Supporting courses in their orientation towards Sustainable Development

Organising institution:
University college PXL

Faculty/Department/Programme/External partners:
Education Directorate –Education Service

Abstract:
University college PXL wants to train students who are in demand for their identity, both personally and professionally. The SD competences are anchored in this identity. The Education Service advises, facilitates and acts as a partner in courses that work on this dimension and wish to (re)orient towards SD.

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Related literature:
P. Champion D., H. Kiel D. en A. McLendon J. (2012). Choosing a Consulting Role: Principles and Dynamics of Matching Role to Situation. In Capacity Development in Practice. Routledge, Londen.

Description:

University college PXL orients its education towards learning for sustainable development. The Education Service works along two tracks to that end.

1. University college PXL stated in its education policy that its courses integrate the pillar 'professional and personal identity' into the course programmes. This identity is shaped by a linkage between international and intercultural competences, sustainable development competences, language skills and media wisdom.
2. Some courses already pay attention to sustainability issues and adjusted types of assessment and work which are reflected in the curricula. These initiatives are centrally monitored, supported and internally disseminated.

In the implementation of SD in the curricula the Education Service, among other things through specific tasks carried out by a staff member, assumes three roles:

1. (Policy) adviser ('to be a sounding board'): the Education Service is currently working on a vision on sustainable development in which courses, lecturers and other stakeholders can work and communicate. The idea is to create a transparent framework which inspires courses to work on the personal and professional identity (PPI) of the students and to focus more specifically on competences regarding sustainable development. Desired output: a vision on SD, the PPI concept and a competency framework for SD at the start of the new academic year '14-'15.
2. Facilitator ('to attend the process'): a lot of initiatives are currently running at university college PXL which we encourage and monitor. Some examples: the Bachelor's course Electromechanics uses the EHE (Ecodesign in Higher Education) kit and attaches importance to the Ecodesign theme in the curriculum. The Bachelor's course Primary Education Teacher Training teaches student teachers through an optional module to think in systems (such as the relationship circle) and to apply this to pupils. The Bachelor's course Tourism incorporates the theme 'sustainable tourism' in a number of course components and also uses it as the starting point for a number of projects and cooperation initiatives. All courses of the PXL-tech Department wish to immerse themselves during the next academic year in systems thinking in education and the PXL Education Department wants to develop a learning line 'sustainable development' in all courses. The Education Service assists courses in their search for challenging sustainability issues and sustainable teaching practices. For instance, we bundle together all existing tools, publications, methodologies, scientific literature and good practices which we make available to the courses. Desired output: professionalisation of the personnel of the Education Service (among other things by attending workshops and meetings of learning networks for SD), guidance of courses towards experts in SD and other partners, development of PXL information package on SD, provision of tips in newsletters, etc.
3. Partner ('do it together and learn from each other'): it is not the ambition of the Education Service to be an expert in the SD theme. We want to be a partner of courses for the development of a vision, content and practices regarding SD. Together we want to produce a climate that creates opportunities for courses, professionalises lecturers and raises their awareness and offers students added value during their education. As partner we also build bridges. At our university college experiences can be exchanged between courses with regard to the theme of SD during in-service training programmes and intervisions. In addition, we also build bridges between the theme of SD and other themes like internationalisation, language, media wisdom, enterprise and research, and we consider the integration of SD to be an important quality requirement of the education provided by our university college. Desired output: participation in internal consultation on (Education for) SD, organisation of brainstorming sessions, intervision, consultation bodies, expertise working group, ...