

Lessons and tips from Bradford, Gloucestershire and Plymouth

Bradford

'Ecoversity' – whole institution approach aimed at changing culture and practice towards sustainability. Three curricula model for achieving change: formal, informal and physical.

ESD in the School of Life Sciences:

- focus on integrated practice in understandings of ethical behaviour, seeks evidence-based approaches to the issues of 'Responsible Science' and 'Responsible Professionalism'
- MSc Clinical Pharmacy, contribution of community pharmacies to reduce the impact and incidence of health inequalities.

School of Social and International Studies

- interdisciplinarity, critical thinking, participatory decision-making, and applied, culturally appropriate learning
- Psychology examination of personality and individual differences in relation to the potential conflicts with values associated with ESD, and through critical approaches to the opportunities and possibilities for bringing about behaviour change

Successes in ESD

- Swift in principle approval
- Quick wins in curriculum
 - Sharing examples of ways ESD had been translated to a number of courses proved invaluable – overcome the questions of how, what and why
- Drawing on those sympathetic to ESD
 - Widespread consultation with key gatekeepers about the ESD agenda
 - Successes and failures of previous large-scale curriculum change
 - Understand the concerns individuals may have about further change
- Framework development
 - Ensuring that the approach is exciting, flexible and creative – not a burden.
 - Creation of a resource drawn from several UNESCO documents as a frame of reference for course teams to discuss and work out the relationships

Difficulties

- Making sense of ESD considering the range of view points
 - *Countered:* small team worked on how to develop a curriculum and institutional change. Concerned about how to achieve widespread staff and student engagement
- Building a unified approach so as to produce relevant topics that build student capabilities.
 - Steve Outram's Change Academy paper, on 53 ways in which colleagues resist change proved useful.
- Enabling the 'Pioneers' – confidence in the staff.

Top five tips

1. Know your institution

2. Enlist senior support and work collaboratively to keep it
3. Understanding change – prior insight into processes of curriculum, development and curriculum change was a critical element in the design and delivery of ESD. Academic innovation takes several years to flourish.
4. Guard academic freedom
5. Link ESD with a wider institutional programme.

Gloucestershire

Corporate and academic channels, aims to embed sustainability into the DNA of the Uni.

ESD in the Business School

- Development sessions to embed ESD across Business Management courses
- Graduate placement to research student learning and employer perspectives on sustainability in business.
- An online resource archive was developed for teaching staff to share publications and materials on ESD and sustainability within organisations and in business studies subjects.
 - Look to do the same at gre + gain access Gloucester archive
- Library stock
- Introductory guest lectures and seminars were provided by the Sustainability Team for the first-year BM student
- An external speaker series was organised

Successes in ESD

- Systems approach – entire uni and each part
- Developing a distinct approach that builds on existing university strengths
 - Connect agendas whether that's employability, active learning, work-focused learning, improving the overall student experience
- Provide scaffolding for those new to ESD. How & Why?
 - Why requires the articulation of EfS within widely accepted educational theories and good practice
 - How needs the research and development of user friendly frameworks and illustrations of how to go about bringing it to life – and also to connect with the work people have already begun
- Structure – not enforced but as to provide coat hangers to hang new clothes.

Difficulties

- Building understanding across corporate channels and academic interests – negotiation
 - Shift the strategic direction towards education for sustainability rather than the inclusion of sustainability elements into the institutional framework
- Avoiding enclaves – big picture

Top five tips

1. Build credibility and respect – communication and dialogues at all levels.
2. Get the positioning right – to bring innovation in, there needs to be appropriate formal positioning and directorial influence, otherwise initiatives remain as fringe projects and expectations are disappointed.
3. High level backing,
4. Contextualise the approach
5. Dedicated resource is essential – protection of the big picture despite academic diversity and organisational changes.

Plymouth

Whole institution approach – Curriculum, Campus, Community and Culture

Successes in ESD

- The 'whole institution' approach
- Enlisting Fellows
- Integration of ESD into the institutional skills policy
- External profile-raising

Difficulties

- Communication with those sceptical
 - Invites disciplines to consider how they might respond
- Variable senior support

Top five tips

1. Understand systemic change – it was critical to act both on systematic aspects of change (policies and structures) and systemic change (the flow and networks of colleagues and communications).
2. Harness opportunities and allies externally
3. Be opportunistic, but also pragmatic and tactical
 - a. Working with central academic and quality assurance structures, to maximise benefits through connectivity with academic development across the institution.
4. Avoid working in silos and forge new connections
5. Curriculum change requires legitimation, dedicated support and appropriate approaches.
 - a. It was critical to adopt invitational and supportive approaches, rather than being directive, to build effective working relationships through which people felt valued rather than judged in relation to academic innovation.