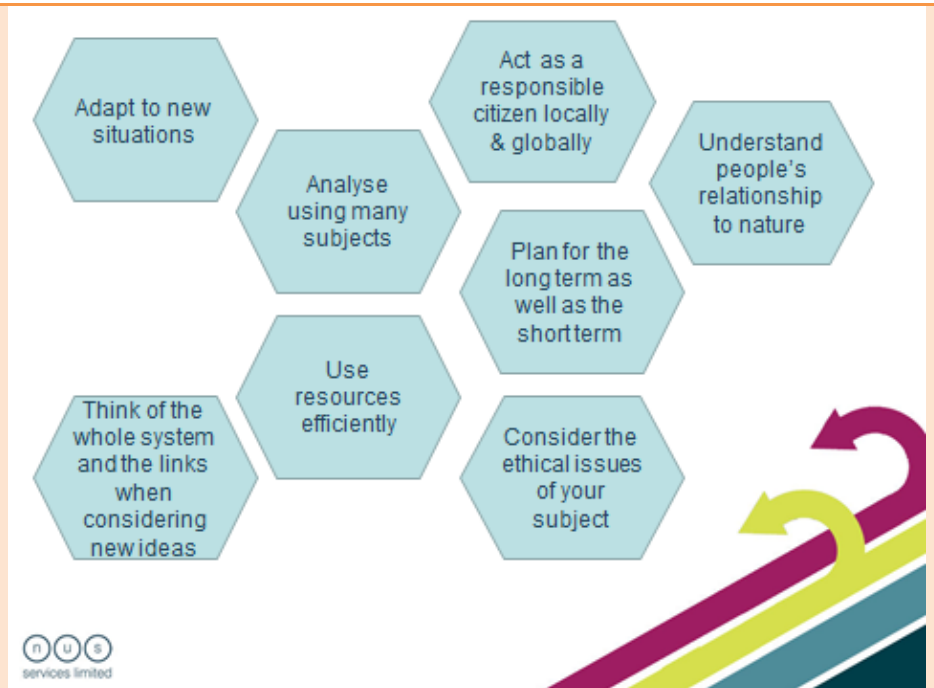


Stepping Up in Sustainability 2012-13

Easton and Otley College Case Study



Title of project	Employability and Sustainability	
Lead partner organisation name and address	Easton and Otley College Otley College Otley IPSWICH Suffolk IP6 9EY	
Contact details (lead organisation)	Name: Neil Ridley Email: neil.ridley@eastonotley.ac.uk	Phone: 01473 784165
1. Aims of the project	The aim of the project was to create a definition for sustainability in linking to employability. The fundamental thrust is to link curriculum with employers around the issue of sustainability. Using pedagogy that provided incentives through competition in Greenpower and Young enterprise and reflections through group tutorials, and use of video case study. Develop long-term relationships and close working with employers.	
2. Situation: Identify the situation or issue that faced you	Colleges are like any organisation, they are systems with specialist roles for finance, HR and more. There is no longer the general manager, with the CEO (Principal) probably the only person with an overall view of the organisation. In this working world we are faced with problems that are described as 'wicked problems' derived out of the concept of complexity. These Wicked problems are where we cannot agree on either the problem definition or the solution. Part of this problem is grounded in the concept of Sustainability. There are many definitions of sustainability and here in lies the problem. We believe that the rising generation needs sustainability skills in their education for the jobs in a low carbon future. We are not bound by process of waste disposal, energy usage, climate change - the usual suspects in the band of sustainable development. We want to educate students in key areas identified by the National Union of Students.	



Slide from Homerton conference November 2013

- **Why did you implement this project?**

Sustainability is a much abused concept; however it is well known that the top businesses around the globe take sustainability very seriously. The challenge in the FE curriculum is to persuade teachers to embed sustainability in their teaching. This is not mission critical now that Ofsted have dropped their reporting on sustainability. This does not mean that sustainability is less important for success in Ofsted or for the rising generation. We implemented this project as a multiple task project of small bite-sized actions to help teachers embed sustainability in their work and improve learning outcomes.

- **What was going on that you wanted to change or improve?**

Easton and Otley College undertook a type A merger in July 2012. We identified the need to build on sustainability work at the college and develop improved learning outcomes for sustainability in the curriculum and meet the changes coming along in response to the Wolf report and understand the latest changes in the form of programmes of study.

- **What were the opportunities that presented themselves?**

The opportunity that most seek on entry to a college is a job afterwards. There is a desire to help students become more employable or in new parlance employability skills. There is conflict when the subject is raised the question of defining employability often pits employers against academics where each 'still talks past each other and there are endless debates about appropriate

language'. Given the desire to work on employability then linking sustainability into this new thinking appears to have the proverbial win win solution, as finding time in the busy curriculum is the challenge faced by managers to include more on sustainability.

- **What motivated you?**

We wanted to build on our work with partners and a previous LSIS SuS project. Projects such as this enhance community working and inform college strategy. There is also a desire in some of the team at Easton and Otley to champion sustainability, which is a thing that not everyone takes to. Students are, and do, buy-in to the concept and they want the tools to be able to learn more about it. The debate needs to engender more dialogue and not fall too readily on emotive issues of saving the planet, climate change and waste. People need to be able to see how they can become part of what appears to be a large problem that, as an individual it is beyond them. In essence the project sought to try and resolve the disconnects between what colleges do and what employers think they do or what employers want them to do, in respect of sustainability.

We wanted to explore the use of video as we are constantly told that learning styles are an integral part of our learning and it would appear that there is linkage between video and active learning. However teachers need time and much support to enable this. IS VARK the future of education in Britain or more of guidance to managing learning?

- **Why did you see a need or opportunity for action?**

The student population are interested in sustainability issues and often challenge the college management about the sustainability issues in college. Too often sustainability as a management issue resides with the estates department and not with curriculum and we are no different in this matter. The secret is to have sustainability as a point of reporting to Governors and to be in the strategic policy of the college. The college operates in education for agriculture and Horticulture where there are jobs for all who qualify with 97% going onto work from the college, but these courses are not promoted by schools as schools do have an interest in careers in the way that FE does.

3. Task: Define the outcomes you needed to achieve

The goal of the project was to raise the level of sustainability skills in the student body through making available materials on teacher training course, moodle, video case study methodology, and undertaking a series of lunchtime and group tutorials to enable wider learning.

	<p>We wished to achieve the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wider knowledge of sustainability and its importance in the curriculum • A series of tested learning materials on sustainability • The use of video as a demonstration of the new pedagogy which is to guide from the side • Demonstrate ways in which colleges can implement sustainability learning in the tight curriculum demands of FE in 2013 • Enable students to have greater understanding of how employability skills and sustainability functions in the workplace • Enhanced partnership working with specialists in the field • Linking sustainability to leadership and Governance at College • Understand the developments of sustainability which are now being subsumed into Corporate Social Responsibility and often appear as community working for business
<p>4. Actions that you took in order to achieve your plan, and your approach</p>	<p>This project started in September 2012 and finished in March 2013. The first action was the creation of an action plan and delegation of activities for the project supported by Heather Barrett – Mold our critical friend.</p> <p>September Team Neil Ridley (project manager), Denis McAuley (Head of teacher training), Lucy Faller- Meade (teacher training tutor Video), Tegan Locke (Teacher training tutor), Martyn Davy (Director Land-based), Simon Burnham- Slipper (Lecturer in Conservation), Tom Brown (Programme area leader Arboriculture), Sarah Partridge (Orchard Barn), Ali Wells (Tutor young enterprise), Sarah Wright (Tutor Young enterprise) Les Holden (tutor Engineering), John Negus (Head of estates) and Andrew Ellams (Director of marketing and enterprise – interim) and Tom Cheek (tutor WBL sports), Jamie French (ICT technician)</p> <p>Tom Cheek a work based learning tutor wanted to see how flip cameras and iPads could help his work. The project enabled him to acquire these tools and Tom working in sports agreed to undertake video evidence of employability and sustainability as part of his assessment work as it is in the modules he delivers. He felt that the video evidence would be an excellent reflective teaching tool. The iPad would enable external activity to occur, while we are undertaking new ICT infra-structure developments.</p> <p>Tom Cheek investigates the use of iPad and links to moodle and use for video and learning in work place. There are incompatibilities with iPad and moodle. However Tom will pursue use of video in his work.</p>

October we set a group of 19 students going on the young enterprise competition developing a business in sustainable dog agility equipment. This involved Ali Wells the tutor and Neil Ridley as Business advisor and mentor to the group working with them on all aspects of the business and understanding sustainability every Monday morning until Easter.

We set up a group of Countryside students to work with Orchard Barn with a practical session organised.

The first teacher training session occurred.

The lunchtime sessions were offered out to students and were not received well due to timetabling changes and extended lunchtime meaning a critical mass of students did not occur. Next year we will offer sustainability at the college as a drop in desk for information as opposed to more formal offer.

Tom Brown Programme area leader for arboriculture is engaged to produce a lesson that incorporates use of flip cameras. He will also produce a proposal for reinvigoration of the college arboretum with a sustainability plan.

November

The practical session at Orchard Barn was undertaken, with video created. The video on a flip camera did not work out as the range was too great for the microphone, however some footage was usable.

The first sessions of group tutorial activity started with 45 minute sessions on sustainability. These sessions were provided to 10 groups of students in animal care, equine and horticulture. The students found the sessions interesting but feedback suggested a less academic approach from PowerPoint, you tube clips and some inter active exercises was required. It was decided that the format would change into a session delivered by the estate department saying what the college is doing about sustainability, waste and energy.

December

The Young enterprise group undertook a market stall session at BT astral park, making 6 sales of their product, which most commendable had the impact of enabling them to believe more in the product. The students are from different background to the market serving high sustainability local products which are a different world. 'Seeing is believing'.

The second sustainability session delivered to trainee teachers with a further session also on use of flip camera use in teaching. It was suggested that an outcome of the work was to shoot some footage on sustainability in the college grounds and how you would sell it to someone who does not know the college. They were also set the task of describing how they embed sustainability in their teaching at present in a question and answer session.

Tom Brown delivered a session on sustainability with use of flip cameras to his group of students. Tom Brown completed the project proposal for sustainable arboretum at Otley.

January

The group tutorial session to 9 groups in the new format delivered. These sessions were more easily digested, but these sessions were more “talk-at” than “interactive” learning and suffered as a consequence. It is difficult to get professionals to teach, the best to hope for is a short talk and a question and answer session, which is only going to work effectively at Level 3. Group tutorials next year are subject to the way in which the 600 hour session is cut and diced for the offer to students. Sustainability is complex and would be best delivered in a split session with some teacher introduction, and input from estates. This would improve communication about college sustainability credentials which are not held in high esteem by college students.

The final teacher training session was delivered.

The green power group of engineering students with their tutor Les Holden started work on their car design and schedule of activity with video being included in how they undertake the work. This work carries on until July and will be continued into next academic year.

February

Young enterprise group go to Orchard Barn to learn more about sustainability and link their project to social enterprise business. Agree a joint marketing approach for college big day out on 11th May 2013 and Suffolk Show. They produce dog agility equipment from wood at Orchard Barn.

March

The young Enterprise group attend county final on 18th March winning the shield for the best sustainability business, the green power students continue in their quest for a low energy consumption racing car with the purchase of a second hand machine through e bay. Tom

Cheek produces three videos and a dissemination workshop is held on 13th March 2013.

We evaluated our work through oral feedback discussion with staff and students involved, which continued to inform our activity. What areas of excellence can be seen within the organisation? How to disseminate this effectively? Why is there no time for development now?

What we have determined in this project is the need for communication is paramount in sustainability. Colleges operate like many organisations in discrete areas of endeavour. Sustainability is not discrete it is cross cutting. The doubling of the size in college, with two campuses split geographically by 46 miles means a radical approach to communication with ICT necessarily fundamental.

There is a new sustainability policy being developed we have worked with Esin Esat from Bedford on this through LSIS and the pilot Champions instigated in a previous project will be brought in as part of the implementation of the strategy.

5. Results that you obtained

1. We created a **sustainability page on Moodle** for staff and students to obtain information.
2. We did a series of group tutorials on sustainability to 19 groups of students at a range of levels and courses. Some courses did not feel the need to undertake the offer. The feedback was positive in respect of the learning for the period. However if further analysis is undertaken then students and staff are ill-equipped for sustainability, too often reducing the area to waste disposal. It was after a few sessions that we included a presentation for the estates department on college waste, energy and sustainability, to meet the need on waste. **From this work we will spend time developing a piece of training on systems thinking and systems approach. This is too in depth for a tutorial session.**
3. We did a series of activities with Orchard Barn www.orchardbarn.org.uk a community interest company which champions sustainability. The **group of students were 14 L3 C&G Countryside Management**. This work was with a group undertaking a practical workshop on dead wood screen.

“In particular, the ratings for ‘Were the learning Outcomes achieved’ had the highest proportion of Very Good's which is pleasing and was the core point of what we were seeking to achieve.” Ian Burnett organiser of event at Orchard Barn wrote in feedback.



Group at Orchard Barn on 15th November 2012

4. A group of **L2 Extended Certificate students entered the Young enterprise** award and for their business produced dog agility equipment decided to market the equipment as sustainable and locally sourced with Orchard Barn lending great support. This activity is not normally available to students but the project funding from LSIS enabled this with £650 needed for entry and attendance at the awards. This is how Orchard barn presented the work in the e-letter: -

*“Perhaps you enjoy walking in nature with your dog? Would your dog benefit from agility training? If so, we may have got a unique and sustainable answer for you and your canine. OBe are working in partnership with Otley and Easton College to mentor a group of Animal Care students. In order to enter a Young Enterprise competition, and in an attempt to demonstrate that there are alternatives to plastic dog jumps, students are using reclaimed pallets, coppiced hazel and lengths of chunky apple prunings to bring you **Sustainable Dog Jumps**. At Orchard Barn we are teaching them green wood working skills to enable them to give our chunky apple and hazel prunings a new life as lightweight mallets (to hammer hazel weave poles in the ground). During their visit to local woods they learnt how to assess and clean up hazel rods which they had to carry out of the*

woods through deep mud – deep green human transportation - all good fun and great exercise. I can put you in touch with the students if you'd like to commission a set of sustainable dog jumps.”

Students quotes on the experience are :

‘We have learned to work as a team, and work together discovering how a business works’; (Billy Dalton)

‘I have learned how to set a business up, and advertising simply by using social media sites’; (Bridie Leek)

‘I have learnt how to set up a bank account and manage finances’; (Cecily Tate)

‘I have learnt that some people can be difficult to work with, and that strong leadership is required to keep everyone in order’; (Bobbie-Jo Harvey)

This project has been essential to our developing relationship of the College and Orchard Barn, with a plan for working into the future already established.

5. A group of 19 engineer students and their tutor Les Holden put forward a proposal to enter the green power activity which is particularly targeted a sustainable engineering by building a car that runs on batteries and putting it into a race in June. The students will learn much about sustainability and have the interactive education that enables skills development for employability and sustainability. Without the LSIS funding this could not have happened as the car and entry cost £3,000. A sum not normally available in these parlous times.

6. The most challenging aspect of the project was the decision to undertake video case study work. This presented a challenge on two fronts. The college has decided to undertake a major re-build of the ICT systems which has created some significant bottle necks and inhibitions in use of IT during this project, the best prognosis for the IT at the college to be up to speed is a further 6 months hence. This is a consequence of merger that had not been planned or risk assessed. The second challenge is the teacher skills in delivery and undertaking video.

An example lesson using video is demonstrated here:

This is an example of an assignment used by Tom Brown (Tutor) In your assigned groups and using the flip camera given to you, you are to create a short video. This video must identify a tree that requires pruning in the college grounds as a group you should choose someone to act as the presenter. Once you have identified the tree you will most likely need to carry out some research to ensure your presentation covers the following areas:

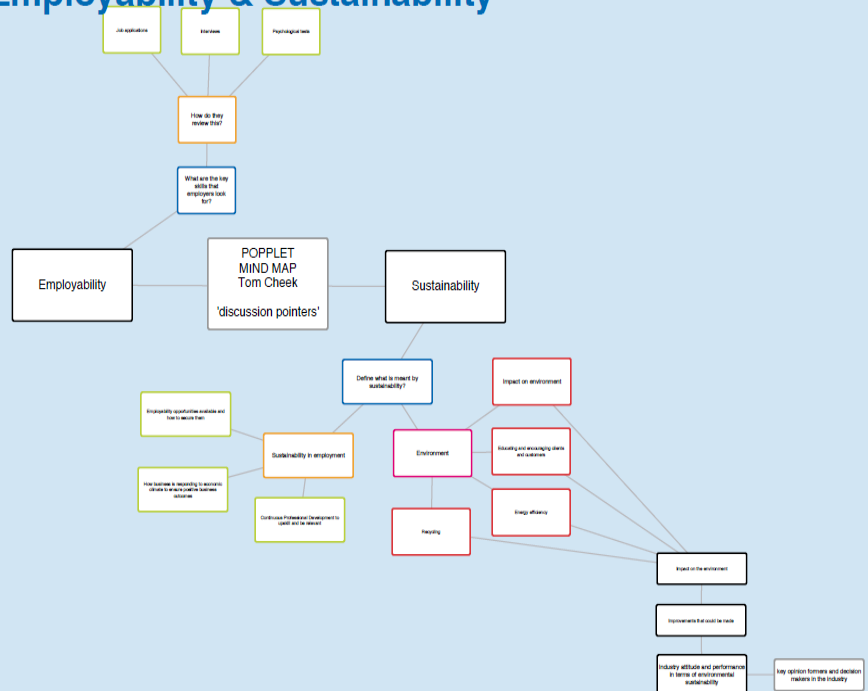
1. *Tree species and expected form for its age and growing conditions*
2. *Pruning requirements relevant to its location and condition, to achieve specific outcomes e.g. thin to increase light.*
3. *Outline the time of year that the pruning should be carried out and link this to sound biological principles.*
4. *Highlight any previous pruning that has taken place and suggest how long ago this occurred with evidence.*

The videos should be at least 4 minutes long and contain researched facts not just hear say. You must return with your camera to view each other's videos, which will be uploaded to moodle.

Feedback from the students is very positive, meeting skills development in problem solving and team work as the work has to be story boarded and planned. The students are grouped as 3 or 4 and have to arrange their own tasks to achieve the assignment outcome.

We worked closely with an outstanding practitioner Tom Cheek (Tutor in sports Work based –learning) Tom uses iPads and flip cameras very effectively and in the shooting of the videos he developed the use of a Popplet www.popplet.com to create a sustainability and employability popplet to guide and inform the quest.

Employability & Sustainability



7. A first year **Teacher training group** of 14 trainee teachers were offered a series of 3 sessions on sustainability and use of video. The concept of sustainability was a difficult thing for them to comprehend and the thought as inexperienced teachers putting this over to students betrayed a lack of confidence in technique. It is interesting that even new people into the position of teacher still see themselves as the font of knowledge and are uncomfortable with the new pedagogy associated with ICT and social media which is the guide from the side approach. These sessions found that the trainees are in need of more time to understand the idea of systems approach, and how sustainability is embedded into their

teaching. Many felt that the pressures of the job are very great and because getting the qualification and earning money was the most significant driver of their motivation a more in-depth education may be almost a luxury.

The teacher training Course objectives set:

1. You will understand the use and misuse of the concept of sustainability
2. You will understand how to embed sustainability into your teaching
3. You will understand why sustainability is fundamental to resource use.

What is deeply worrying is the singular focus on assignment work to achieve a qualification, as opposed to a curiosity and desire for new knowledge that appears to be coming more prevalent in the rising generation.

The project reached across sectors of the college, but did not reach into senior management as a way of implementing sustainability in the curriculum. Change is being driven by the 600 guided learning hours and the programme of study planning at this stage. However we did interact in the project with over 300 of our students directly, 42 staff and with 15 businesses.

The qualitative changes have been the raising of sustainability onto the college strategy and this will enable the vision to drive us towards that achieved by Walsall Adult and Community College. We are also better informed to provide sustainability education to our student body next year. Sustainability does not end here; the project has enabled the idea that a communication strategy is crucial. This derived from the feedback at the dissemination workshop where students suggested we are poor at sustainability, and this is something that comes out of student groups continuously. This should not be so as the college does sustainability; it needs to produce a sustainability report with a notice board of activities and a flier. Work for the marketing department.

- **how the project has stimulated organisational change and improvement**

This project has raised the status of sustainability at the college. We have reporting into the governor audit committee for the sustainability development policy; the appointment of Martyn Davy to be director responsible for sustainability; and the new appointment of a head of purchasing has brought to a head the need to resolve

ethical purchasing policies. The challenge is for the ownership of policy to ensure that it does not gather dust on a shelf and students are communicated regularly about this.

A facet of the sustainability agenda is that it is now being subsumed into the corporate social responsibility (CSR) agenda of business. We are not as far along the road with CSR as we would like, but as a freshly merged institution we are in many ways running to walk. The impact of change on our organisation has been fantastic with the idea behind project work such as this being change. We have overlaid change on an institution that is going through very rapid change. The fact is life carries on as the platitude goes, but undertaking project work in a freshly merged institution is not a thing to recommend to the faint-hearted.

- **what it means for learners, partners and other stakeholders**

The project has enabled the new college vision and strategy to be informed with students being particularly animated by sustainability issues and in many ways feedback sessions and groups found that students are quite harsh on the college in respect of its sustainability credentials. This is something that will have to be addressed through better communication.

- **benefits beyond your organisation**

As a major college of land-based education in East Anglia we need to be leaders in the community. Through this work we have been able to forge excellent links with businesses working in this area Green Light Trust, Orchard Barn, Suffolk ACRE and LEAF with many other local stakeholders through the Young Enterprise competition.

6. What made the project a success? What were the key ingredients?

Through examining the linkage between employability and sustainability it is possible to define the skills sets required. However successful employment will be determined by enthusiasm and a desire to work hard.

When we reflected on our work we felt that Sustainability skills look very similar to life-skills: i.e. Wellbeing, balance, happiness, engagement, emotional intelligence, interpersonal connections, continual reach for knowledge and evolved behaviour.

Sustainability skills should NOT be taught separately - digestible little ethics courses on the side-lines of key subjects just don't work. How could they?; we need sustainability and the skills we've identified to flow and be incorporated into every subject at every level. This reflection in some ways negates our efforts which are bite size and working at the side. However this could not be further from the truth as what we knew at the start is the staff are generally not comfortable

with sustainability to teach as a subject area and need to have tools and help to enable sustainability to be taught through different ways whether video, PowerPoint or other means. At essence is the knowledge base which is underpinned here through ready availability on moodle.

What do you think you/your colleagues and your approach brought to the project that made a difference? How could other providers learn from your approach?

The thing that made this project work for the students was seeing the work at Orchard Barn where as an example they had managed to construct a disabled toilet from local materials collected from within the property that met buildings regulations, and the use of rainwater harvesting and compost toilets. The work on these practical feature that are real as opposed to the project work that they are asked to do which does not have an end result animated the learning in a most excellent way.

The main thing that has come out of the project and is pertinent to all work in the field of sustainability in colleges is the failure to work across departments and to be focused on the curriculum efficiencies demanded by managers chasing the targets set, without looking at other ways we can get to the same end. Through excellent communications and a clear strategy sustainability can be a highly functional part of the curriculum as championed by Walsall Adult and Community College in their Ofsted report. "Tutors have an exceptional focus on promoting sustainability, which ensures resources are not wasted. Learners think carefully about the environmental impact of their work. Classrooms are equipped with energy-efficient equipment and tutors receive frequent reports about energy usage." We have a group of practitioners who are more focused on sustainability but are not as far down the road as Walsall.

7. What would you say were the most important things you learned from this project, which you will take forward as an individual or as an organisation in your sustainability journey?

The impact of merger cannot be under estimated. FE is seemingly in perpetual change, and LSIS projects are a superb way to help the change in ways to deliver improved learning outcomes. As a new college, which is a thing that is not comprehended before it happens, as there has been a previous college; undertaking project work on top of such change is challenging.

Merger embodies change, and it is this change that generates different emotions among different employee groups. Easton and Otley College was a type A merge which does not stop a dynamic associated with employees from an acquiring college may feel excited about the new challenges that the integration brings to them, employees from an acquired college may have very different

reactions, such as feeling anxious, uncertain, or even intimidated as they go through major changes. In our case people have to establish that it is a merge of equals and believe it with a background of curriculum changes, demographic changes and economic gloom perpetuated by the obsession of news cycle. There was also the squashing together of two different cultures and a realignment of Otley campus provision to be more focused on land-based provision. With sports and Fish courses being moved to the Easton Campus. In the face of this organisational change employees are worried with issues such as job security and their future careers within the organization. Uncertainty can drag on without being addressed, or when employees do not have a good understanding about the change process or new work roles and standards, it impedes productivity and performance. The rumour mill begins and employee morale not only decreases, but many employees do not wait around: they jump ship and leave the company. To address this The Principal has a staff consultation group and writes an update blog, however communication which is key is in need of continual improvement. **It was a key finding of this project the importance of communication. The question is how? What language to use? What method to adopt?**

The human resource (HR) functions are critical to the success of a merger. HR is often a function in the college that is overlooked in these projects and a recommendation to embed sustainability in college needs all directorates involved.

Colleges work in the people business and the knowledge business. In this knowledge-intensive marketplace, the success of human capital is imperative and must be at the top of the list. Colleges like many organizations focused more on the tangible products and financial goals and failed to recognize the human capital risks and opportunities are critical. Research shows that management attrition rates can soar 47% over the 3 years following the merger, employee satisfaction dropped by 14% and productivity dropped 50%. Such statistics illustrate just how high the human capital stakes are during a merger.

What was highly beneficial to our work was the support of Heather Barrett- Mold who has experience in this area and she was able to speak through the concerns. The impact of merger takes time, and managers have to be patient, tolerant and talk through the issues individually and in groups, as necessary continually reassuring that everything will be alright. At a certain point the process of change moves into a more positive phase.

<p>8. Any resources or tools produced by the project</p>	<p>We found the following useful:</p> <p>Greenpower http://www.greenpower.co.uk/ http://www.greenpower.co.uk/sites/default/files/library/Greenpower%20Regulations%202013%20v1.2.pdf</p> <p>Orchard Barn http://www.orchardbarn.org.uk/</p> <p>Aldersgate group useful for background on employability skills to informing project http://www.aldersgategroup.org.uk/reports</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Skills for a new economy 2. Mind the gap skills for the transition to a low carbon economy. <p>Business reports used in group tutorials:</p> <p>PwC http://www.pwc.co.uk/corporate-sustainability/index.jhtml</p> <p>Accenture http://www.accenture.com/us-en/Pages/service-accenture-sustainability-academy.aspx</p> <p>McKinsey http://www.mckinseyquarterly.com/The_business_of_sustainability_McKinsey_Global_Survey_results_2867</p> <p>Sustainability leadership report http://www.sustainabilityleadershipreport.com/</p> <p>And we produced these:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PowerPoint on the benefits (economic, social and environmental) of recycling concrete on-site. 2. PowerPoint on sustainability and systems thinking for teacher trainers. 3. Word document outlining why Sustainability is included in the teacher trainer course. 4. Word document outlining the work plan for a sustainable arboretum. <p>Videos produced during this project can be obtained by contact Easton and Otley College - contact details above.</p> <p><i>The purpose of looking to the future, said the French writer and industrialist Gaston Berger, is to disturb the present</i></p>		
<p>9. Total costs of the project</p>	<p>LSIS funding</p>	<p>Match funding</p>	<p>Total funding</p>
	<p>£10,000</p>	<p>Suffolk Young enterprise is</p>	<p>£10,000</p>

supported by funds from the council and business.

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