

# Leadership towards the Sustainable University – Students as Integrated Catalysts

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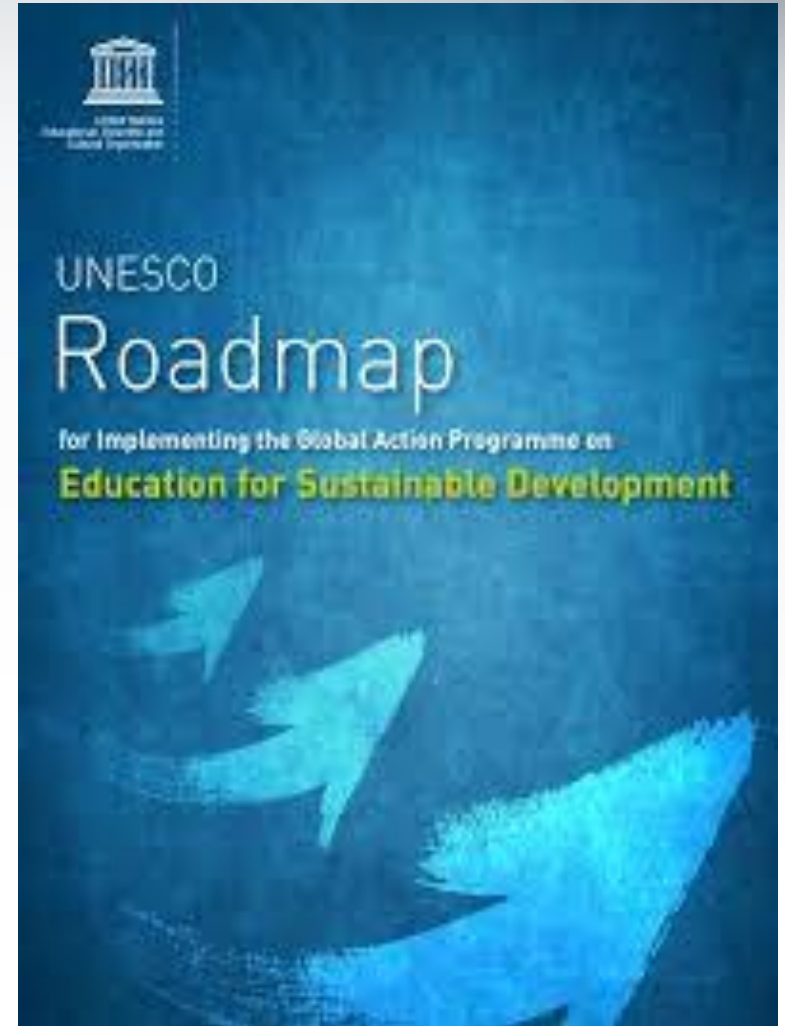
# GAP Educational priorities



Priority Action Area 3.  
Strengthen the capacity of  
educators, trainers and  
other change agents to  
become learning  
facilitators for ESD.

Priority Action Area 4  
Empowering and  
mobilizing youth: Multiply  
ESD actions among youth

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002305/230514e.pdf>



# Sustainability Education: a national agenda



Education for sustainable development is the process of equipping students with the knowledge and understanding, skills and attributes needed to work and live in a way that safeguards environmental, social and economic wellbeing, both in the present and for future generations. QAA 2014:5



**QAA**

**Knowledge & understanding |  
Skills | Attributes**

**Global citizenship | Environmental  
stewardship | Social justice, ethics  
& wellbeing | Future-thinking**

**Teaching, learning & assessment**

**ESD Guidance for UK higher education providers**



**Education for sustainable development:**

*Guidance for UK higher education providers*

June 2014

# Sustainability Education: an institutional agenda.

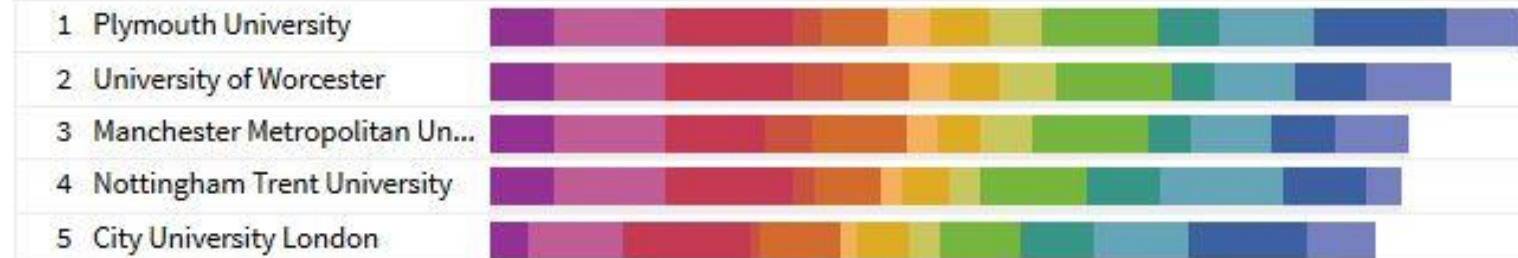


‘We aim to:

- differentiate our academic offer by ensuring issues and principles of sustainability permeate and inform our teaching and learning programmes, enabling students to engage positively with sustainability issues affecting their personal and professional lives in a rapidly changing world’

**Plymouth University Strategy 2013-2020**

## First Class Universities



# Plymouth University Compass

While you're at Plymouth, we hope you'll gain more than just your degree.

The Plymouth University Compass helps you to navigate your way through your whole university experience, in both your taught curriculum and your extra-curricular activities.

What you learn at university prepares you for more than a career, so the Compass identifies key attributes in four broad areas of your life - academic, civic, professional, and personal.

During your time here, you'll have plenty of opportunities to practice and develop these attributes, helping you gain experiences, improve skills, and build networks for your life beyond graduation.

The Compass also supports us, as a community, to coordinate our efforts to offer you as broad an education as possible. It clarifies what the University values and what it anticipates will help you, as a graduate, in a future that is hard to predict.

## The Critical and Creative Learner

As a Plymouth graduate, you will be able to learn independently, explore new avenues with confidence, and think in a critical, creative, and enterprising manner, enabling you to function effectively in a complex and ever-changing society. There will be opportunities to develop and practice your:

1. Specialist subject knowledge and expertise
2. Critical thinking
3. Creativity and enterprise
4. Research skills and information literacy
5. Learning and study skills

## The Sustainable and Global Citizen

As a Plymouth graduate, you will be able to contribute to a more sustainable future as an informed, responsible, and active citizen, both locally and globally. There will be opportunities to develop and practice your:

1. Sustainability literacy
2. Systems thinking
3. Openness to cultural encounters
4. Responsibility
5. Change-leadership

## The Competent and Confident Professional

As a Plymouth graduate, you will be ready to play an active role in shaping a sustainable society and economy, understand the importance of managing your own career, and promote a positive work-life balance. There will be opportunities to develop and practice your:

1. Self-organisation and management
2. Team-work and collaboration
3. Professional and ethical manner
4. Negotiation and persuasion
5. Effective verbal and written communication

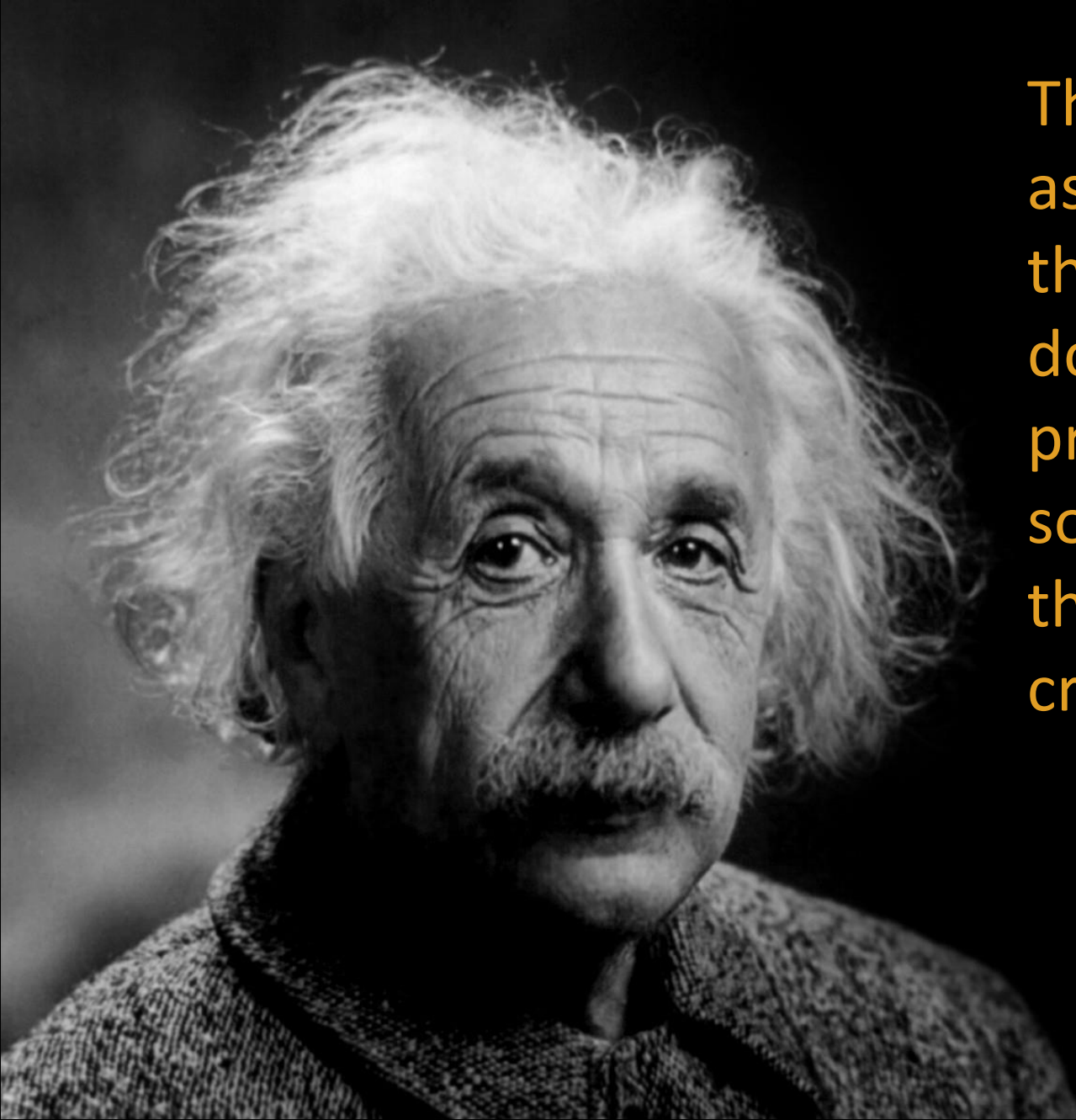
## The Resilient and Thriving Individual

As a Plymouth graduate, you will value and develop the wellbeing of yourself and others, and appreciate the role of evidence-based ways towards a flourishing life. There will be opportunities for you to:

1. Connect with others
2. Be active
3. Be empowered – you can make a difference
4. Keep learning
5. Give back in social and community life

EXPLORE  
DREAM  
DISCOVER  
WITH  
PLYMOUTH  
UNIVERSITY

# Education for compassionate critical creatives.



The world we have made  
as a result of the level of  
the thinking we have  
done thus far creates  
problems we cannot  
solve at the same level of  
thinking at which we  
created them.

*Albert Einstein*



1<sup>st</sup> Order  
Change: Being  
less UN-  
Sustainable  
(Less Bad)

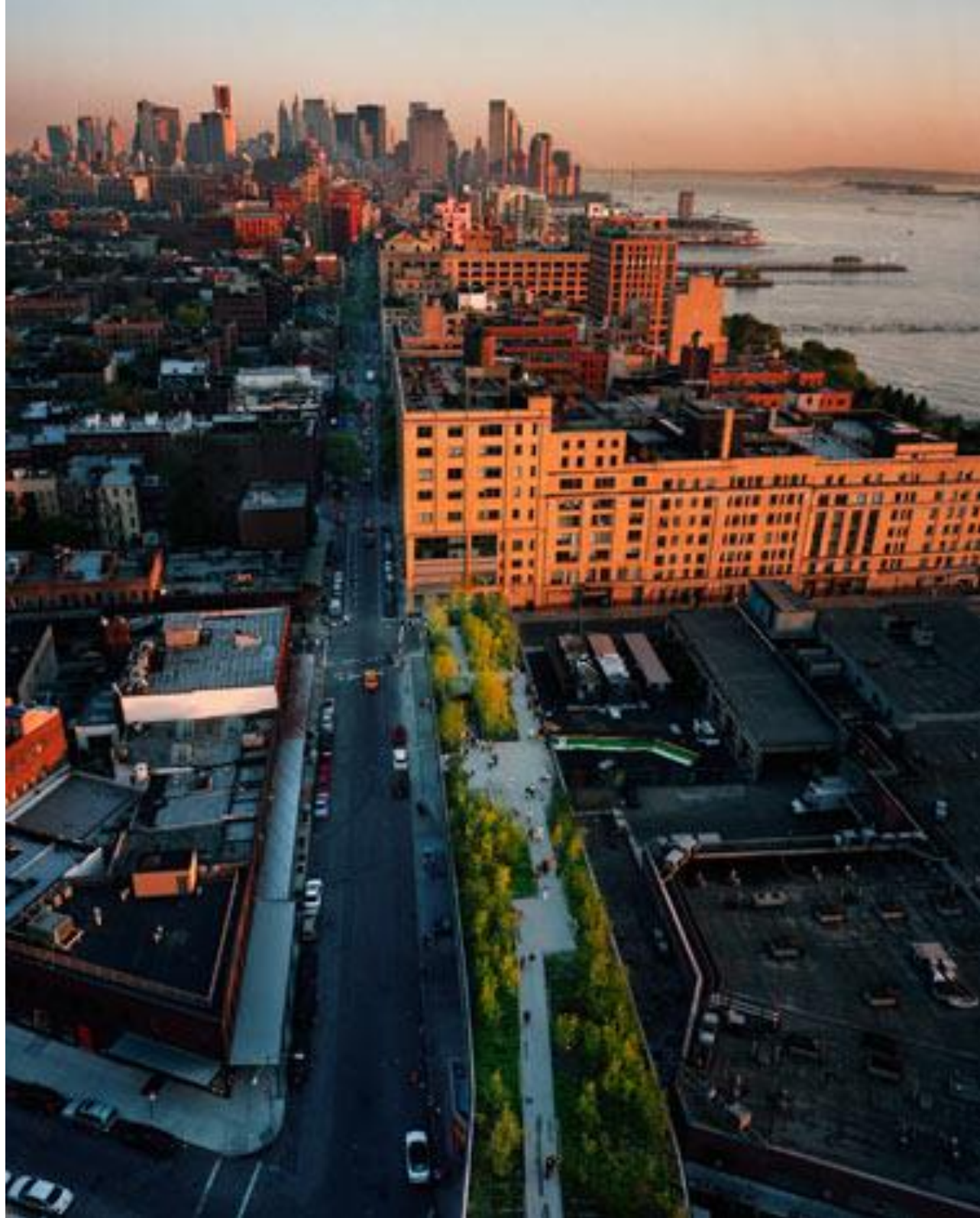
First-order  
solution  
strategy:

**Add more  
lanes!**

Harold Glasser  
West Michigan  
University



2<sup>nd</sup> Order Change: Becoming  
NetPositive (Improve quality  
of life for all)



# Degrees of student participation as integrated catalysts of change



1. Students as data source – in which staff utilise information about student progress and well-being
2. Students as active respondents – in which staff invite student dialogue and discussion to deepen learning / professional decisions
3. Students as co-enquirers - in which staff take a lead role with high-profile, active student support
4. Students as knowledge creators – in which students take lead roles with active staff support
5. Students as joint authors – in which students and staff decide on a joint course of action together
6. Intergenerational learning as lived democracy – in which there is a shared commitment to / responsibility for the common good

# Working with students as catalysts requires new learning spaces



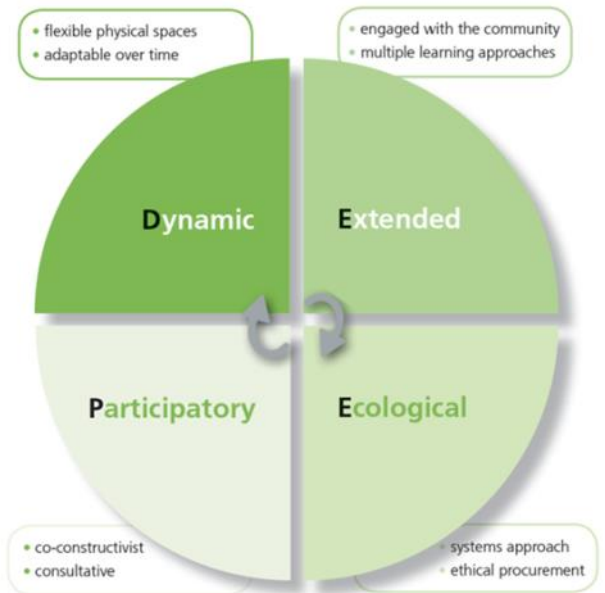
There is now a growing interest in many countries concerning the design of learning spaces to ensure environments which are geared towards the diverse needs of students in their learning (eg. JISC 2006, Jamieson et al 2000, Oblinger 2006, Johnson and Lomas 2005)



TK Park, Bangkok, Thailand



Hellerup School, Copenhagen, Denmark

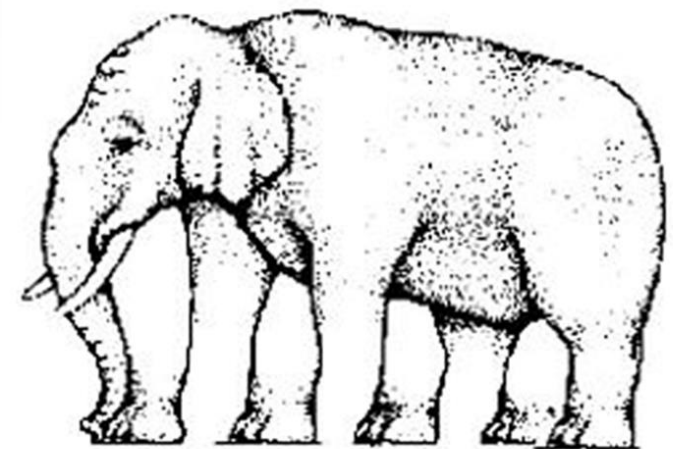


# We need to give attention to the social dimensions for students to be integrated catalysts



## Principles for open dialogic inquiry

1. Including everyone: The knowledge each person brings deserves to be actively listened to in order to be understood.
2. Lifelong learning: People can see the world from different points of view that can change and develop over time.
3. Recognising diversity: Our points of view are in part related to who we are and where we come from.
4. Critical and creative engagement: All knowledge, including our own, can be questioned and re-considered through dialogue.



# Students as leaders



## The Environment and Sustainability Forum

One of fifteen student led forums within the University of Plymouth Student Union (UPSU)

This forum is a chance for students to share their ideas for ultimate change within the UPSU and the University. Therefore it acts as a student led port of call if students wish to implement solutions that are both related to the University and the Environment.

Operates through regular working group meetings using a project based model.

The 'C' model at Plymouth University



# Making the invisible visible



# Students as partners



The Future Leaders Programme is a partnership initiative between the University (Centre for Sustainable Futures) and students. It Integrates 3 participatory educational approaches:

## 1. Student Voice

(students being consulted by the University and invited to identify their own sustainability issues of concern)

## 2. Creative enquiry

(deliberation around a chosen sustainability issue and exploration of possible action responses)

## 3. Collaborative Action for Sustainability

(Students creating and leading their own sustainability action project in partnership with the University to seek to make a difference within their chosen issue)

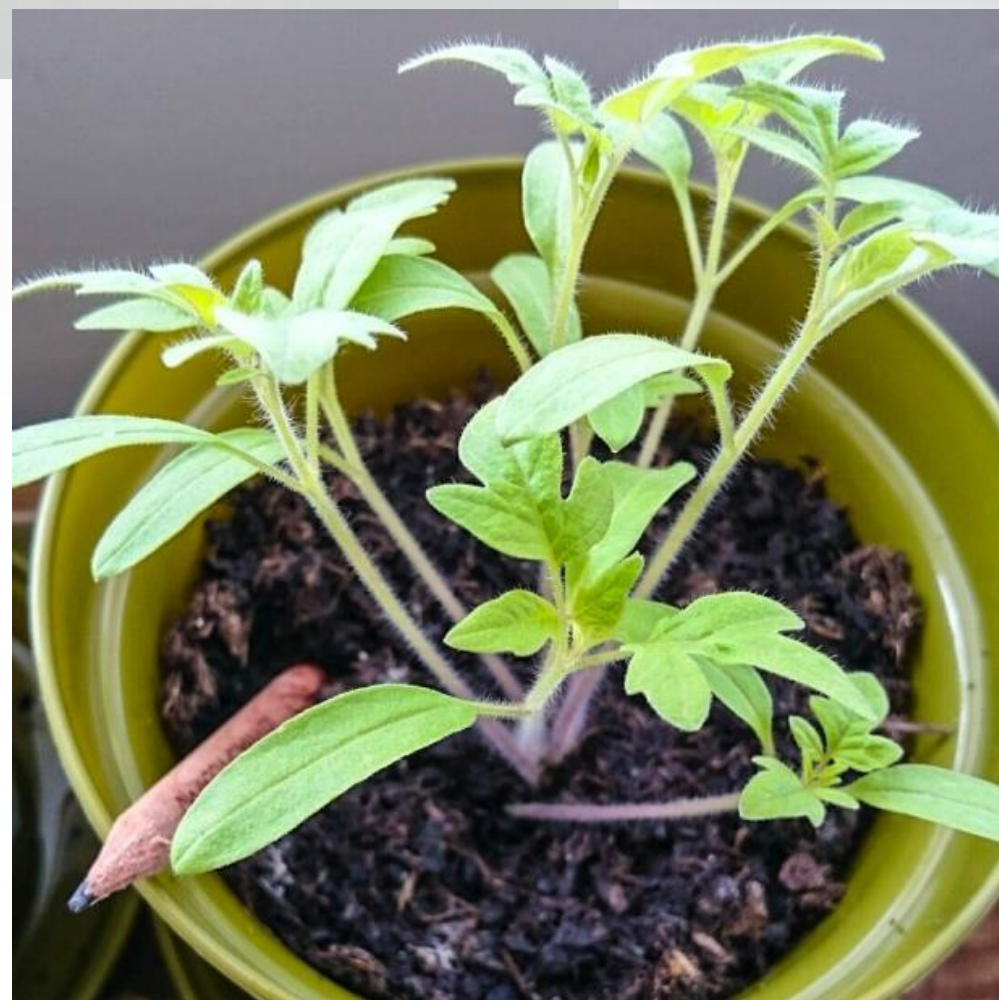


# It's all about WEEE!



# Moor to Sea Sustainable Bike Ride





# Beyond mere student satisfaction

## The 2020 research project



### **What happens to the sustainably educated?**

### **A longitudinal study of Plymouth University graduates**

This research project will track a cohort of twenty students as they graduate from Plymouth University. The aim is to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of sustainability education beyond the time-span of being a student at Plymouth and beyond the more traditional snapshot 'satisfaction' evaluations of outcomes and student reflections through module and course feedback processes.

This project intends to investigate graduates life futures beyond university and in so doing acquire the benefit of their 'hindsight' perspectives on the shortcomings and the strengths of the sustainability education they experienced at Plymouth. The aim is for their perspectives to inform the future visioning of sustainability education policy and practice here at Plymouth.

The project will employ a range of qualitative research methods (surveys, interviews and focus groups) and emphasise a students as partners approach.

# Minding the gap – an example of leading ESD that still has a lot to learn



1. A practice 'bubble' in isolation – requires a more integrated institutional approach
2. Volitional non-accredited participation – preaching to the converted?
3. Where is student reflexivity in all this?
4. How do we engage students in a way that is a lesson in perseverance and collaboration rather than a lesson in frustration and hopelessness (with the institution being so slow to change)
5. The need for us to know better the temporal legacy of our work – longitudinal studies that learn from our students' flightpaths.
6. Is the firestorm of discontent (global points of crisis/troublesome knowledge) the apt starting point – does the Future Leaders programme begin in the wrong place?

# Conversation Tables



1. What are the barriers to engaging students as integrated catalysts of change within HE? Oli
2. What are the learning benefits for students engaged as integrated catalysts of change? Jen
3. What are the skills and spaces needed for facilitating students as integrated catalysts of change? Paul