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minds and policy

19 - 20
June 2019

University of Manchester



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Initial steps in Education for the SDGs in taught Higher Education programmes: *diverse contexts and shared challenges*

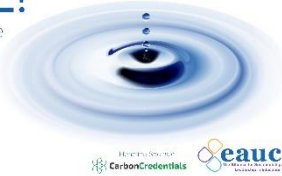
Dr Andrew Reeves, De Montfort University, Leicester
Influence! Conference, 20th June 2019

You have the top-level support...

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“We will equip students and staff with an understanding of **the challenges of sustainability and sustainable development**, and will approach learning, teaching and assessment mindful of the **opportunities to contribute locally and globally** to the public good and environmental futures as well as of our impact on a resource-limited world.”

DMU University Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy, 2018

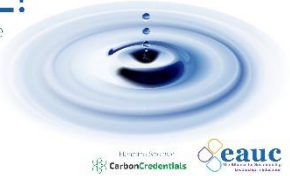
A new challenge for staff: Embed this!

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The Project: Embedding SDGs in Taught Programmes

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- Six Programmes
- Aims for each Programme
 - Identify current contributions
 - Develop future ideas
- Strategic Aim
 - Pilot support offer and resources
- Resource
 - DMU Academic Innovation Project through Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Forum
 - c. 10 hours per programme
 - 15 days staff time funded in total

Health
(undergrad)

Design
(masters)

Engineering
(undergrad)

Academic
Skills (staff)

Law
(undergrad)

English
(summer
school)

Two key challenges

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Lost in the Fog: What does embedding the SDGs tangibly mean?



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Lost in work: Busy students and staff struggling to find time to take part

Plans Change

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- Plan A: The original design
 - Launch events: enlist staff, students, alumni from 6 programmes
 - Hold co-creation meetings, working with thinking tools
- Plan B: The emergent design
 - Working mostly with staff from 5 programmes and 1 school
 - Develop web page with ESD resources: <https://esdg.our.dmu.ac.uk>
 - Drop in to lectures: 10 minute Kahoot survey on current engagement
 - Follow up with Focus group and/or survey
 - Meet staff to identify next steps and develop initial activities

Starting Point: Current Engagement

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- Aims
 - Awareness of SDGs
 - Understanding of SD
 - Perceived relevance to course

| Programme | Engineering | Law | Health | Design | TOTAL |
|----------------|--------------------|-----|---------------------|--------|-------|
| No Sessions | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 8 |
| No. Responses | 44 | 48 | 131 | 3 | 226 |
| Level of Study | 5 (n=44) & 3 (n=4) | 5 | 5 (n=35) & 4 (n=96) | 7 | |

Awareness of SDGs?

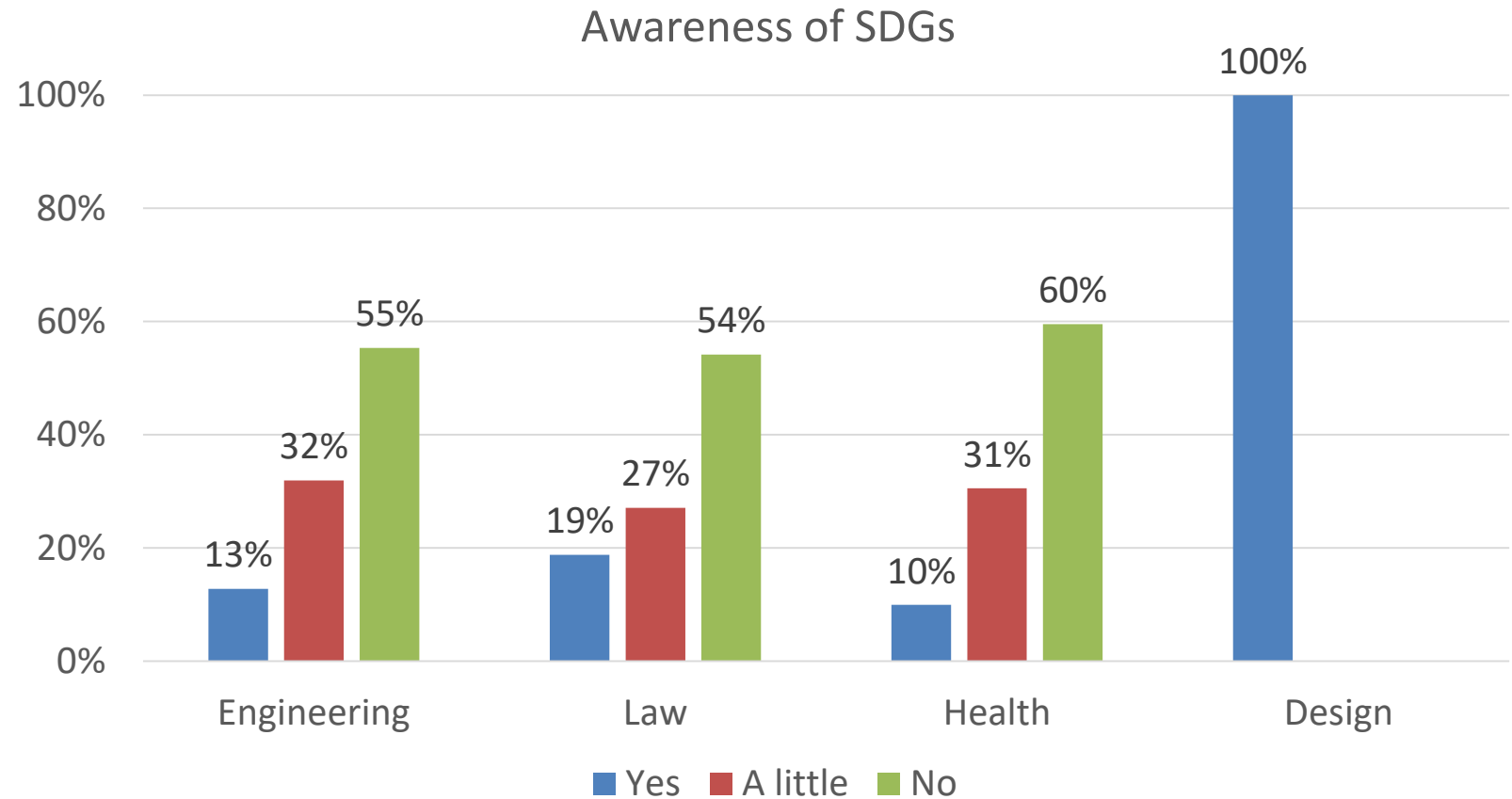
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- Low, unless taught in course



Perceived relevance?

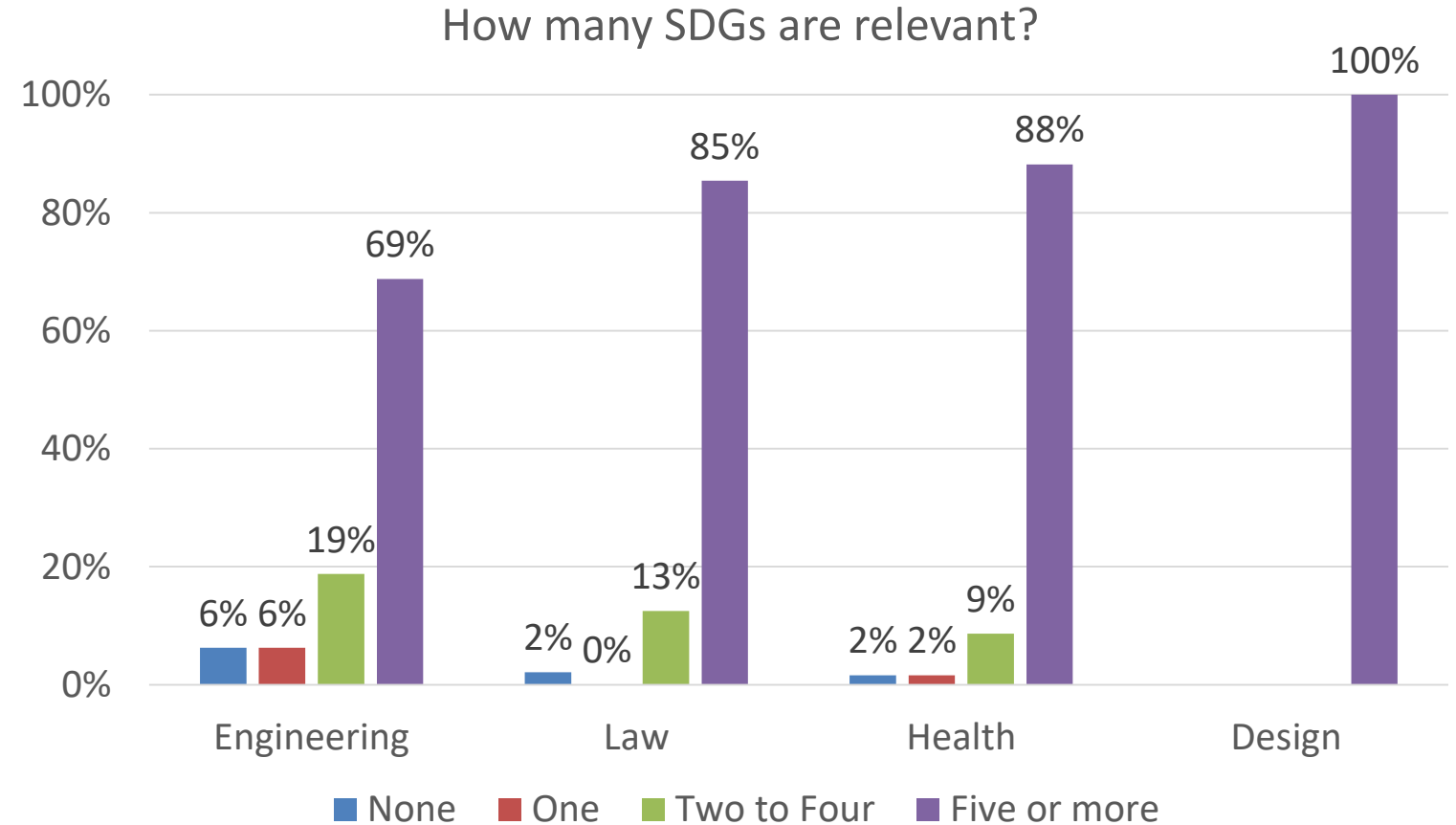
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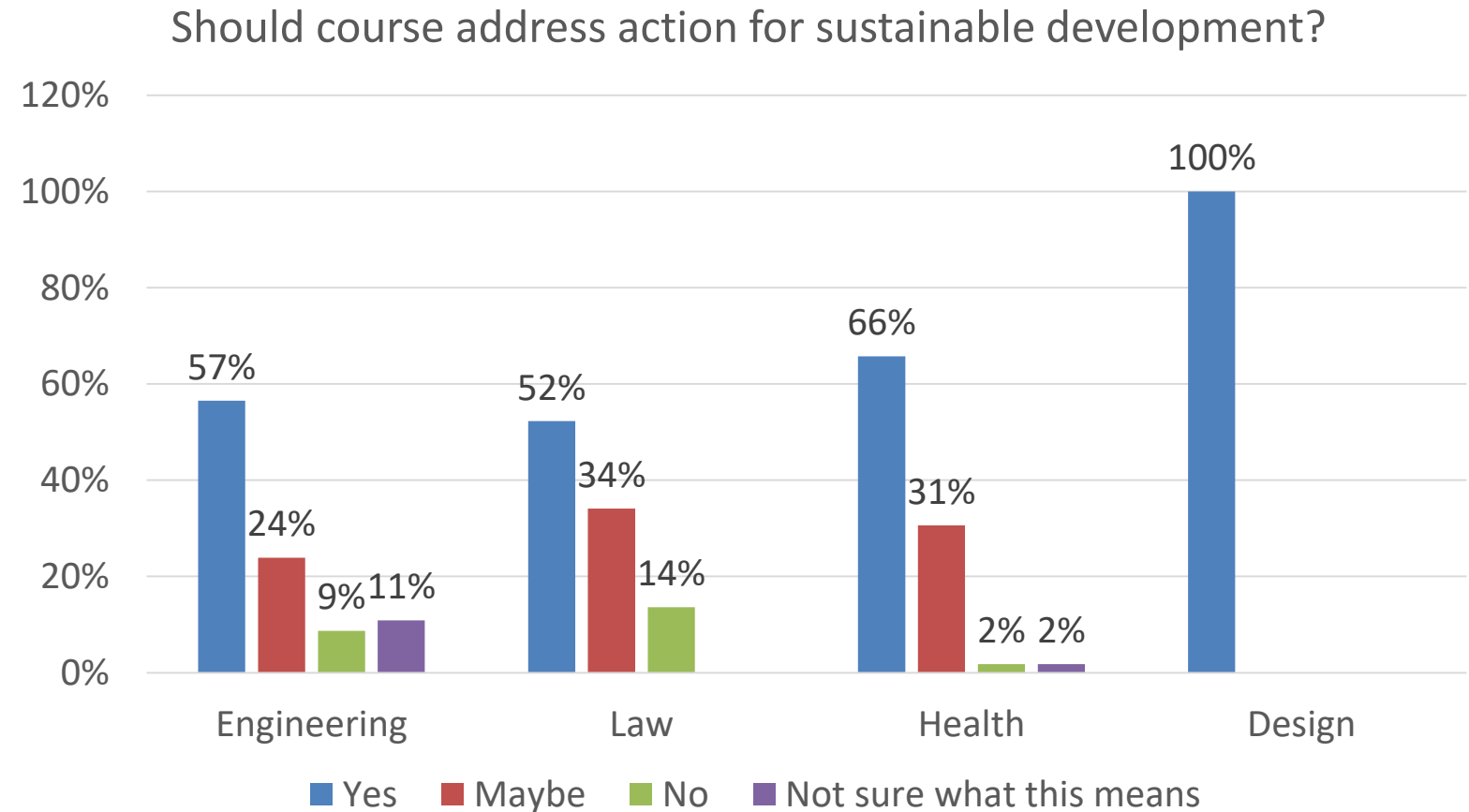


- In most cases, 5+ of the SDGs



Embedding?

- Typically
 - Over half in favour
 - Quarter to third unsure
 - Some say no



Initial meetings: challenges to engagement

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- More clarity needed!

Health (undergrad)

- Relevance of SDGs

Design (masters)

- Heavy use of water, chemicals and energy in practical work

Engineering (undergrad)

- Abstract language

Academic Skills (staff)

- Need for clear recommendations

Law (undergrad)

- Students seeking 'easy' answers

English (summer school)

- Accessible resources (High quality audio; text at appropriate language level; Copyright!)

Out of the Fog – mapping engagement now

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- Piloted a thinking tool to frame conversation:
 - “Ten Steps towards Education for the SDGs”
 - Ten potential actions rated (0 not done; 1 partially; 2 strongly)
 - Leads to identification of good practice and enhancements

COMPETENCIES

KNOWLEDGE

TRANSFORMATION

DIRECT IMPACTS

| Step | Action |
|------|---|
| 1 | Students develop critical thinking skills |
| 2 | Development of interpersonal working skills |
| 3 | Key concepts of sustainable development are introduced |
| 4 | SDGs addressed via topics covered, either implicitly or explicitly |
| 5 | Key course concepts are put in a wider social or historical context |
| 6 | Ethics and values are linked to the activities taught in the course |
| 7 | Minimising resource use and negative social or environmental impacts |
| 8 | Students learn via engaging with real-world sustainability challenges |
| 9 | Inspiration- students encounter inspiring examples of how their discipline can address sustainability |
| 10 | SDGs or sustainable development in course learning outcomes |

Learning from the tool

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- Highlights strengths and weaknesses
 - For 6 programmes:
 - strength at competencies, weakness on SDG related content
 - Demonstrates ESD is more than including SDGs in curriculum
 - Can compare staff and student views
- An accessible starting point
 - Helpful to put more familiar concepts first (e.g. critical thinking)

Tools still in the toolbox

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- Key challenge: time to engage
- Self-assessment: SDGs in a course
 - Consider SD as a whole; SD themes; SDG targets
 - Consider learning outcomes; assessment; activities and resources
 - SWOT analysis and planning
- Self-assessment: Competencies
- A3 Canvas to cover SDGs; Competencies and more

Sustainability Competencies: Thinking Tool

“Competencies in Sustainability” complement the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a core way of thinking how a taught course can contribute to Sustainable Development. They enable a focus on how course participants develop the competencies that can play a key role in action for sustainable development. They are also useful as a trigger for reflection for teaching staff regarding their own competences in relation to sustainability.

For a short overview of the competencies concept, see [Redman \(2018\)](#) (2-page summary) [Wiek \(2016\)](#) (6-page summary), or for a lengthier rationale and discussion, see [Wiek et al. \(2011\)](#).



Q1: How are Sustainability Competencies currently embedded in the course?

Consider strengths and weaknesses linked to: *Intended Learning Outcomes; Course Materials; Learning Activities; Assessment.*

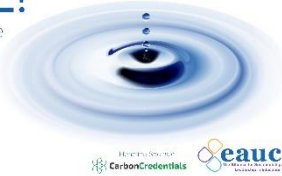
| | |
|---|--|
| OVERALL <i>i.e. developing competencies to act on sustainable development in the context of the subject discipline</i> | |
| Systems Thinking | |
| Futures Thinking | |

Success: Health Programmes

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- Initial engagement with head of school
 - Callout for staff volunteers: three programme leaders
- Engagement approaches
 - Staff meetings
 - Identified good practice (pedagogy) and opportunities (links to SD and SDG targets)
 - Drop-in class sessions
 - Follow up focus group and survey
 - Students highlight frustration at waste
- Talk and survey at school teaching meeting
 - Follow-up mentoring meetings with module leaders
 - Signposted resources; advised on embedding in learning outcomes

Success: Generating Case Studies

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- Make it quick and easy!
 - Using a template with questions
 - Research assistant edits and puts online
- Participants
 - Participating programmes
 - ESD Forum members
- Posted on
<https://esdg.our.dmu.ac.uk>

Case Study: Using engineering designs to solve SDG related issues in communities (Dr Leticia Ozawa-Meida and Dr Kegong Diao)



This 2nd year module uses the Engineering without Borders (EwB) challenge for groups of students to create design solutions for

Case Study: Using the SDGs to Research ICT Issues within Developing Countries (Dr Kutoma Wakunuma)



Dr Kutoma Wakunuma created this new module to contribute towards DMU's goals surrounding Social Good. It allows students to research the ICT issues of a chosen country, in the context of the UN's Sustainable

Our Next Steps

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- Resources
 - Edit 'Ten Steps' to align with ESD strategy learning outcomes
 - Knowledge – Competencies – Taking Action – Transformative Learning
 - Showcase events: June 27 and July 11 (webcast option)
- Support
 - Mentoring meetings in ESD strategy
 - With ESD lead and faculty champions

Summary

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- Course leaders taking initial steps benefit from:
 - Accessible resources – what does Education for the SDGs mean?
 - Mentoring support – signposting, sounding board, key concepts
 - Students' views
- What has worked well
 - Drop-in smartphone surveys in class
 - Generating case studies
- Try out our resources
 - <https://esdg.our.dmu.ac.uk> or areeves@dmu.ac.uk

The SDG Accord

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End extreme poverty, inequality and climate change
www.sdgaccord.org

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