

Best Practice Cases of Education for Sustainability in Educational Development

Principal Investigators

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Short Project Description

We are researching best practices of Education for Sustainability (Efs) in educational development to stimulate and support educational developers (EDs) to incorporate Efs into their practices. Best practices will be identified through a literature review and by gathering cases through interviews with expert Efs practitioners from around the world. The results will be disseminated through appropriate websites. In the future, and not part of this grant proposal, we hope to incorporate the results of this work into an EDC Blue Guide on Efs.

Full Project Description

Goals

- Identify best practices in Efs in educational development from around the world, specifically those practices that support post-secondary teachers to embed sustainability themes and outcomes within courses and programs.
- Develop, and make widely available, a set of videos, transcripts and a literature review that demonstrate the diversity of ways in which EDs contribute to Efs. These resources will be posted on the appropriate websites including the EDC Efs Action Group, the Resource Repository for Sustainability and Leadership, SFU, and UBC.

Activities and Timeline

| <i>Activity</i> | <i>Timeline</i> |
|--|----------------------------|
| Gain ethics approval/exemption from SFU, UBC and George Brown College, requiring up to six weeks. (This will shift the original project timeline by up to six weeks.) | <i>Jun-Jul 2015</i> |
| Conduct literature review of Efs in educational development. | <i>Aug-Sep 2015</i> |
| Identify interviewees: Identify potential interview participants through discussion with EDC Education for Sustainability Action Group members and investigators' networks including the EDC listserv. We will revise the list to 10 to 20 participants to ensure representation based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • those focused primarily on Efs in higher education • diversity of cultures and countries represented • diversity of approaches to Efs in educational development • a cross-section of disciplines • practices that are transferrable and/or scalable to other | <i>Aug-Sep 2015</i> |

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|--|--|
| situations/circumstances Note that participants will likely include one or more of the PIs themselves. | |
| Conduct interviews: Semi-structured one-on-one interviews will be guided by an agreed-upon set of questions. Each of the three principal investigators will conduct roughly one third of the interviews and we will confer regularly to ensure quality and consistency. The interviews will be conducted and recorded using Skype or similar technology. | Sep-Dec 2015 |
| Transcribe interviews and edit videos: Interviews will be transcribed into text. Videos will be edited into 2-5 minute segments that focus on principles and practices. We expect to draw several video segments from each interview. | Oct-Jan 2015 |
| Disseminate results as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Videos and transcripts will be made available through the EDC website, the Resource Repository for Sustainability and Leadership (previously funded by an EDC grant), and SFU and UBC websites. We will present results at an EDC conference. | Jan-Feb 2015; EDC conference Feb 2016 |
| On completion of this project, and not part of this grant proposal, the PIs hope to leverage the outcomes to help develop an EDC Blue Guide. See attached Addendum | 2016 |

Why this work is important and timely

Sustainability has become an important issue in Canada and globally, and EDs are increasingly asking for assistance in how to incorporate Education for Sustainability into their practices. In response, the EDC EfS Action Group formed in 2013 with a mandate to advance knowledge of the interrelation of sustainability topics and focal areas of research and study within higher education. The three principal investigators, who are members of this group, have found that Canadian EDs want more guidance about how to integrate EfS into their practices, especially using evidence-based approaches.

Presently, sustainability themes are embedded within teaching and research primarily when sustainability is a personal interest of the educator or educational developer. We have identified a need for a more considered and structured approach to integrating sustainability themes and learning outcomes within teaching and learning. By identifying best practices we aim to contribute to the creation of coherent and pedagogically valid approaches to EfS.

Capabilities of the PIs to accomplish this research

- We are all founding members of the EDC EfS Action Group
- We currently represent three post secondary institutions in Ontario and BC, and have worked in the US, UK, East Africa, and China.
- Collectively we have more than 50 years of experience in sustainable development, educational development, and EfS. Recent activities include:
 - V. Neal is currently serving a three year appointment on the AASHE (Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education) Advisory Committee, and has been an active member of SFU's Sustainability Advisory Committee since 2010.

- S. Neill is a member of the Green Team for Sustainability at George Brown College; she is the member responsible for EfS on that committee. Over the past 3 years she developed and led a sustainability-across-the-curriculum audit based on identifying learning outcomes associated with environmental, economic and social sustainability. The methodology for this work has been disseminated at 5 conferences.
- A. Cassidy served on the EDC executive for 4 years, as Vice-Chair, Professional Development and was a co-creator of the Sustainability Education Intensive at UBC.

Fit with EDC Living Plan

- *Building professional capacity; facilitating curriculum development and reform (including signature pedagogies/ content-specific pedagogy); work with international faculty, cross-cultural communication, internationalizing the curriculum:* We will create resources to help build professional capacity of Canadian EDs; we expect to identify signature pedagogical practices in EfS; interviewees will be drawn from several different countries and cultures, and their practices will be captured and made widely available.
- *Engaging our community, cross-country collaboration, EDs without borders:* The PIs represent 3 Canadian post secondary institutions and we will be interviewing both Canadian and international EDs.
- *Monitoring the big picture, awareness of current and upcoming trends:* Because the literature and the interviewees will be drawn from the international community, we expect to identify both best practices as well as emergent leading edge approaches to EfS. Post secondary institutions are increasingly taking on responsibility for ensuring a sustainable future for the planet and we expect to identify, specifically, how EDs are contributing to this effort.
- *Building resources for EDs, SoTL, sharing best practices:* The resulting literature review and collection of videos and transcripts will ensure that best practices in EfD in educational development will be more widely available.

Intended outcomes/dissemination

The results of the study will include the following deliverables:

- Transcripts of interviews with 10-20 EDs
- Edited video segments from these interviews
- Literature review of best practices of EfS in educational development

These results will be disseminated as follows:

- All deliverables will be made available on, or linked from:
 - EDC EfS Action Group webpage,
 - Resource Repository for Sustainability and Leadership website, and
 - SFU and UBC websites
- We will present results at an EDC conference.

Budget

| Tasks (research assistant at \$25/hr incl. benefits) | Hours | Cost |
|--|--------------|-------------|
| RA to set up tracking system for interviews and interviewees: appropriateness, level of interest, availability | 20 | 500 |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|--------|----------------|
| RA to transcribe interviews | 60 | 1,500 |
| RA to conduct literature review | 40 | 1,000 |
| TOTAL | 120 RA | \$3,000 |

References

Cassidy, A., Sipos, Y., & Nyrose, S. (2014). Supporting sustainability education and leadership: Strategies for students, faculty, and the planet. In *Sustainable Practices: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications*. (pp. 1454-1477). Hershey, PA: Information Science Reference. doi:10.4018/978-1-4666-4852-4.ch081

Cassidy, A. (2011). Sustainability education: Leading by example. *Bridges*. 9(2), 15-16. University of Saskatchewan. www.usask.ca/gmcte

Cotton, D.R.E., Sterling, S., Neal, V., & Winter, J. (2012). *Putting the 'S' into ED: Education for Sustainable Development in Educational Development*. Staff and Educational Development Association, SEDA Special 31

Neal, V., & Langley, G. (2012). Education for sustainable development and accredited programmes. In *Putting the 'S' into ED: Education for Sustainable Development in Educational Development*. Staff and Educational Development Association, SEDA Special 31 (Eds: Cotton, D.R.E., Sterling, S., Neal, V. & Winter, J.)

Resource Repository for Sustainability and Leadership, Found online April 15, 2015: <https://cassidyinview.wordpress.com/publications-and-other-resources/sustainability-education-and-leadership/>

Next Steps

After completing the activities described in this grant proposal, we hope to leverage the research outcomes to support the development of an EDC Blue Guide on Efs. We have included our ideas for this next step as an addendum to this grant proposal.

Agreements

I/We agree to provide the EDC community, who funds this grant, with access to resulting information and resources for which the copyright remains with the authors.

I/We acknowledge that I/we will submit an interim report and a final deliverable.

Addendum

Development of an EDC Blue Guide on Education for Sustainability for Educational Developers

The second part of this project is not part of this EDC grant proposal. Rather, it will leverage the results of the interviews and the literature review to inform the development an EDC Blue Guide on EfS. This part is scheduled for 2016.

This work will begin with an analysis to identify and glean principles, practices and/or themes around EfS that are relevant to Canadian and international EDs, drawing from:

- the interview videos and transcripts that have captured the experiences of EDs working in EfS, and
- evidence from the literature review.

The EDC Blue Guide might be a project of the EDC EfS Action Group, potentially with editorial contributions from the international community of educational developers.

Potential Outline of Blue Guide

1. **Introduction** State and extent of EfS in educational development in Canada with comparison internationally, including introduction to literature and principles.
2. **Principles and practice** Synthesized from the interviews and the literature, this part will consist of several chapters devoted to principles and practical ideas for EDs to implement within their practice. This could be a rich description of how to do EfS well. Also, it could demonstrate the diversity of ways that people are contributing to EfS in the realm of educational development.
3. **Cases from the interviews** This could constitute transcripts or edited narratives or it could be more of a map or guide, with embedded links to the video /audio interviews housed on another website – to be determined.
4. **Literature review**
5. **Ending parts** About the authors, interviewees, and acknowledgements.