

University of Leicester

Courses

Sustainable Futures Modules

Section 1 About the project

Summary

The Sustainable Futures Course is an innovative approach to teaching sustainability to 'hard' scientists consisting of four 5-credit modules, each of which contains four 2-hour workshops. The course is a modern, multidisciplinary approach to the subject of sustainability and sustainable development offered to conventional scientists.

The modules introduce many of the different facets of sustainability and allow access to both external and internal speakers helping to put their knowledge in the context of real life situations. The materials for the course (both preparatory and workshop) are being made available as an open educational resource, enabling anyone to take part and broaden their knowledge of the dynamic, multifaceted subject of sustainability.

Section 2 The results

The problem

A need for cross-disciplinary education about sustainability and sustainable development.

The approach

The creation of 16 stand-alone units (including online lecture, pre-session reading and workshops) on wide range of issues pertaining to the complex issue of sustainability.

Our goals

To create adaptable teaching resources for use throughout our university and other institutions.

Obstacles and solutions

The generation of informed student discussion in workshops	Workshop leaders created a 30 minute online introductory presentation and guided pre-session reading list
Coverage of a wide range of subject areas	Recruitment of external experts from industry, NGOs, consultancies and other HEIs
Provision of formative assessment	Multiple-choice online questions and answers for each unit



Profile

- HEI
- 23,000 students (includes full and part time students)
- 3500 staff
- Urban



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Performance and results

- 100% of the students agreed that the course improved their knowledge and understanding of sustainability.
- 94% felt the course prompted them to consider different viewpoints.
- 94% indicated that the course taught them the importance of Education for Sustainable Development.
- 78% thought that they had developed useful skills throughout the course, which would be valued by future employers and suitable for a range of careers.
- 61% felt empowered and that they could make a difference after taking the course.
- 89% liked the diversity of viewpoints presented through the workshops.
- 94% of those completing the course agreed that it has made them want to actively increase their knowledge of sustainable development.

Section 3 The future

Lessons learned

On the whole the students have been very positive about the Sustainable Futures modules and we feel fortunate to have so many experts involved from many different backgrounds, representing a diverse range of viewpoints. One of the most important points to come out of the feedback is that students would like to see more teaching on sustainability and sustainable development embedded into the curriculum. The majority (67%) of the students felt that a cross-disciplinary course taught by a range of experts was the most effective way of doing this.

Sharing your project

Our units will be available as Open Educational Resources in March 2013 at:
www2.le.ac.uk/departments/interdisciplinary-science/sustainability

What has it meant to your institution to be a Green Gown Award finalist?

Being named a Green Gown Award finalist was a fantastic way to gain some recognition for all of the hard work that has been put into developing and delivering the modules by both internal and external workshop leaders and staff, which will help to make sustainability education available to all.

Further information

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