

Stepping Up in Sustainability 2012-13

Stockton Riverside College Case Study: Responding to Future Sustainability Skills



Title of project	Responding to Future Sustainability Skills	
Lead partner organisation name and address	Stockton Riverside College Harvard Avenue Thornaby Stockton-on-Tees TS17 6FB	
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1. Aims of the project	<p>In response to the "Leading and Learning for a Sustainable Future", a wide-ranging LSIS strategy to support the sector in responding to the challenge of sustainability, Stockton Riverside College wanted to inform the curriculum by developing new sustainability skills provision in partnership with the Local Enterprise Partnership, Local Authority and employers.</p> <p>The aim was to develop and deliver a new sustainability toolkit and to pilot a volunteering scheme where Student Sustainability Champions would undertake a placement with employers to inform and improve their sustainability.</p> <p>Introducing a Sustainability qualification into the curriculum would also help inform the college and its learners on how to improve the carbon footprint both in the home and in the workplace.</p>	
2. Situation: Identify the situation or issue that faced you	<p>We chose the project as we wanted our students to see sustainability within the workplace, to really bring it alive for them. We also know that it is important to expose our students to employment as much as possible. We felt that being involved in the project would give our students the edge compared with others, as not only will they have had work experience and understanding of the workplace, they will also have helped a small business to improve their knowledge, and hopefully consider including sustainable practises. As a college that values sustainability, we wanted to start to ensure this was evident at every opportunity.</p> <p>We didn't want this to be something that was abstract for students, either during tutorial or enrichment or even within their vocational subject. We wanted students to gain an understanding of how it applied in real workplaces.</p> <p>To be frank, as it was a complex project, it was very hard work. Nothing flowed; it was complex to explain to employers and required a great deal of staff input.</p>	

	<p>Taking on board the views and recommendations of the Wolfe review, and Ofsted’s consideration of the importance of work experience and work-related learning, ensured we have a clear focus. We also wanted to do something that would support the work of our local council and our resident Sustainability adviser, and by taking this out to employers, we believed that would achieve the desired outcome.</p>
<p>3. Task: Define the outcomes you needed to achieve</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to employer needs by developing new curriculum provision relating to sustainability skills • Increase partnership working through engagement and developing partnerships with employers to inform the curriculum offer, by gaining understanding of emerging sustainability skills • Develop new green skills through designing, trialling then adapting a Sustainability Teaching and Learning toolkit to raise awareness of the available green technologies that underpin the sustainability agenda • Use the new toolkit to broaden the college response to growth sectors and the low carbon economies, whilst producing measurable improvements which are relevant to the core business of teaching and learning • Use the toolkit to underpin the delivery of an accredited programme, developing knowledge of renewable energy • Identify new teaching and learning strategies for the delivery of the toolkit, by piloting the delivery of the toolkit through a variety of approaches with learners, staff and partners • Deliver the toolkit as part of the staff development programme to support teaching staff to find a sustainability angle within their subject • Use the toolkit to provide learners with an introduction into the environmental/green technologies, to promote progression into employment or further training in the sustainable agenda • Produce a resource to develop sustainability skills for the wider sector to raise the profile of sustainability at a strategic and organisational level • Fully engage and involve students in sustainable activities • Develop a cultural change by increased understanding about sustainable development and the short, medium and long-term economic, social and environmental considerations • Stimulate a behavioural change amongst learners, staff and stakeholders • Establish a common and clear understanding of what sustainable development is about through piloting of the toolkit and student Sustainability Champions • In accordance with the Sustaining Our Future Framework themes, build common understanding of what sustainable development is about (through developing a new toolkit) and test new strategies for delivering the toolkit • In line with the concepts of sustainable development for the expanding renewable energy sector and application to the learning and skills sector,

	work with employers to equip us to respond to the challenges of creating a sustainable society for our current needs and for the future.
4. Actions that you took in order to achieve your plan, and your approach	<p>The project coordinator was appointed quite late and preliminary activities had taken place prior to the appointment. These included meetings with personal tutors, the students union and local businesses. Once the project coordinator was appointed in late September she adjusted the project plan and began the implementation of it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify tutors and students who would take part in the project and become Sustainability Champions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The project coordinator used the Tutorial system to visit tutorial groups to explain the project, the implications and expectations. ○ Initially no students turned up to the meetings arranged after the tutorial visits; this was then ‘marketed’ again amongst tutors. ○ 20 students turned up to the next meeting where more detail was given of their roles as champions and what they would be expected to do. ○ These students showed an interest in being part of the project and another meeting was arranged to confirm and begin the qualification. • Determine the qualification students would take to enable them to become sustainability champions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A number of qualifications were investigated which could provide suitable training for the champions; it was finally decided that the NCFE Level 1 Award in Sustainability would give students the required knowledge to become champions. ○ An initial meeting was set up with the students who had shown an interest and the course structure and content described to them. Ten decided they would like to continue, although it was explained to them that they did not need to produce the evidence required to gain the qualification if they only wanted the knowledge; they all agreed that actually gaining the qualification would be beneficial to them in the future. ○ Weekly lessons were given attended by the 10 champions; these were of a two to three hour duration with students taking work home with them to help build up their portfolios of evidence for the qualification. This continued for 15 weeks. The students carried out a carbon footprint exercise at the start of the qualification and again at the end: the results showed they had reduced their carbon footprint significantly just by changing a few of their habits such as turning lights off when leaving rooms and not leaving electrical items on standby. The final part of the qualification evidence would be gained through carrying out the toolkit with an organisation. • Develop a toolkit for use with employers to determine their

sustainability levels

- A toolkit was developed using the Reaching Forward Index as a template and refining it to meet the needs of local employers and training providers.
- This was then turned into an online resource using Google Drive. The ILT team at SRC are currently attempting to create a standalone toolkit which can be taken away by employers to use themselves.
- The toolkit was trialled by a member of the TADEA team which is a not-for-profit organisation providing sustainable project management and advice services to organisations. The toolkit was adjusted taking account of their recommendations.
- The toolkit was then tested on a local employer and they said they were happy with the results and found them useful.
- The sustainability champions were trained in carrying out the toolkit.
- Sustainability champions carried out the toolkit in 8 local organisations.
- Champions are producing reports in various formats for the organisations (written reports/PowerPoints) to be presented at the dissemination event.

The original project plan had indicated that Champions would spend some time on a placement within an organisation to carry out the toolkit; due to the late start of the project this proved to be unattainable, so a visit was arranged and students went along to each organisation accompanied by the project coordinator to carry out the toolkit and finally prepare a report to feed back with.

5. Results that you obtained

- The following quantitative outputs were achieved through the project:
- Toolkit: one version for education looking at curriculum and students and one for businesses and other organisations
 - Ten students trained to use the toolkit
 - Eight visits to different employers for those 10 students to go through the toolkit
 - Ten students all doing the qualification in Level 1 NCFE award in Sustainability
 - A mini-challenge was organised with all students in college, consisting of an electronic questionnaire asking about sustainability in the classroom, asking about lights, power use etc. Students who participated were entered into a prize draw and won music vouchers. It is hoped this can become an annual event in the college.
 - The college now has the sustainability qualification approved which it wasn't before; hopefully they will continue to run it in the future maybe as part of the Induction procedure.

The qualitative outputs are as follows:

- Participating in the project has given students an understanding in thinking about sustainability and what resources they use, having done a carbon footprint activity.
- The qualification also looks at the workplace – how you can be sustainable in the workplace without it costing lots of money; students also now have an understanding about sustainability in the workplace.
- Students have gained experience and confidence of going out and visiting employers.
- It has given students a bit of an insight into the workplace and about what some employers do and what they don't do. Students will compare experiences at the end of the projects and compare what different employers are doing and why.
- The changes/impacts on employers are not measurable at this stage: eg one employer said he found it really useful to look at his organisation and what they do and what they could do to improve things.
- It has possibly upped the profile of sustainability a bit in the college too, in tandem with the work that the college's Sustainability Officer, Ann Anthony, is already doing.

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

The engagement of the eight students who participated helped to make parts of the project very successful, in particular through the professional way they carried out the toolkit within each organisation. The effort they put into gaining the qualification and into understanding the main issues with being a sustainable organisation really showed through when they were speaking to the people in each organisation.

	Working with the college's Sustainability Officer, Ann Anthony, also proved very useful, especially in providing contact with external organisations and in understanding the college's sustainability programme and the stage the college is at, along with future plans.		
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?	There needs to be full support from a strategic level as well as from a curriculum level to ensure a full buy into the project, especially releasing time for carrying out project activities for both staff and students.		
8. Any resources or tools produced by the project	<p>Please outline here anything that the project generated that others might usefully benefit from. This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning materials • The toolkit https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dGg1Qilyaks3eHVVOF81T3FzUXA3OUE6MQ (non-educational) https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dDBDcU9HLUhaWV9QcmxKTTAwT3BsQUE6MQ (educational) • Mini challenge https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Ys4xADZtLrwtIc5nW LnaJlxjVg5GvaPgrCT36tmWm8/viewform • PowerPoint presentations 		
9. Total costs of the project	LSIS funding	Match funding	Total funding
	£10,000	£0	£10,000

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