

Student Action for Sustainability conference report



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Copernicus Alliance, U. of
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Why Student Action?

Background

Activist projects beyond the classroom have the potential to generate transformative learning - the heart of ESD. Encouraging student action in this way is a vital way to support ESD.

Learning by doing develops skills than could even be achieved through core academic activities

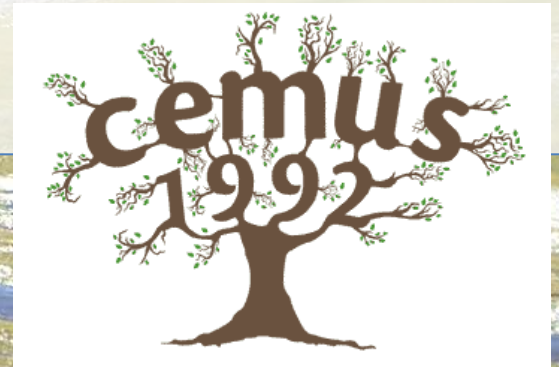
the challenges, solutions and opportunities?

Aimed at both staff and students involved in sustainability action projects

Challenge 1) Existing University systems

1. Students as consumers and customers
2. Knowledge as something that is transferred
3. Learning for employment in an unsustainable world
4. Research pressures on academics + 'activism' considered outside of academia
5. Cost centres and departmental silos

An alternative: Cemus,
University of Uppsala
Challenging existing systems
- students as creators



Challenge 2) Student transience and longevity of projects

Green Office Maastricht

Estates

Estates
Environment
Team

Transiti

Albany
Garde

Residen
and Busin
service



Challenge 3) Student 'know how' and reputations





Environment Rep

- Group of keen students



Transition



- Plans and support



Estates



- Permission

Challenge 4) Different ways of working

Activity/Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Cut fur													
Stuff and sew fur													
Cut material													
Sew clothes													
Embroider T-shirt													
Cut accessories													
Sew accessories													
Dress bears													
Package bears													
Ship bears													

Lot size: 100 bears

All activities are scheduled to begin at their earliest start time.

■ Completed work

■ Work to be completed



Opportunity 1) Working in partnership, university, communities and other organisations

- Need to work together from the start
- Demonstrate students' appetite for sustainability



- Students Unions as Green Hubs in their communities

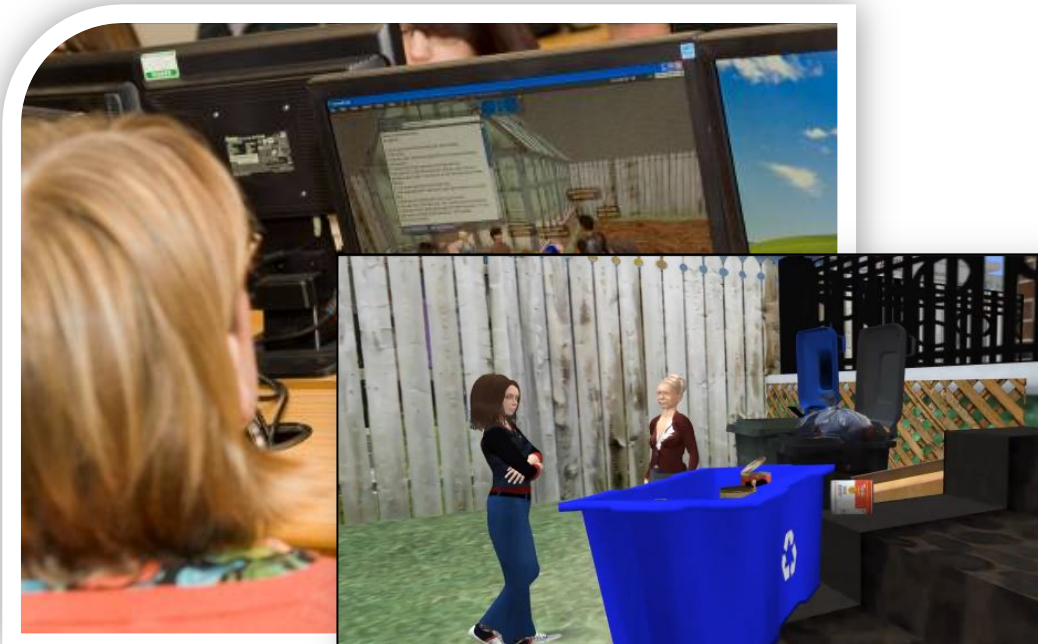
- Help with transience + know-how issues



What's the point of being in a particular town/city if you're not going to contribute to it?

Opportunity 2) Sources of inspiration

- Students inspire staff
- Staff inspire students
- Different ways of engaging
- The curriculum





● Sustainability

One of our course priorities is to embed more responsible and ethical approaches to the way we work and teach.

To reflect this our 2013 show uses 82% less foam board, 46% less paper, and cut down mount spray use by over 90%.

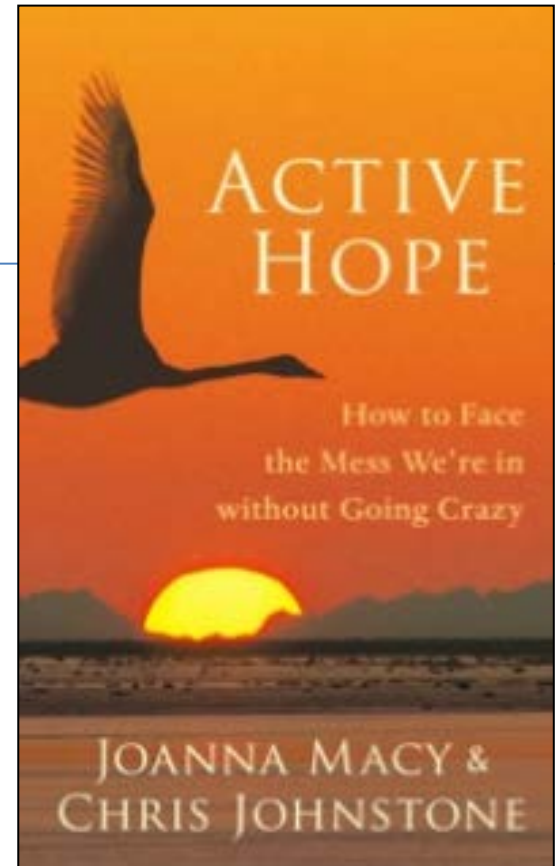
Where appropriate we used — 100% FSC approved recycled paper — and vegetable based inks to print. The show format was designed to be easily transferable and uses lightweight materials to save on fuel and transportation costs.

***Is activism a
natural
consequence of
SD teaching?***

***Is activism the ultimate
transformational
learning experience?***

Opportunity 3) The 'affective' domain

- Limited focus on the affective domain and its use in inspiring and empowering
- The role of reflection



But....the 'dark side' of activism



- The ethics of working not *with* but *through* or *on* students
- The blurring of the public and the private



Making the links....

“Content and relevance of education increasing concern”

“Need for a reorientation of education and learning”

“Priority areas: building capacity and mobilizing youth, transforming learning environment, accelerating solutions at local level”

= ‘Activist learning’. An educational approach which advocates action for sustainability

“A need to be change implementation savvy”

Summary

- Many examples of students making big ideas for change happen
- A real forum for inspiration and a desire for more



What's next??

Thank you to...

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