

Stepping Up in Sustainability 2011-12

City College Coventry case study



Title of project	Producing a Low Cost, High Value Video Guide to Learning for Sustainability	
Lead partner organisation name and address	City College Coventry 50 Swanswell Street Coventry CV1 5DG	
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1. Aims of the project	<p>If the Further Education sector in the United Kingdom is to play its full part in delivering the kind of far-reaching sustainability goals envisaged by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service in its “Sustaining Our Future” Framework, learning providers need to develop innovative forms of learning infrastructure that make best use of the new generation of learning systems and focus on the delivery of those higher order 21st Century skills that will help society become “low carbon ready”.</p> <p>Over the past three years and with LSIS support, the City College Coventry has sought to embed “learning for sustainability” into everything we do as a College. The aim of this project has been to produce a simple and easy-to-access “Video Guide to Sustainability Intelligence”, to help a mass audience of learners across the sector and beyond align their worldview, mindset, values and actions with the goals and operating principles of a low carbon society and with the wider strategic objectives of sustainability.</p> <p><i>“We have adopted the term “Sustainability Intelligence” to refer to the aggregation of knowledge, skills and values that is required – amongst individuals and organisations – to meet the complex challenges of a “hot, flat and overcrowded” world in crisis, and to navigate a path to a different kind of world, a different kind of society and a different kind of economy, in ways that are as humane and fair as possible to as many as possible”.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Roger Talbot, External Sustainability Advisor to the College.</p> <p>The Video Guide takes the form of a series of short, informative, inspirational and instructional videos that draw freely and widely upon the views, experience and wisdom of a rich, interdisciplinary “cast” of influential and authoritative researchers, teachers, thinkers and practitioners, current and past. Collectively the series seeks to develop an understanding of key concepts underpinning the idea of Sustainability Intelligence and to integrate these into a compelling case for a new kind of “social” learning, relevant and appropriate to the grand challenges of the 21st Century.</p>	

2. Situation: Identify the situation or issue that faced you

In 2009 City College set out on a new path which anticipated the key themes proposed in LSIS's sector-wide "Sustaining Our Future" Framework – leadership, learning, organisational capacity and partnership – specifically placing our focus on the importance of learning for sustainability and the acquisition of 21st Century skills.

"City College shares a vision of a FE sector which is in the lead in equipping society – all of society - with the higher order skills needed to meet the challenges of sustainability." Carrie Smith, Vice Principal

At the start of the project, the College was aiming to push the boundaries of the Framework by seeking to embed opportunities to learn for sustainability not simply across all curriculum areas – and indeed as a cross-curriculum issue - but within all College activities which make up the whole learner experience. These include specifically the College's own internal sustainability and "low carbon ready" programmes and its engagement with employers and the wider community.

By 2011, the College was in a position where we felt able to share our ideas as openly as possible with the sector - and beyond - to help build a common understanding of what sustainable development is about in practice as well as in theory and establish a common set of themes for collective and inclusive action.

In the course of our "Planning for a Low Carbon Future" programme, the College's thinking about "learning for sustainability" had taken us down the road of exploring new kinds of learning – principally what is coming to be known as social learning – which challenge existing conventions and orthodoxies and focuses increasingly upon the learning that takes place outside and beyond the classroom and even outside of formal learning structures altogether.

We began to realise that, in shaping a new "learning for sustainability" landscape, we did not need to reinvent the wheel but that a hugely powerful set of tools and technologies was already in the process of development - social media. With the help and advice of Roger Talbot Associates and financial support from LSIS, the College initiated a complementary programme we called "Social Media in Further Education: 21st Century Tools to develop 21st Century Skills".

The aim was to achieve a better understanding of how social media tools and technologies could be harnessed to help develop some of the necessary skills – those of connecting, creating and collaborating – not just amongst an elite few in specialist training or occupation but across a generation.

We were able to use the experience gained in our "21st Century Tools for Delivering 21st Century Learning" project to assess the best means of sharing our ideas and disseminating our findings.

Whilst our findings and outputs to date were - and remain - freely accessible to the sector via our Interactive Online Guide we felt that developing a library of video shorts would complement the existing guide

	<p>and push the boundaries of learning for sustainability to the benefit of the sector as a whole.</p>
<p>3. Task: Define the outcomes you needed to achieve</p>	<p>We wanted each video in the series to be dedicated to a vital aspect of learning for sustainability - which we hold to be a core mission of further education – and contain new exemplars of how the learning potential inherent in key College activities can be maximised through a focus on social learning.</p> <p>We believed that well presented short and popular videos of the kind we propose, and produced in the way we propose, would have the inherent advantages of being attractive to a very wide audience, flexible, student-centred, easily accessible and information rich.</p> <p>The videos should provide a valuable resource that could be used to enhance student and staff induction programmes and ensure that sustainability features prominently and memorably in such courses.</p> <p>The videos should form a central part of training programmes designed to equip learners to low carbon economic development (what we at City College define as “low carbon ready”)</p> <p>Sections of the proposed videos – intended to form an integral part of personal and group development programmes for both students and staff - could include instruction on the responsible use of energy and resources.</p> <p>The videos should form an integral part of sustainability-focused Continuing Professional Development programmes for staff and a shared point of reference for discussion and debate.</p> <p>Beyond the use of our existing online guide to social media, we propose to make free and full use of video-streaming services such as YouTube to promote the video library and communicate with as wide an audience as possible both within and out-with the FE sector.</p>
<p>4. Actions that you took in order to achieve your plan, and your approach</p>	<p>An important first step was to appoint Jodie Young who is Programme Area Manager for Tutorial and Enrichment Curriculum and who has played a leading role in the delivery of the recently completed Social Media in FE project. Dr Roger Talbot of sustainability consultants Roger Talbot Associates Limited, who is a close friend and partner of the College and who has worked intimately with College staff and students on both the Planning for a Low Carbon Future and Social Media programmes was engaged to provide the all-important link with the previous projects.</p> <p>In the very early days of the project, Roger prepared a “scope of work” under the following headings typically associated with professional video production: Pre-production, Production, Post-Production, Preview, Release. This scope of work was developed into a carefully formulated project plan which guided the actions of all participants throughout the five-month duration project.</p> <p>It was then the responsibility of Iain Bruce, Course Director in Media Studies at the College, and his team, to turn the storyboard into scripts and prepare a production and editing schedule for the whole of the series that</p>

	<p>took account of student workloads and the delivery date for new equipment.</p>
<p>5. Results that you obtained</p>	<p>The most tangible outcome of the project has been the production of the library of short videos, constituting a Guide to Sustainability Intelligence. These will be freely available to the whole sector and beyond via YouTube or equivalent media. Collectively the series seeks to develop an understanding of key concepts underpinning the idea of <i>Sustainability Intelligence</i> and to integrate these into a compelling case for a new kind of “social” learning, relevant and appropriate to the grand challenges of the 21st Century.</p> <p>The full impact of the Video Guide of the long time remains to be seen but the expectation is that they will prove of real value to individual learning providers (not limited to the FE sector), to the sector as a whole by the reinforcement and enhancement of the “Sustaining Our Future” Framework, and for the wider community.</p>
<p>6. What made the project a success? What were the key ingredients?</p>	<p>We believe a key ingredient of the success of the project was our capacity to set out a clear set of objectives from the very beginning, building upon the success of previous LSIS funded projects.</p> <p>Continuity with previous projects was an important component and this was provided by the committed and enthusiastic involvement of Vice Principal Carrie Smith, Project Manager Jodie Young and Director Estates Jim Edwards who heads the College’s Sustainability Group.</p> <p>A very good working relationship - and trust – has been established between the College and our external partner Roger Talbot – a situation which further helps to minimise/eliminate any potential tensions at that level which might have posed risks to the project.</p> <p>Media Studies lecturer Iain Bruce immediately saw the potential of the project for involving students in the making and editing of the videos and provided the authority, expertise and enthusiasm necessary to turn the conceptual framework and storyboard developed by Roger Talbot into a practical programme of video making.</p> <p>It was Iain’s input in particular that ensured that the best and most appropriate use was made of the College’s excellent facilities in this area and provided the organisation and coordination of student efforts, without which the project could not have been completed.</p>
<p>7. Any resources or tools produced by the project</p>	<p>The principal resource that has been produced by the project is the Video Guide itself. The Guide will provide a valuable resource that can be used to enhance student and staff induction programmes and ensure that sustainability features prominently and memorably in such courses. They will directly feed into the current City College the student and staff Induction Courses specifically developed as part of the College’s Planning for a Low Carbon Future programme.</p> <p>The Video Guide resource added extra value to the College’s pre-existing interactive online facility – the Guide to 21st Century Tools for Delivering 21st Century Skills that we call “Connect Create Collaborate”. The</p>

videos can be viewed on You Tube here:

Episode 1: Earth System

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bIZ6wZXzodk>

Episode 2: Sustainable Economy

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dd_TuEf7b94

Episode 3: An Uncertain Future

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sk8KS8VoCss>

Episode 4: Sustainable Learning

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yxm6IZbtvIE>

This was a primary outcome delivered by the LSIS-SUS supported Social Media Project undertaken by the College in association with Roger Talbot Associates, between November 2011 and March 2011.

Connect | Create | Collaborate has in-built blogging service we call Share which allows us to provide instant dissemination of our findings across the sector and beyond, mount sample videos and elicit feedback and what we call give-back from all parts of the network.

A key outcome of the first stage of the project was the preparation of a Project Concept Document, entitled “A Video Guide To Sustainability Intelligence: Meeting 21st Century Challenges with 21st Century Learning”.

This core document was the result of intensive research during the first stage of the project carried out by Dr Roger Talbot on behalf of the team. The research enabled us to pull together a large database of key contemporary resources, on the basis of which the original conceptualisation of the video series could be further developed and enhanced.

A second key outcome was the preparation by Roger Talbot of a further project document called “The Making of the Video Guide to Sustainability Intelligence”. This document, as the name implies, focuses upon the technical process of video production and sets out the “production values” to be adopted by the team in producing the Video Guide.

8. Total costs of the project	LSIS funding	Match funding	Total funding
	£5000	£5000	£10000

	<p>Funded by LSIS through the Stepping Up in Sustainability Fund</p>	
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