

# Education for Sustainability: shaping future HE experiences



## **Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice 8<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

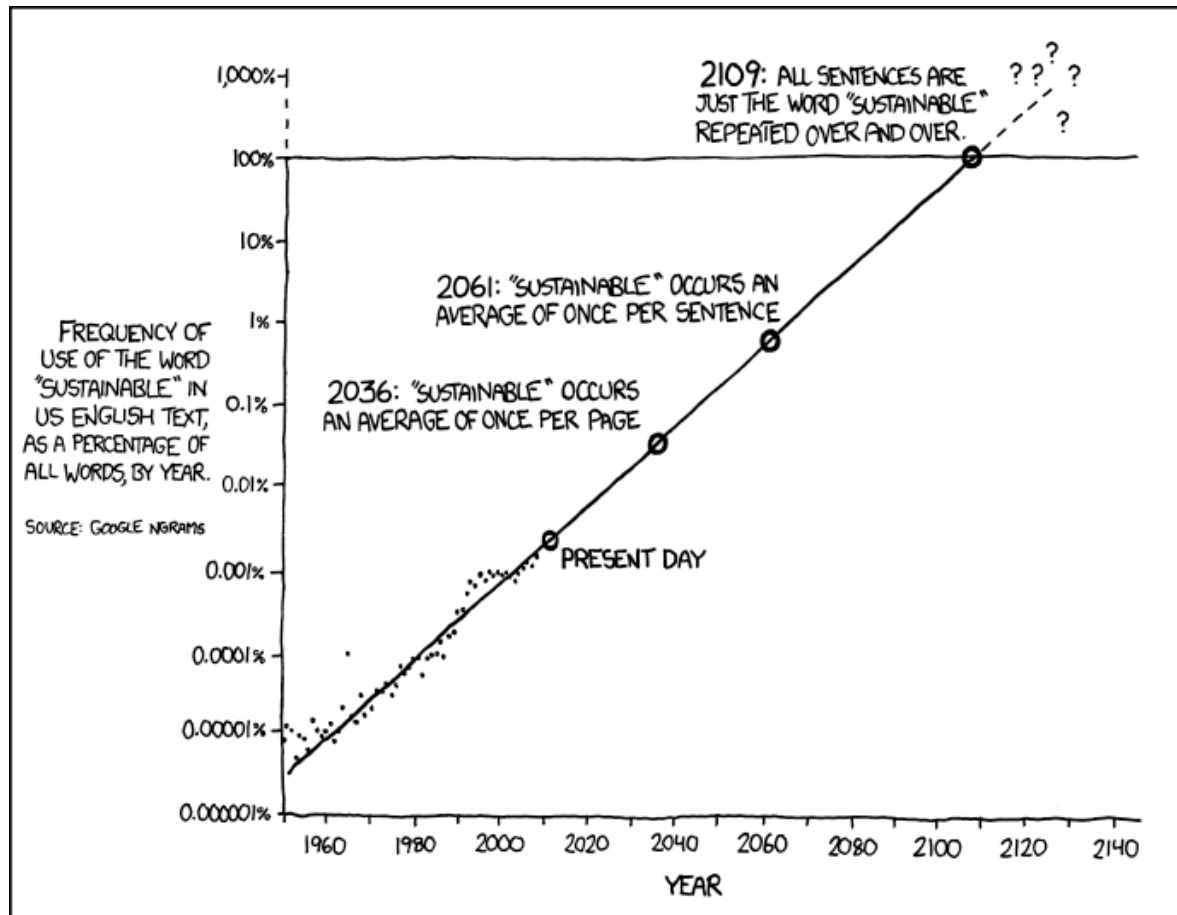
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# Education for Sustainability: shaping future HE experiences



- 1. Scene-setting: sustainability and ‘higher’ education**
- 2. Basics: EfS core principles – ideas and approaches**
- 3. Chat Show: EfS in practice - unvarnished experiences**
- 4. Have a Go: Starting Blocks for EfS**

# 1. Scene-setting: sustainability and 'higher' education



THE WORD "SUSTAINABLE" IS UNSUSTAINABLE.

# Professionally Qualified - but bleary-eyed?

Raana is a business studies lecturer taking her PGCAP, having come to HE from the private sector.

She gets excited by pedagogical ideas around 'real world' learning and international perspectives - she is keen to support students in exploring how their values can inform viable business models.

Raana's protected teaching development time is dominated by learning new software tools for online delivery and student evaluations. Other spare moments are spent pondering the NSS scores and TEF priorities to see how she can improve the 'academic challenge' she provides....

What she really wants is to rethink the learning process to ask deeper questions about post-recession economics, 'green wash' in business, responsible supply chains and global workers rights – and to enable her students to critically reflect and take a lead on these challenges...



*Dilemma: are policy and technology drivers masking the core purpose of HE?*

# Wifi Connected – but learning disconnected?

John is a 2<sup>nd</sup> year in computing, interested in current affairs and how technology affects culture.

He works part-time to finance his studies and improve his employment prospects, and is using technology in his studies and for research but also developing code and apps in his spare time.

John's HE experience is helping him gain technical skills and grasp basic business issues... but his studies are not showing him how he could be influential in changing how technology is used, to increase its positive benefits on people and minimise the negative impacts.

His course informs him about current technological advances, but is not giving him strategies to analyse how it shapes wider systems or how he could successfully apply his innovations for social change.



*Dilemma: high-tech, hyper-busy experiences that lack meaningful application?*

# Ambitions for 21<sup>st</sup> century educators

## *Specialism in specific context*

## *Specialism within holistic context*

*Focus = present*

Providing a context in which disciplinary mastery is achieved by students.

Providing a context in which student learning development (both discipline mastery and generic attributes) is achieved.

*Focus = future*

Providing a context in which students experience an education which enables fit-for-purpose entry into their determined career/ profession.

**Providing a context for development of ways of being, doing, and acting associated with life-wide career opportunities as well as appropriate economic, financial, socio-cultural, and ethical attitudes.**

# An emerging 21<sup>st</sup> century graduate profile

*“The recurring message in every meeting, conference and workshop held has been that, whenever we develop or review a learning program, we should give far more attention to confirming that its outcomes are relevant and desirable, to confirming that what graduates are actually capable of doing is going to be of benefit to their professional work and, more broadly, to the social, cultural, economic and environmental sustainability of our planet”*

Professor Geoff Scott, FlipCurriculum – Australian National Senior Teaching Fellowship, 2016: <http://flipcurric.edu.au/>

- Envisioning, understanding and shaping social change
- Thinking critically and proposing alternatives to current practice
- Using global perspectives and intercultural understanding
- Supporting circular economies and creating fairer societies
- Working across systems and engaging at multiple levels
- Being enterprising and able to handle complexity
- Using moral compass and taking professional responsibility

# GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

Transformation is a deliberate function of our university learning communities...

Through collective practice we aim to develop citizens who are:

## » Engaged

- are confident in their individual potential and able to seize opportunities
- are able to make a positive contribution to the world
- are active partners in generating knowledge and learning
- are aware of how to collaborate effectively
- take responsibility for their personal and professional development
- know how to engage with stakeholders to achieve constructive change
- apply learning to develop rewarding lives and/or careers.

## » Enquiring

- are able to utilise scholarship in order to make discoveries and solve problems
- are able to make assessments on the basis of evidence and recognise alternative perspectives and possibilities
- become active, supportive and trusted members of a learning community
- engage in critically reflective practice and professional development
- know how to question existing ideas and challenge ingrained assumptions
- understand how to apply learning to real-world issues.

## » Empowered

- are capable of leading, or contributing to, beneficial change
- are able to imagine alternatives, plan and follow through to achievement
- have the confidence and communication skills to inspire and positively influence others
- have the desire to identify and tackle complex concerns
- develop resilience and flexibility
- develop the skills and understanding to become the person they want to be.

## » Empathetic

- are able to understand and appreciate different values, norms and ideas
- are able to recognise the origins and bias of their own assumptions and beliefs
- have the ability to engage respectfully in challenging dialogues
- act in ways that are inclusive and fair
- understand the value of different philosophical and/or religious standpoints
- value and develop multiple ways of knowing.

## » Ethical

- have a considered framework of principles and values that inform decisions
- are confident in promoting social justice and diversity
- take a considered position on the 'big questions' of the twenty-first century
- develop an understanding of our dependence on a healthy planet for our life and work
- are equipped with the skills to make a positive contribution to our world
- are able to think across systems and to connect people and planet
- demonstrate capabilities to help reconcile local and global issues and needs



## 2. Basics: EfS core principles – ideas and approaches



Frank and Ernest



# *Learning to Change: why sustainability is fundamentally an educational challenge*



*'Progress towards sustainability is like going to a country we have never seen before... We do not know what the destinations will be like, we cannot tell how to get there'*  
(Prescott-Allen, 2001, p2)

***No country has worked out yet how to be sustainable. There is no proven recipe or magic bullet - we need to learn how to create it...***

# *The power of HE: how universities can influence prospects for sustainability*

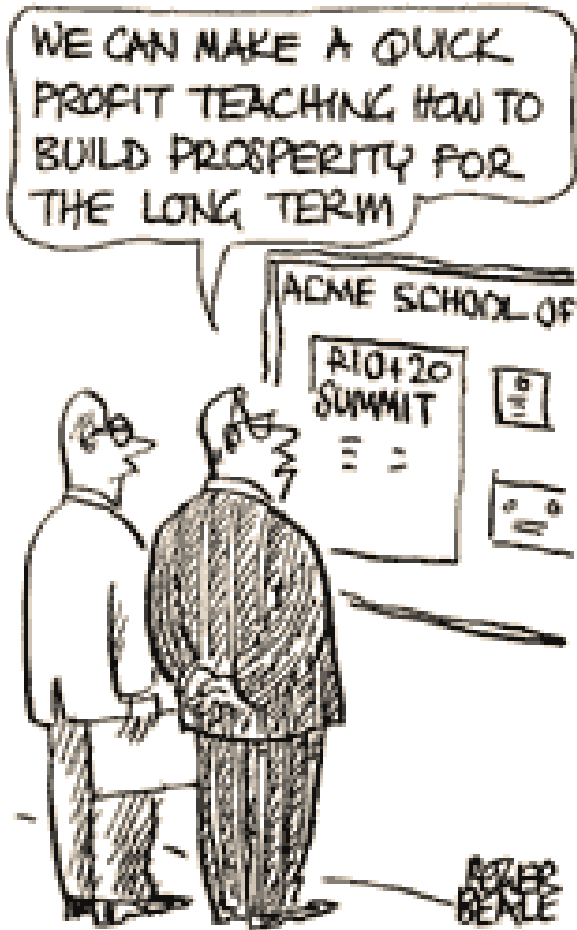
IN A FLASH, PRESIDENT JONES KNEW WHAT THE UNIVERSITY'S STRATEGIC PLAN HAD TO BE.



*'Those who contribute to exploiting poor communities and the earth's ecosystems are those who have BAs, MBAs, MSCs and PhDs and not the 'ignorant' poor from the South'*  
(Orr, 2004, p7)

*Universities hold the key to change for sustainability by educating future generations of leaders and decision-makers*

## *The aim of EfS: reimagining the university and the purpose of its academic activities*



*'You can't put a lettuce in the window of a butcher's shop and declare that you are now 'turning vegetarian'  
(Grant, 2009, p85)*

*Universities can best address sustainability in core business - by changing paradigms for how education and research is done*

# *EfS and learning-based change*



## **SHIFTING FROM...**

**Negative 'problem-solving' approaches to sustainability**

**Passing on knowledge and raising awareness of issues**

**Teaching about attitudes and values**

**Raising awareness and trying to change behaviour**

**Sending messages about sustainable development**

**Bolt-on additions to add to the existing curriculum**

**Isolated changes/actions**

**Seeing people as the problem**

**Focus mainly on individual and personal change**

## **MOVING TOWARDS...**

**Constructive creation of alternative futures that take account of sustainability**

**Questioning current scenarios and getting to the root causes of issues**

**Encouraging clarification of existing values**

**Challenging the mental models which influence decisions and actions**

**Creating opportunities for reflection, negotiation and participation**

**Innovation in the curriculum to rethink its outcomes and experiences**

**Learning to change**

**Seeing people as change agents**

**More strategic focus on professional and social change**

# 3. Chat Show: EfS in practice - unvarnished experiences

## Starring...

**Dr Julia Peck**

**Academic Subject Lead, Photography**

**Margaret McDonough**

**Academic Course Lead, Fashion Design**

**Dr Andrew Stafford**

**Lecturer, Criminology**

**Paul Wiltshire**

**Lecturer, Journalism**



"Since you became famous - er - oh  
I'm sorry, your fifteen minutes are up."

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# 4. Have a Go: Starting Blocks for EfS



1. *Sense-Making – deciding on suitable entry points –* looking at your subject and its professional and industry context, where does sustainability come in and how?

Example: 6 ‘doorways’ for Sustainability in Sport

2. *Transformation – building in your pedagogy –* based on how your subject is delivered and how you want students to develop, what pedagogies could work?

Example: 6 EfS principles applied to Tourism



# Learning Innovation for Tomorrow



<https://sustainability.glos.ac.uk/staff/academic-practice/learning-innovation-for-tomorrow/>

## 2016-17 PROJECTS



**Bids Closing Date:  
Monday 25<sup>th</sup> September**

- ✓ £2,000 funds per project
- ✓ Peer-to-peer mentoring
- ✓ 'Learning Lab' seminars
- ✓ Advice, contacts, resources