

Sustainability Mindset Toolkit - Opening Minds to Change #Opera (QAA 1, 6)#Impactfund

Group Size

Any

Learning Environment

Special

QAA Enterprise Theme(s)

1Creativity and Innovation 6Interpersonal Skills

Objective:

- Develop students' sense of collective responsibility for the environment.
- Engage in a participatory process to identify, articulate, and prioritise actions for change within a specific setting.
Reflect on steps to effect behavioural change

Overview:

Target audience: All students at undergraduate and postgraduate. The activity can be used with small or large groups, but this influences how many ideas students can propose for inclusion on the OPERA board, which is subject to a maximum of 24 ideas. Pre-requisite(s): Students have an awareness of the ecological imperatives behind the need for social and economic transformational change.

Duration: Suitable for a session of about 2 hours

Sustainability Mindset Principal Themes addressed:

ECOLOGICAL WORLDVIEW

Eco literacy

My contribution

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Creative Innovation

Reflection Self-awareness

Enterprise Educator Framework addressed:

Developing Skills and Competencies associated with being Enterprising.

Activity:

1. Briefly recap the ecological imperatives behind reducing climate change (10 minutes).
2. Introduce students to the aims of the session: to engage in a participatory process to identify, articulate and prioritise actions for change within a specific setting using the OPERA methodology. Explain that students will first work on their Own, then in Pairs, to Explain, Rank and Arrange their responses to a question (5 minutes).
3. In preparation for the activity, put students in pairs (5 minutes).
4. Pose a question to stimulate ideas for change. For example: Drawing on your personal knowledge and experience, what steps can we take to contribute to social and economic transformation? Take students through the following steps of the OPERA process:
 - a) Own thoughts, students work on their own responses to the question in silence and write their ideas down (5 minutes)
 - b) Pairs 1: students share their ideas with each other (this is not a discussion but involves careful speaking and listening in turn (5 minutes each, total 10 minutes).
 - c) Pairs 2: agree the ideas to share with the rest of the group, you can blend and combine (10 minutes).
 - d) Explain 1: Write your ideas clearly and comprehensively on A4 paper, landscape format, with marker pen (5 minutes).
 - e) Explain 2: Read your idea to the rest of the group. Place your ideas on the OPERA board (see resources for an example; note the number of ideas is constrained by the number of OPERA board spaces of 24) (depends on the size of the group, maximum time 15 minutes).
 - f) Ranking: Each pair has 10 votes to allocate to the ideas presented. (Note: They CANNOT vote for their own ideas) (10 minutes)
 - g) Arrange: The tutor/facilitator will remove ideas that receive no votes and will be guided by students to rearrange the remaining ideas by popularity and themes (10 minutes).
 - h) When all ideas have been rearranged, the group is tasked with naming and labelling the themes (see resources for an example) (10 minutes).
5. Reflect on which actions can be taken –
 - a) individually,
 - b) collectively, and
 - c) institutionally (Individual activity: 10 minutes).
6. Consider future examples of what we are doing (and not doing) together (Whole group: 10 minutes)

7. Next steps: Identify steps to effect behavioural change as a group collectively (Whole group: 10 minutes). **Total: 120 mins**

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

- Strategic competency: the ability to collectively develop and implement innovative actions that further sustainability at the local level and further afield.
- **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

- **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.
- **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.**

Resources:

- PowerPoint presentation on OPERA
Sample OPERA board.

References:

Link to resources on Research

Gate: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/373680439_EE_and_Planetary_Sustainability_What_can_EE_do_EEUK_Research_Project_Toolkit_Brentnal

About the Author

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