

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: INTER-DISCIPLINARY EVENTS:

October 2006 to January 2007: a 3 day discussion series to explore the interaction between the Natural and Human Sciences in relation to 'Education for Sustainable Development'

Facilitators: **Dr Colin Brooks** (Director: History, Classics & Archaeology subject centre; member of ESD Planning Group)
Dr Alex Ryan (freelance academic; member of ESD Planning Group)

Places are limited: please respond by the end of August with early expressions of interest - later applications will depend on availability

Contact for all enquiries - Dr Alex Ryan: alex@learning-energy.org (Tel: 01242 577976)

Background:

In 2005 the Higher Education Academy Subject Centres carried out initial explorations on the theme of 'Education for Sustainable Development', analysing the current state of the various disciplines in terms of teaching activity and its relationship to the direction of research. Two of the Subject Centres (*HCA: History, Classics & Archaeology & C-SAP: Sociology, Anthropology & Politics*) joined forces to hold a multi-disciplinary discussion day at Oxford University, in order to initiate debate on the interplay between their disciplines and the natural sciences. Post-event evaluations and feedback during the dissemination process have confirmed a significant interest in developing the agenda in relation to inter-disciplinarity and sustainability. We have been encouraged to take this work forward and have since made a successful bid for funds to run a first series of 3 multi-disciplinary day events, involving participants across the natural and human sciences with interests in this area, plus a concern to work out the curricula, teaching and learning implications of developments in and between the disciplines.

Aims/Agenda: This sequence of 3 events will provide time for debate and reflection with colleagues from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds, all of whom have research and/or teaching expertise in relation to 'sustainable development'. Understandings and approaches to concepts of sustainability (and indeed 'development') will be diverse at these meetings – they have been conceived as an opportunity for creative exchange of ideas and as a forum for exploring approaches, challenges, and ways to move forward on these issues. This series will serve as a forum for those who wish to forge new networks and collaborations, to contribute to the growing debate around sustainability in HE, and to inform the direction and approach taken with events and projects funded by the ESD Planning Group over the coming years.

Output/Outcomes: We intend that these day events will form a progressive sequence and that their developmental orientation will allow participants to shape the content and issues as they arise. Demands on participants will be minimal; we may simply ask that you send a paragraph for pre-circulation, previewing your orientation and expertise on these matters. One or two participants may be invited to prepare short presentations as the sequence progresses, but the level of participation, comment and collaboration will be a matter for each participant. In terms of more pragmatic outcomes, we will write a final project report and the series will be evaluated by other members of the ESD group, with a view to planning for future projects. We will decide as a group whether we feel there are significant teaching materials, electronic resources, or publications that might emerge from this project. Again, participants may become as closely involved as they wish; we will seek continuation funding for any substantial future outputs, with the aim of buying out academic time to support the preparation of materials and publications.

Expressions of Interest:

Places will be limited since we will need to create a coherent base of representation among the various disciplinary communities. Therefore we are inviting initial indications of interest in attending either the whole sequence or single days. Please email Alex Ryan in the first instance at the address above **BY END OF AUGUST**; invitations will be confirmed towards the start of autumn term and applications later than August will depend on the availability of places. There is no charge for attendance and reasonable travel expenses will be refunded.

Proposed dates: Thurs 26th Oct, Mon 20th Nov, Wed 10th Jan

Proposed venues (TBC): Leeds (IDEAS CETL), York (HE Academy), Birmingham (Centre for Sociology, Anthropology & Politics)

The seminar series is funded by the Education for Sustainable Development Planning Group of the HE Academy and the project will be administered at LLAS (Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics & Area Studies) at Southampton University.