

Sustainability Mindset Toolkit - Leading Responsibly (QAA 2) #ImpactFund

Group Size

Small group (teams of 4-6), Individual Task, Large Group

Learning Environment

Lecture Theatre, Carousel Tables (small working group), Special

QAA Enterprise Theme(s)

2 Opportunity recognition, creation and evaluation

Objective:

- To provide students with an opportunity to experience the complexity of managing and engaging with stakeholders.
- To provide students with an understanding of the impact of their decisions making, environmentally, socially, and economically
- To provide students with an opportunity to develop their communications skills and strategies.
- To enable students to become reflective practitioners
- To enable students to become responsible leaders

Overview:

This workshop allows students the chance to “live” the challenges of leading change responsibly and sustainably, engaging stakeholders and considering the external effects of internal decision-making. This is done with the support of a computerised simulation based on a comprehensive model of how and why human beings react to change, and includes a range of commercial, personal, emotional, and ‘political’ factors for the students to consider. Students experience, first hand, the sort of ethical decisions and dilemmas of balancing the Environmental, Social and Economic, factors that will determine the final success of the initiative. Success is measured by the level of support obtained from the stakeholder group as a whole and the Environmental, Social and Economic value that is derived from the decisions that they make.

Sustainability Mindset Principal Themes addressed:

SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE

Long Term Thinking –

Both-And Thinking

Inter-connections

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Reflection Self-awareness

Enterprise Educator Framework addressed:

Developing Skills and Competencies associated with being Enterprising.

Activity:

This activity is designed to be embedded into a module and form part of the student's formative assessment. However, it can be adapted to be delivered as a ½-1 day workshop.

1. Pre-Simulation Activity

Students are given a Project Brief associated with the simulation (provided by Prendo). This document contains information about the scenario, the decisions that the students need to make and an overview of the key stakeholders. Students are asked to consider the environmental context of the project locally and globally and prepare the following:

- Identify and appraise the current external environment in which the project will take place (through tools such as PESTLE, the ESG pillars and the SDGs). Use these as a consideration and justification for making the key project decisions.
- Identify, map, and rank the stakeholders in terms of their power, and interest along with the political and emotional factors that could impact on the project. This could be done by identifying each stakeholders needs and expectations with regards to the implementation plan and the decisions that are to be made.
- Perform a Network Analysis to understand the formal and informal relationships between each stakeholder. This information will familiarise the students with the stakeholders in preparation for the simulation.
- Prepare an effective stakeholder engagement strategy based on the above analysis, that will ensure that the stakeholders are kept informed of progress during the change process. Include in the strategy an indication of appropriate communication channels and the frequency of communication and how they will be monitored.

These tasks will be refined after the consultation (simulation) with the information that they have subsequently gathered, to become part of a strategic report

2. Simulation

<https://www.prendo.com/simulation-workshops/pactio/>

The Simulation is framed to the students as an opportunity to consult with key stakeholders about their, views, needs and expectations. The stakeholders will react in accordance with the decisions that the students have proposed. The outcome and success of the project will be based on a combination of stakeholder support, revenue gains/cost savings.

Students will be given the opportunity to do a Warmup exercise to familiarise themselves with navigating the simulation.

It is advisable that the students capture as much information during the simulation as possible by taking notes, recording the session, or taking screen shots for example, just as with real life, there is no going back.

Groups of 4 are preferable during the simulation but will depend on the size of the cohort. The reason for this is 1. It reduces the costs of the licences 2. Students learn from each other 3. It enables the students to capture more information. The outcome and the learning during the simulation will be shared amongst the team members to inform their individual assessment. The online project simulation that will last approximately 3 hours.

The facilitator of the simulation has access to a summary of key variables delivered during the simulation. It is imperative that the students have a full debriefing of the results, what they have achieved and what they could have done to improve the outcome. This will enable the students to reflect on their performance.

3. Post-Simulation Activity

Based on the information that was gathered during the consultation (simulation) and the information that was accumulated in the pre-simulation work, students will further prepare the following:

- Critically evaluate the business decisions as outlined in the Project Brief file and conclude which decisions will derive the most value and why. Use the information gathered from the Pre-Simulation activities and the Simulation, as well as academic literature, to justify the decisions.
- Identify the key risks associated with the final decisions, quantifying them by their impact and probability together with any mitigation plan and evaluate the impact on resources (human and physical)
- Summarise key areas of the report and outline additional governance frameworks and considerations that would enable a positive and sustainable outcome.

4. Strategic Report

The assessment deliverable of this workshop is a suggested individual 4,000-word strategic plan based on the pre and post-simulation activities (the bullet points therein).

Skill Development:

UNESCO Sustainability competencies covered using this tool.

Cognitive/ Thinking competency

- **Systems thinking competency:** the ability to recognize and understand relationships, to analyse complex systems, to perceive the ways in which systems are embedded within different domains and different scales, and to deal with uncertainty.
- **Anticipatory competency:** the ability to understand and evaluate multiple futures – possible, probable, and desirable – and to create one's own visions for the future, to apply the precautionary principle, to assess the consequences of actions, and to deal with risks and changes.
- **Critical thinking competency:** the ability to question norms, practices, and opinions; reflect on own one's values, perceptions and actions; and take a position in the sustainability discourse.

Behavioural/ Ways of Doing competency

- **Collaboration competency:** the ability to learn from others; understand and respect the needs, perspectives, and actions of others (empathy); understand, relate to and be sensitive to others (empathic leadership), deal with conflicts in a group; and facilitate collaborative and participatory problem-solving.
- **Integrated problem-solving competency:** the overarching ability to apply different problem-solving frameworks to complex sustainability problems and develop viable, inclusive, and equitable solution that promote sustainable development – integrating the above-mentioned competencies.

Socio-emotional/ Ways of Being competency

- **Normative competency:** the ability to understand and reflect on the norms and values that underlie one's actions and to negotiate sustainability values, principles, goals and targets, in a context of conflicts of interests and trade-offs, uncertain knowledge and contradictions.
- **Self-awareness competency:** the ability to reflect on one's own role in the local community and (global) society, continually evaluate and further motivate one's actions, and deal with one's feelings and desires.

From feedback that has been received from the students, they report that the simulation highlights the complexities and frustrations of managing stakeholders and balancing their needs and expectations against the business objectives. They describe how this “live challenge” is multidimensional and requires them to understand the interconnectivity between each consideration to make informed decisions.

Resources:

Access to PC and internet

References:

- Leigh, E.E. and Levesque, L.L., 2024. How to prepare for facilitation. In *Facilitating Simulations* (pp. 93-150). Edward Elgar Publishing.

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