

# Skills for Sustainability: Alignment, Integration and Assessment Across the Ontario Qualifications Framework

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The presentation is accompanied by two curriculum tools :

- a) *Aligning skills for sustainability across the Ontario Qualifications Framework (OQF) and with Essential Employability Skills (EES)*
- b) *Teaching, learning & assessment strategies to support the integration of skills for sustainability across the curriculum*

# Overview – Skills for Sustainability

- Background – *learning for sustainability*
- Outcomes from inter-jurisdictional research – *pedagogy for sustainability*
- Skills clustering and alignment with the Ontario Qualifications Framework – *a skills inventory (see handout)*
- Strategies for teaching, learning and assessment – *tools (see handout)*

# ***Learning for sustainability - a definition:***

Learning for sustainability (LfS):

*'Involves learning to make decisions that provide for the needs of the world's current population without damaging the ability of future generations to provide for themselves. Sustainability encompasses the intertwined ideals of viable economics, equity and justice and ecological integrity.'*

Curriculum for the Bioregion Initiative, Washington Centre for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education

# *Learning for Sustainability – a skills typology*

- Green technical skills – broad-based (transversal) and/or specialized (vocational, professional, discipline-specific)
  - Sustainability concepts, principles, themes and values, habits of mind (general education, discipline-specific)
- and
- *Skills for sustainability – the change agent skills (generic or essential employability skills)*

# Skills for Sustainability - A definition:

*'Skills for sustainability'* prepare people to cope with, manage and shape social, economic and ecological conditions characterized by change, uncertainty, risk and complexity.

Stephen Sterling,  
Centre for Sustainable Futures,  
Teaching & Learning Directorate,  
Plymouth University, UK



# Learning for sustainability: Pedagogy

Learning for sustainability:

- Is not separate from other key PSE initiatives and skills needs
- Informs education practice at all levels
- Challenges the overall direction and purpose of the education system; 're-orienting education'

*The Higher Education Funding Council for England supports EfS as a cross-cutting curriculum agenda and as a quality enhancement initiative.*



In general, good sustainable development pedagogy is often simply good pedagogy. Hence its promotion is broadly consistent with a commitment to improve quality in the sector.

UK Policy Studies Institute et al, 2008 p.34



# A Systems Approach:

As Education for Sustainability takes the systemic view of education practice, 'good practice' in this area is based on the need to rethink both the issues raised in the curriculum and the teaching and learning [and assessment] approaches being used to actively engage learners in responding to sustainability.

[http://efsandquality.glos.ac.uk/efs\\_the\\_strategic\\_view.htm](http://efsandquality.glos.ac.uk/efs_the_strategic_view.htm)

# Skills for Sustainability....

- Can help build desirable graduate attributes
- Are key skills for the 21st C. workplace
- Can challenge conventional approaches to teaching, learning and assessment

Align with and enrich:

- The knowledge and skill requirements of the Ontario Qualifications Framework
- The Essential Employability Skills (EES) of the college program standard
- The Ontario University Undergraduate Degree-Level Expectations (UUDLEs)

# Activity

- Review handout *Aligning Skills for Sustainability with the Ontario Qualifications Framework*
- Reflect on the areas of greatest alignment and/or areas of omission between the skills for sustainability and the Ontario Qualifications Framework
- In integrating skills for sustainability, what might be some of the challenges for teaching and learning? For leveling of performance? For assessment?

## Activity

Choose one skills 'cluster', and reflect on a skill, or skills, that you are already teaching to, but which could be adapted to better include skills for sustainability.

What changes might you consider in the strategies for teaching, learning and assessment?

# Activity

- Review the handout Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategies
- Using the *same* skills cluster, review your initial ideas for teaching, learning and assessment. How do your initial ideas compare to the handout?
- What other modifications might you consider?
- How would you re-design an existing assessment plan to better integrate skills for sustainability?

# Follow-up

In your current approach to teaching, learning and assessment:

- What is of value and should be kept?
- What could be modified to better respond to skills for sustainability?
- What new ideas, principles, pedagogies, and approaches could be adapted to better prepare students for the 21<sup>st</sup>.C workplace & citizenship?

Questions? IDEAS?

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