birmingham

Friday 19 March 2010

To date, there has often been comparatively limited knowledge exchange between the fields of Area Studies and Development Studies, but the global and interdisciplinary nature of both subjects would suggest that both ought to be primary sites for engaging with questions of environmental sustainability and climate change. The HE Academy's Languages, Linguistics, and Area Studies (LLAS) Subject Centre is pleased to host this event where the accent falls mainly, but not solely, on exploring examples of "classroom" practice of whatever form, embracing anything from traditional delivery patterns through to enquiry-based or IT based learning. Details: <http://www.llas.ac.uk/events/3282>

EAUC Conference: Engage, Change, Sustain – From Planning to Practice

Bangor University

22–24 March 2010

Details available soon. To discuss opportunities, please e-mail Sarah Lee: slee@eauc.org.uk

Integrating Education for Sustainability into Initial Teacher Training

Leeds

Wednesday 24 March 2010

ESD Briefing for teacher-trainers in Yorkshire & Humber Region

This event will take place at Government Office for Yorkshire & the Humber, Lateral, 8 City Walk, Leeds from 1.00 – 4.00 (lunch at 12.30).

It is organised by Government Office and the Yorkshire & Humber ESD Forum in conjunction with TDA (the Training and Development Agency for Schools) and the Yorkshire & Humber Sustainable Schools Partners' Network

The briefing is geared towards all people who train teachers – at HEIs, SCITS, as mentors in schools or through Graduate Training Programmes. The afternoon will include workshops and keynote speakers.

For further information contact Catherine Heinemeyer:

catherine.heinemeyer@barkmail.com

REMINDERS

UNDER THE SAME ROOF – AN INVITATION TO JOIN US IN THE SHED: SUSTAINABILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION DEVELOPERS NETWORK

As announced previously, the EAUC and the HE Academy ESD Project have joined forces in launching a new concept – the SHED network: 'Sustainability in Higher Education Developers'.

The SHED network has two constituent parts:

1. The former EAUC ESD mailing list, which is continuing as before, with Arran Stibbe as its convenor. This was renamed the SHED Share network. The purpose of this network is to share information, announcements, post queries and so on. Anybody can use this network, whether or not they are active in ESD.
2. A new grouping called the SHED Act network. The aim of SHED Act is to allow people to develop collaborative work more easily. SHED Act has an additional function to SHED Share, and is designed for active and key people in HE to keep in touch with each other.

Members of SHED Act can use each other, for example, as a sounding board for floating new ideas, to raise concerns, seek support for initiatives, develop responses to consultation documents, develop research proposals, or to form working groups. The EAUC and the Academy's ESD Project will also use SHED Act as a form of consultation with the sector. For example, how would SHED Act

advise both the EAUC and the Academy as to how best to develop new ways of leading, training and supporting your colleagues? All activities of SHED Act will be reported on the EAUC ESD (now SHED Share) e-mail list, as well as in the Academy's bi-monthly ESD e-Newsletter.

SHED Act is primarily open to staff who are working actively in the area of sustainability at UK higher and further education institutions, either directly in sustainability-related courses or in embedding sustainability across the curriculum. The moderators reserve the right to limit membership of SHED Act to new applicants who conform to these criteria, and to review the membership of existing participants who may no longer conform to the criteria, or are not participating actively in the group's activities. We also reserve the right to limit numbers in SHED Act at any one time to ensure that the network can function and does not become over large.

When you join SHED Act, you are committing yourself to putting time into working with others on the list, either by responding to or initiating actions.

The SHED sound good to you? Just enter your details at:

http://www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/projects/esd/shedact_f.htm

and the co-convenors, Heather Luna and Arran Stibbe will add you to the SHED Share list and review your application to SHED Act. See you inside!

ESD NETWORKS AND REGIONAL NETWORKING DAYS

Do you have experience of, or are considering, incorporating ESD into your higher education work – or incorporating higher education into your ESD work? Statutory agencies, local authorities, voluntary and community organisations, and those working within higher education are all invited to join one of the networking lists we have created to allow individuals and organisations to find one another for collaboration on community and curriculum projects. Your details, including expertise and interests, are collected, collated and then sent back to other members for networking purposes. An e-mail list allows for periodical updates and extraordinary requests for partnerships. Links to the forms are below. All responses on the forms are made available to all other respondents in that region/nation. You may choose whether or not to receive the e-mails with updates.

The ESD Networking Lists are different from the SHED Network (see above) for two reasons:

1. The ESD Networking Lists are regional. SHED is not.
2. SHED Act is for collaboration amongst all members. The ESD Networking Lists are primarily for people to find one another. Any work done subsequently is private and not reported to the other members.

The ESD Networking Lists:

In Scotland? http://www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/projects/esd/scotland_f.htm

In the South West? http://www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/projects/esd/southwest_f.htm

In Wales? http://www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/projects/esd/wales_f.htm

In the West Midlands? http://www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/projects/esd/westmidlands_f.htm

Let us know if you find these network lists helpful as we may offer more lists in other regions... Watch this space!

Meanwhile, if you would be interested in a networking day for your region, please contact us as we may be able to offer advice and resources. Details about previous networking days are available:

East Midlands: http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/events/detail/sustainable_development_in_east_midlands_2006

Scotland: http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/events/detail/sustainable_development_in_scotland_june07

South West: http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/events/detail/sustainable_development_in_southwest_mar07

Wales: http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/events/detail/21_May_2008_ESDGC_Welshevent_Millenniumcentre

CONTACT AND FEEDBACK

Let us know:

- if you find this e-Newsletter useful (or not!)
- if you have items for our next edition (Deadline: 15 December 2009, Publication: 15 January 2010).

Contact the editor, Heather Luna, at: sustainability@heacademy.ac.uk
<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/esd>