



Swinburne University Learning & Teaching

Give them wings and they will fly! Transforming VET Teachers into Sustainability Champions, a national professional development program

Section 1: About the project

Summary

To purpose is transform VET teachers into 'Sustainability Champions' – through their Teaching practice and within their organisations. The program's focus is to enable VET teachers to create transformational learning environments that support shifts in thinking and behavior towards sustainability using Education for Sustainability principles and tools.

Project partners

Tropical North Queensland TAFE, North Coast TAFE NSW.

Section 2: The results

The problem

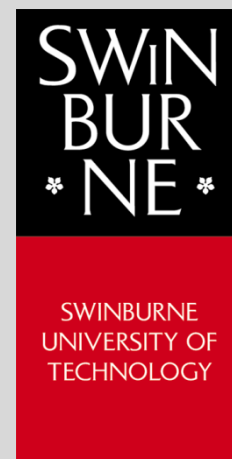
The majority of Australians recognise that a transition to a low carbon economy and society is desirable and inevitable. Equipping Australian industries with employees who possess and can apply relevant sustainability skills and knowledge to support the transition is the challenge – and long term vision behind our program. Working alongside educators to deepen their capabilities to facilitate transformative learning towards sustainable futures is the basis of the program.

The approach

Education for Sustainability (EFS) is shorthand for learning based strategies to stimulate change towards sustainability. Educators learn and apply EFS principles and tools such as; whole-of-system thinking, critical thinking and reflection, real world problem solving, innovation, transformational change, consensus building and partnerships. Formal learning occurs over 12 months through face-to-face workshops, online and real-time 'virtual classrooms' co-facilitated by the participants, peer to peer exchanges, field trips, guest speakers and workplace based application.

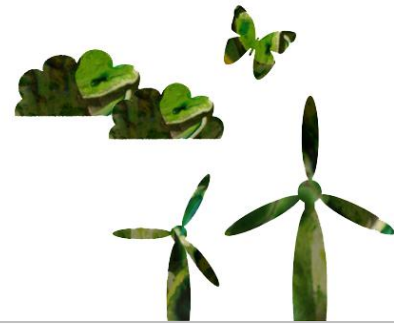
Our goals

Effective sustainability education requires the development of new knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that depend as much on *how* we teach as *what* we teach. Evidence suggests that this learner centred, action based, participatory course is making a real difference to the way educators equip students to face complex problems in moving to a more sustainable future. Our goal is to promote the up skilling of all educators in *Education for Sustainability* teaching and learning approaches .



Institutional Profile

- HE / TAFE
- 30,538 students (EFTSL)
- 2371 staff
- Urban / rural/
international/ online



2014 Winner's Case Study

Performance and results

"This has been the best training experience I have ever been involved with, and I have been involved in lots. It has had more effect on my teaching, and my personal life than any other single thing." Anon

"I would highly recommend this course to others and do so frequently because I have found it enriching, stimulating and indispensable. When thinking about the state of our world, there is really no better alternative than EfS." Rosanna, Victorian participant

"This program was the best program to come out of the PD funding for teacher. The first year results were so outstanding when compared to other VET programs that further funding was provided. It has been an exceedingly positive course and we're thrilled with its success." DIISRTE.

75 VET teachers from across every state and territory in Australia completed the program.

Section 3: The future

Lessons learned

Educators are powerful catalysts for change and influence towards sustainability. Investing in their professional development is a very powerful instrument for systemic change.

Education for Sustainability principles and tools support transformational change through facilitating highly experiential learning environments. Students become empowered to see themselves as contributors to changing their worlds for the better.

Education for Sustainability is about effective learning practices and should form the basis of all teacher training and education.

Sharing your project

The program has been communicated widely through our relevant stakeholder communities, social media, conferences and more recently in research and academic papers.

What has it meant to your institution to win a Green Gown Award Australasia?

This award confirms Swinburne University of Technology's commitment to a sustainable future. We recognise as a university, we have an important role to play in preparing tomorrow's leaders and decision makers to contribute to a sustainable future. At Swinburne, we are working towards incorporating sustainability principles into our teaching and learning programs, our social and built environments, and through our engagement with industry and the community. The Green Gown Awards Australia is a fantastic initiative to acknowledge and inspire significant sustainability achievements in our sector.

Further information

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