Moving from safe to brave spaces



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She is passionate about sustainability education and is presently leading the Future Pathways Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Project and working on embedding sustainability into all aspects of teaching and learning. She is particularly interested in the theory of change and transformative learning, and working on how we can reframe cultural narratives for a fairer, fitter future for everyone.

The sustainability education narrative in HE is finally on the move from niche to more mainstream spaces. Growing awareness of the SDGs, embedding sustainability into curricula and empowering learners are all emerging trends, as education’s pivotal role in tackling urgent global crises becomes more established (Advance HE and QAA, 2021). Whilst there are many pockets of excellent practice and innovation aimed at engaging staff and students across the university, the literature notes we still lack sufficient examples of operationalizing sustainability knowledge and competencies into the fabric of HE (Cebrian at al., 2018) in order to motivate and guide learning for more just and sustainable futures.

Drawing on a honeycomb model, a range of sustainability teaching and learning practices, ideas and tools that have surfaced through the Future Pathways ESD Project at Oxford Brookes University are presented. Taking heutagogy as central to the transformative ESD learning ethos, Future Pathways has engaged a diversity of voices, working in different domains across the university. The importance of communicating and connecting, embracing liminality and ‘moving from safe to brave spaces’(Winks, 2017) is explored through sharing some concrete, adaptable examples of what operationalizing sustainability across programmes, disciplines and levels can look like.