

University of the Arts London (UAL) aims:

**To create a culture of social and environmental awareness in order to develop and integrate sustainable and ethical practice throughout all aspects of our life and work.**

(University Strategy 2010-15)

This publication showcases some examples of UAL best practice in embedding sustainability within the curriculum. These short case studies highlight the various ways in which colleagues address sustainability and environmental ethics with their students.

For further information or to share how you have adapted, re-used, recycled and/or upcycled any of these examples please contact Antony Johnston, Curriculum Development Coordinator

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# Sustainable Pedagogies

What is sustainable pedagogy?

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**Sustainable pedagogy is often interpreted as having to do with raising awareness and undertaking practices in the curriculum related to our physical environment. However, the concept and practice is much broader than this.**

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## Sustainable pedagogy is built on five essential pedagogic principles:

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**Futures thinking** engages students in imagining preferred visions for the future to foster ownership and responsibility for more sustainable futures.

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**Critical and creative thinking** enables students to explore new ways of thinking and acting and to respond to problems in new and more sustainable ways.

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**Participatory learning** supports students' abilities to engage communities and stakeholders in order to learn from differing knowledge systems and perspectives.

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**Systemic thinking** challenges students to go beyond simplistic models of cause and effect as problem-solving is seen as simultaneously problem-making

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**Partnerships** foster change and empower people and students to take action to build capacity for sustainable development.

**(adapted from Tilbury and Wortman 2004)**

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The overarching goal of sustainable pedagogy is to provide an educational experience to students that can transform their view of the world and empower them to strive for well-being in social, economic and ecological realms and identify the interrelationships between these three.

# Sustainable Pedagogy in Practice

What do we mean by sustainable pedagogy?  
Here are two examples:

**In developing and using sustainable pedagogies I draw upon an experiential and reflexive learning process to explore Design for Sustainability through teaching and learning methods that visualise our interdependence, support a mutual learning environment, and explore cause and effect of our actions and interactions.**

Dilys Williams

**The MA Fine Art aims to take forward, apply and test ideas about how the art college at every level can become more sustainable. We use sustainable teaching strategies that emphasise peer learning, experiential learning through live projects, and question engagement with the studio space and institution as a whole. These teaching and learning elements are often drawn from the professional arena and create genuine transferable skills in terms of applying for projects and 'pitching' ideas to commissioning agencies or curators.**

Edwina Fitzpatrick

# Sustainability & Course Design

Sustainable course design creates socially engaged students who are able to effect change for positive social benefit.

**Exploratory exercises of how we effect change and how matters of sustainability affect us are built into the curriculum from the start. Students debate sustainability through cause and impact, and political and cultural lenses. Project briefs encourage students to think creatively and economically by recycling, transforming and using non-toxic materials to create their artefacts.**

*Now I understand the fundamentals of sustainability and I can and will work around it in the future. It is an important topic to go through if you're thinking about cost and savings, and we will inevitably have to handle that issue in the real working world (Student Feedback).*

Candida Moriarty

**MA Fashion and the Environment was conceived for a deep and immersive exploration of sustainability through fashion. It was developed through sustainability principles including mutual learning space, deep ecology practices, social design, and new models for fashion design and business. It challenges conventional approaches to fashion's practices and communication modes, and has enabled collaborations across disciplines and generation groups.**

Dilys Williams

**Outside/Inside is an initiative that explores how the physical environment away from the 'normal' studio affects our making and critical decision making. Blended groups of students from a variety of courses and levels participated in workshops held in different, uncontrolled outdoor situations and locations. The fluid nature of play and discovery helps break down any perceived silos of learning levels as students reflected on their, and their peers' learning.**

Barbara Salvadori and Jacky Blake

# Evaluating Sustainability

80 percent of a product's environmental and economic costs (are) committed by the final design stage before production begins (Graedel et al., 1995:17)

**Textiles Environment Design (TED)** is a research group within UAL's Textile Futures Research Centre that considers the sustainability of the textile/fashion industries with particular reference to the role of the designer in the design, production, use and disposal processes. TED's TEN is a set of 10 cards that are used to investigate, survey and highlight opportunities for sustainability. Each card identifies a critical area for attention and suggests a strategy for analysis and change to overcome the barriers to improvement.

Textile Environment Design

To instigate and support sustainable thinking, students on the BA (Hons) Product Design are encouraged to use a Sustainable Thinking Project Log. The log helps students seek opportunities for increasing the value of their design proposals by supporting their decision making through comparative evaluations, and encouraging reflection on the process and outcomes in sustainable terms. This helps students to view sustainability as a positive contributor rather than a constraining factor in their work.

Jane Penty

At LCC we generated a set of ten new assessment briefs to create a significant positive impact upon the student experience. Our ambition was to genuinely integrate sustainable and ethical teaching and learning into the curriculum. Students were briefed to research a range of challenging themes and to connect with an NGO or charity that had specialist local or global knowledge of their topic. Co-collaborating on live projects placed social and environmental responsibility at the heart of students' work.

Sarah Temple and Tara Hanrahan

# Key Learning Points

...in this new era of collaborative innovation, designers are having to evolve from being the individual authors of objects...to being the facilitators of change among large groups of people.

(Thackara, 2005:7)

**Sustainability is holistic**

**Nurture students' ability to view patterns and systems holistically.**

Dilys Williams

**Sustainability needs to be embedded**

**Sustainability takes time. It should be seen as a long, embedded process that enables students to see its values through their own experience, not just through lectures or books but by hands on practice.**

Barbara Salvadori and Jacky Slake

**Peer learning supports sustainability**

**Support students so that they can take the initiative in communicating a sustainable agenda to other students.**

Patricia Austin

**Sustainability can be supported by professional practice**

**Design participatory and active learning experiences that provide opportunities for students to develop relevant networks that will support their long-term sustainable practices.**

Edwina Fitzpatrick

**Awareness is a foundation for change**  
**Provide students with a rationale for change.**  
**Raise awareness of sustainability and allow students to define what it means for their own practice.**

Candida Moriarty

**Practice what you preach**  
**Sustainability needs to be modelled. Apply simple but proactive actions to demonstrate awareness.**

Candida Moriarty

# References

## Further Reading

**Cotton, D.R.E., Sterling, S., Neal, V. & Winter, J. (2012)**

*Putting the 'S' into ED: Education for Sustainable Development in Educational Development.* SEDA Special 31

**Sterling, S. (2001)**

*Sustainable Education – Re-Visioning Learning and Change,* Schumacher Society Briefing no. 6, Green Books, Dartington.

**Stibbe, A. (ed.) (2009)**

*The Handbook of Sustainability Literacy: skills for a changing world* Totnes, UK: Green Books

## Websites and Resources

or an online version of this booklet containing links to resources and websites relating to projects and case-studies highlighted in this publication visit the Resources page of the Learning and Teaching website (search arts.ac.uk for “Learning and Teaching”)

## References

**Graedel, T., Allenby, B. and AT&T (1995)**

*Industrial ecology,*  
New Jersey: Prentice Hall / AT&T

**University of Gloucester (2012)**

*Education for Sustainability:*

*A Guide for Educators on Teaching & Learning Approaches*

<http://insight.glos.ac.uk/sustainability/education/documents/efs%20educators%20guide%20final%207july11.pdf>

**Sterling, S. (2001)**

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**Thackara, J. (2005)**

*In the Bubble: Designing in a Complex World* Cambridge MA, London:MIT Press

**Tilbury, D. and Wortman, D. (2004)**

*Engaging People in Sustainability,* Gland Switzerland:  
IUCN – The World Conservation Union