

ALL LEARNERS ARE SUSTAINABLE LEARNERS

Graham Hasting-Evans, NOCN Group CEO

On Friday 5th August, I was delighted to speak as part of the AELP Deep dive into Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in the Curriculum webinar. The webinar follows the 2022 revision of the professional standards for those working in the Further Education and Training sector. The standards now include the requirement to 'Promote and embed education for sustainable development (ESD) across learning and working practices'.

I joined Charlotte Bonner, National Head of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) at the Education and Training Foundation. An expert in education for sustainable development and advocate for sustainable lifelong learning.

Charlotte took attendees through what is ESD, why it is important, best practices and recommended templates to enable educators to begin embedding ESD into their curriculum.

What is Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)?

'Education for Sustainable Development allows every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future.

Education for Sustainable Development means including key sustainable development issues into teaching and learning; for example, climate change, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity, poverty reduction, and sustainable consumption.' UNESCO, 2014

Why is ESD important?

There are over 5 million learners and apprentices across the UK, and we need to prepare and support them to acquire the knowledge, skills and behaviours to make informed decisions and take responsibility for environmental integrity and economic validity for future generations. At its heart, it is about lifelong learning and is an integral part of quality education.

ESD is the pipeline for 'green skills' and 'green jobs' within the workforce. A transition to a sustainable future means jobs may become obsolete, so understanding the risks locally and nationally is key for FE institutions and training providers to support employers, learners and communities in the transition to new industries or upskilling/reskilling in existing sectors.

What is ESD in practice?

In practice, ESD links to many broad skill sets, for example, how to question or think critically. It is part of the formal, subliminal and co-curriculum, and there are multiple ways educators can create sustainable learning opportunities for learners. Here are just four ways multiple centres have used to bring ESD into their curriculums:

1. Utilising the local community through external speakers and site visits
2. Creating student-led projects and activities with the college or training centre
3. Roleplay and the use of scenarios
4. Building links with enterprise and business

What resources are available?

The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) have a wide variety of resources available, including research, practical tools, insights, CPD and bespoke consultancy. The ETF have free resources available to help educators, colleges and training providers embed and monitor ESD in the curriculum. For more information visit: <https://www.etf-foundation.co.uk/resources/esd/esd-resources/>

In addition, NOCN Group has developed a clear breakdown of products and services with routes into green occupations and will be releasing new units, qualifications, standards and short courses with green skills embedded in the new 2022-23 academic year. For more information contact business.enquires@nocn.org.uk