



NICEC Conference 2024: Career and Sustainability

Skills, wellbeing and the environment

Tuesday 2 and Wednesday 3 July 2024

NICEC

National Institute for
Career Education
and Counselling



How Green is your practice?

A workshop to help us identify ways in which career development practice addresses or could address environmental challenges.

Korin Grant
University of Warwick
Korin.grant.1@warwick.ac.uk



A bit about me...



Korin Grant ✓ (She/Her)

Assistant Professor, Career Studies

Leicester, England, United Kingdom · [Contact info](#)

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Aims

- Introduce research and key findings
- Watts/Packer model to analyse current practice
- Exploration using the Five Signposts to identify possible actions
- Explore challenges and barriers that we experience

What's missing?



Your practice/experience of career guidance...



Could be...

- One to one
- Group
- Teaching
- Employability award/programme
- Coaching
- Mock interviews
- Role plays
-

Why this study?

- Plenty of voices of concern about environment (NUS Survey, Fridays for Future, environmental groups local to me, student protests)
- Studies and perspectives on 'green careers/guidance' (Dimsits, 2021, Guichard, 2013, Inkson & Parker, 2011, Irving, 2013, Plant 2020 and more), green HRM and organisational sustainability (Ones & Dilchert, 2012, Magill, M.S., Yost, P.R., Chighizola, B. & Stark, A (2020) and sustainability education (Ho, 2023)
- Missing voice from clients/potential service users?
- Curiosity for the perspectives of my cohort/students
- Lack of clarity about what I can do through my work and how this might be received



Warwick students shut down careers fair in protest against the arms trade

November 19, 2022



FRIDAY 25th MARCH CLIMATE STRIKE! CLOCKTOWER 1pm-3pm



@climatestrikeleicester

@climatestrikeleic

@climatestrikeLE

#schoolstrikeforclimate

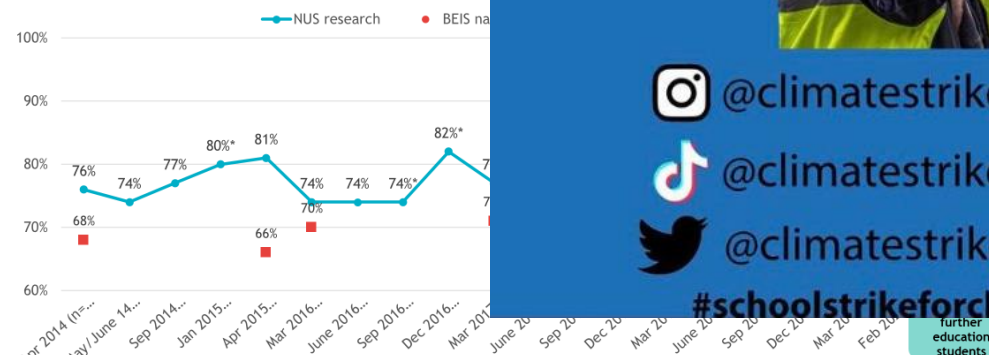
further education students



Growing concern about climate change

"The biggest problem/threat we face is climate change. It is destroying our planet and its environment. We must ensure that positive change occurs" -

"How concerned, if at all, are you about climate change?"
[Responses shown for very or fairly concerned]



Source: NUS Student Opinion Climate Change | Respondents in higher and further education across the UK

Embedding climate education in the curriculum

The story of climate strike Leicester:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&fbclid=PAAaY1J9xdpmJl_n41pBSR-rjRzqkbYML1Avz_46NQk5JhWZ9Kilsy7bgjUg&v=IW0RoZNEorg&feature=youtu.be

Climate change and career:

What role do environmental concerns have in career guidance?

A survey study of 80 strategic leaders aiming to answer three research questions:



1) Environmental attitude

- Positive engagement with environmental concerns
- Questions about where responsibility lies – individually, collectively, with experts, at the top of an organisation...



2) Relationship to organisation

- Organisational action and trust
- Work value congruence may be a factor in job satisfaction



3) Role for environment in guidance: It's complicated!

- Concern about individual liberty
- Association with **choosing employer** and **decision making**
- Link career development aims to sustainability goals

So what?

Analysis of themes & application of Watt's socio-political ideologies (1996) & Packer's green review (2020).

When it comes to change people operate in a range of spaces...

- Conservative
- Liberal
- Progressive
- Radical

...and practitioners need to be prepared to work in each of these.

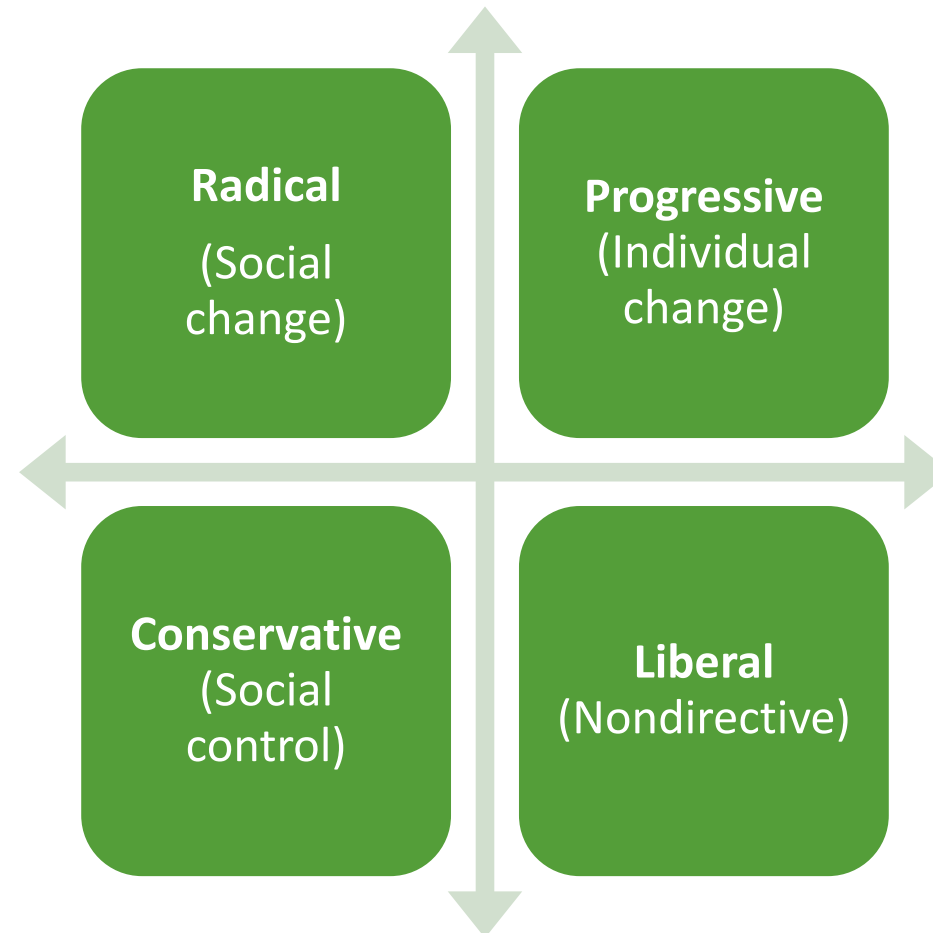


Role for environmental issues within career guidance activities...





Watt's Socio-Political Ideologies (1996)



| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Focus on change</p> <p>DARK GREEN (Ecologism)</p> | <p>RADICAL (social change)</p> <p>In careers practice this might look like: helping individuals to see social and environmental challenges as group – rather than just individual – challenges, e.g. through green critical pedagogy.</p> | <p>PROGRESSIVE (individual change)</p> <p>In careers practice this might look like: encouraging and empowering individuals to make individual career choices that take ecological wellbeing into account.</p> |
| <p>Focus on status quo</p> <p>LIGHT GREEN (Environmentalism)</p> | <p>CONSERVATIVE (social control)</p> <p>In careers practice this might look like: acting as a ‘gatekeeper’, assisting individuals to develop their skillset/attributes for a greener economy.</p> | <p>LIBERAL (non-directive)</p> <p>In careers practice this might look like: helping individuals who are environmentally-minded to make career choices in line with their personal values and skillset.</p> |

| | Focus on organisation/society | Focus on individual |
|---|--|---|
| CHANGE DARK GREEN | RADICAL Expectation that organisation / society will change, collective responsibility, system change, challenge the norm, environmental concerns feature in all areas, wider interpretation of career | PROGRESSIVE Expectation that the individual will change, pro-environmental behaviours, 'green careers', environmental concerns feature in decision making |
| Status Quo LIGHT GREEN | CONSERVATIVE Organisation retains power and control, career guidance services the status quo/economy, narrow view of career, potential for green washing in organisations | LIBERAL Non-directive approach, protect individual liberty in career choice and decision making, environmental concerns may play a role |



Recommendations for practice (from my study)

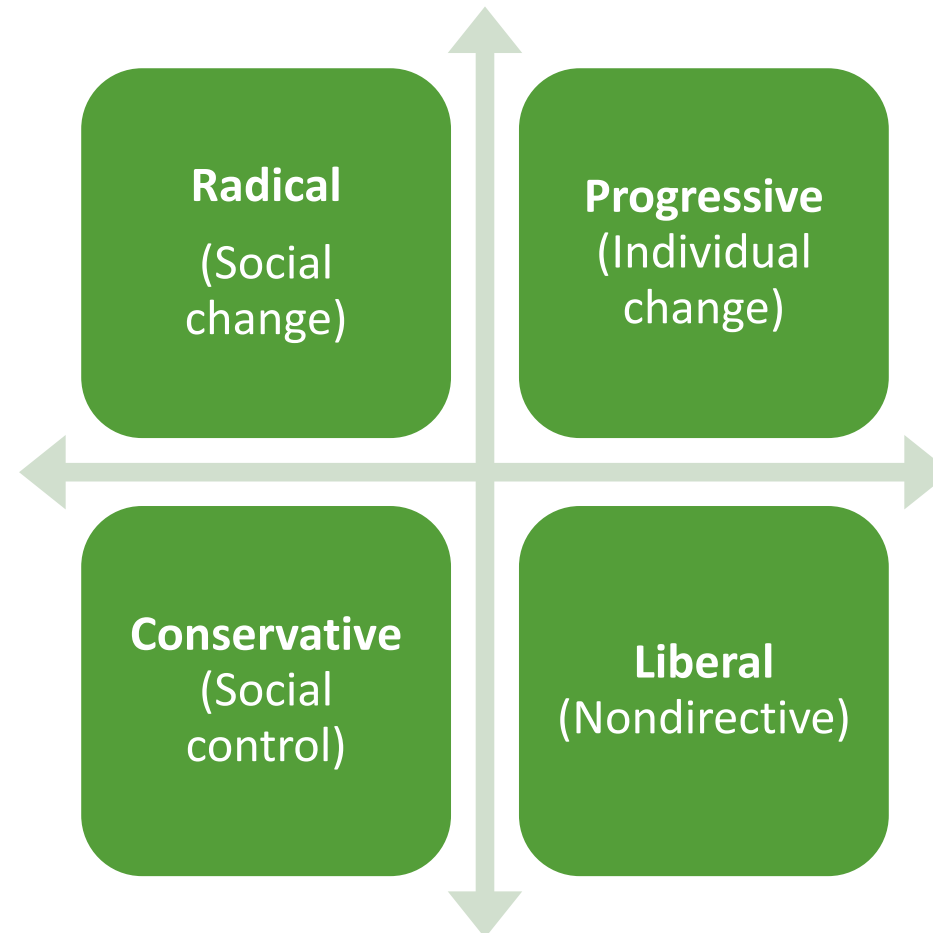
- Practitioners review their practice in terms of readiness for change
- Be prepared to work in different spaces / attitudes to change
- Improve understanding of and access to 'green LMI' (employer/job role link to sustainability, environmental impact)
- Awareness that individuals see a role for environmental issues at decision making stages – how do we respond?



Where are we now? Auditing our current practice

- Supports organisation / system / society
- Focuses on change

- Supports organisation / system / society
- Focuses on status quo / existing opportunity structure



- Supports individual
- Focuses on change

- Supports individual
- Focuses on status quo / existing opportunity structure

Some examples (of adding a green/critical aspect)

Case study: Getting a career in the environmental sector

Name: Louise Clancy

Current job title: Environment Programme Officer (Climate Change Adaptation and Water)

Current employer: [Greater London Authority](#) 

University: Exeter University

Course: BSc (Hons) Biology and Geography

Year of graduation: 2002

Share



1. Why did you choose your particular career?

"I went with my gut feeling at the time. I had the option of following a well defined career route on a graduate training scheme for a well known international business. The other option was to join the Environment Agency, in a graduate entry position, but without a graduate development scheme and with a much smaller salary. I accepted the Environment Agency role. My beliefs were more closely matched with the Environment



World of Work: A collaborative board game experience



Occupational therapy University of Brighton

Sustainability is a compulsory element within two modules in the final year of the MSc Occupational Therapy course at the University of Brighton. Students follow a **problem-based curriculum, working in collaborative teams**. They develop resource-conscious creative skills, such as crafts or gardening, **encouraging them to reflect on the environmental impact of their activities and their own personal wellbeing, as well as that of their patients.**



*“I prioritised one learning outcome above all others because I really believe that it is essential: To develop **effective occupational therapy plans that are safe and sustainable (in that they meet the needs of the client without jeopardising the needs of future generations)**...once inserted in the final two modules **it trickled back into the rest of the course.**”*



A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE, TOGETHER.

GREEN CAREERS WEEK 2024

4 – 9TH

NOVEMBER 2024





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World of Work: A collaborative board game experience



Quantity surveying Heriot-Watt University

Graduates of their Quantity Surveying BSc and MSc programmes are **trained to incorporate sustainability into every decision that they make**. There are links to sustainability throughout different modules, allowing tutors to **relate it to all aspects of the programme**.

Students report a greater understanding of sustainability in the built environment after they complete their studies. This includes the issues surrounding a **growing global population, smart cities** and achieving sustainability with smarter usage of **digital technology**.



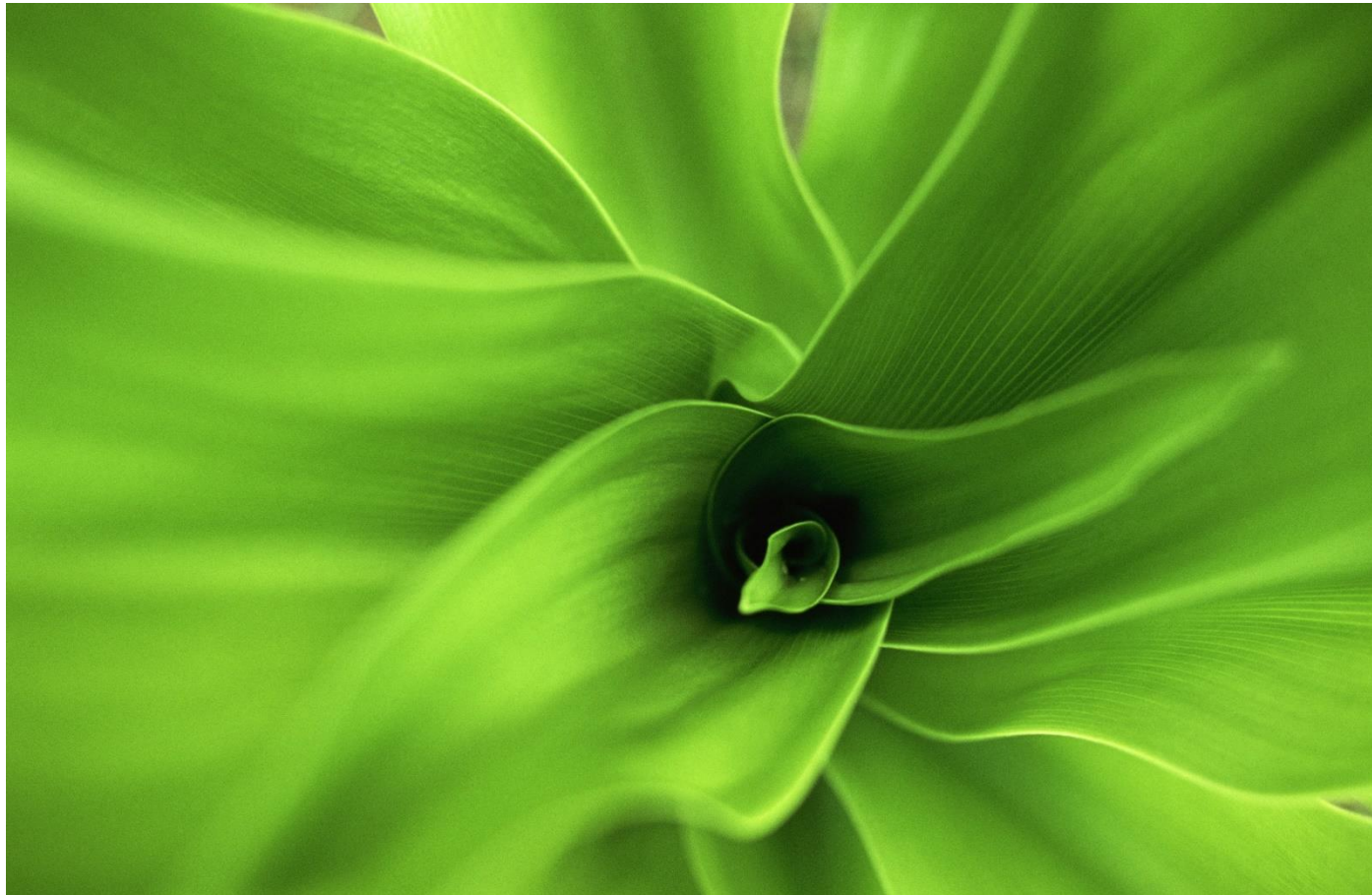


Where would you put your practice example?





What might you do to 'green' your practice?





The five signposts towards socially just career guidance (Hooley, Sultana, Thomsen, 2021)

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Build | build critical consciousness; |
| Name | name oppression; |
| Question | question what is normal; |
| Individuals and Groups | work with both individuals and groups; |
| Different levels | work at a range of levels. |

Using the signposts to move to greener practice

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Build | build critical consciousness; |
| Name | name oppression; |
| Question | question what is normal; |
| Individuals and Groups | work with both individuals and groups; |
| Different levels | work at a range of levels. |

- Choose one (or more) of the five signposts
- Can actioning this help to move your practice to a more progressive or radical space?
- What else might we do?
- What challenges/barriers do we face?

Challenges/barriers

At this workshop we asked what challenges and barriers they face when trying to consider 'greening' their practice further. These are the results:

- Running a business, having to compromise at times to win business
- How can we remain impartial
- Knowledge
- Tension between directive and client centred approach
- Focus on graduate outcomes – jobs not work
- Pressure on HEIs just to fill seats and role of guidance in that
- 'Dictated to' by employers?
- Clients resistance
- Green issues are viewed as political
- How to do this without being judgemental



One thing you will do...

At this workshop we asked what one thing each participant might do to 'green' their practice further. These are the results:

- Add a course about sustainable careers for our PhD candidates (accredited). Use this course to further connect their personal values with UN goals.
- Relabel the Careers Fair to “Green Careers Fair”
- Review my teaching units so “green careers” is not just an add-on topic.
- Question on the “needs of the world”
- Be more explicit about ‘green challenge’ in my career work
- Talk to my corporate clients to design career programmes
- Look for tools to encourage students to reflect on green issues
- Adjust and evolve my diagnostics to open thinking?
- I would like to add a reflective exercise regarding sustainability to our bank of digital material
- Get more LMI info so I can use it in my 1 on 1 session and offer green possibilities for my clients
- Start conversations
- Learn more



*The environmentally enchanted scholar:
A research fairy tale*

(A ChatGPT generated fairy tale version of my dissertation study)

Once upon a time, in a kingdom not so far away, there lived a group of wise leaders who cared deeply about their land and its future. Among them was a young scholar named Korina, who was curious about how the magical force of climate change influenced the kingdom's career paths. Korina embarked on a grand quest to discover the truth. She visited 80 castles, each ruled by a strategic leader. In each castle, she asked three mystical questions:

1. What are your feelings towards the environmental enchantment?
2. How do these feelings affect your loyalty to your kingdom?
3. What role do you think this enchantment should play in guiding the careers of young knights and maidens?

The leaders were very much engaged with the environmental enchantment. One wise leader proclaimed, "*Climate change is our collective number one issue right now. How we all contribute to that is vital to solving the crisis.*" This heartfelt concern also influenced their trust in their kingdoms. They wanted their rulers to be true to their promises about tackling this enchantment, and it was important that their personal values aligned with their kingdom's stance. One leader confided, "*An organization's environmental credentials are important to me as this aligns closely with my personal values.*"

However, when it came to weaving the environmental enchantment into career guidance, things became tricky. Some leaders worried that this might hinder personal growth. One emphatically stated, "*My development is my development,*" fearing that individual liberty might be compromised. Others were preoccupied with immediate concerns, like providing for their families amidst the cost of living crisis. Yet, there were those who saw a clear role for environmental concerns in career decisions. They suggested linking personal development quests to the kingdom's sustainability goals, making the journey meaningful on both personal and grand scales.

As Korina gathered these varied insights, she stumbled upon an ancient scroll by a sage named Tony Watts. The scroll revealed a sociopolitical ideologies framework, showing that people operated at different levels of readiness for change. Some were conservative and liberal, not focused on change, while others were progressive and radical, ready for transformation.

From her journey, Korina learned that for the kingdom's career guides to be effective, they must be ready to work across these different levels. They needed to integrate environmental concerns in ways that resonated with individuals' varied perspectives and readiness for change. And so, Korina returned to her village with newfound wisdom. She shared her findings with the kingdom, helping to shape a future where career guidance could harmoniously include the vital conversation of environmental concerns. Her journey taught her and others the importance of understanding and working with different beliefs and readiness for change. Korina's tale became a cherished story in the kingdom, a beacon of how curiosity, understanding, and a willingness to adapt could lead to a brighter, greener future for all.

And they all worked towards a sustainable happily ever after.



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- Watts, A.G., Hawthorn, R., Law, B., Killeen, J. and Kidd, J.M., (1996). *Rethinking careers education and guidance: theory, policy and practice*. Psychology Press.

Other resources that I have found useful:

- Green Careers Hub: <https://www.greencareershub.com/find-your-green-role/organisation-case-studies/>
- Groundwork: <https://www.groundwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Groundwork-Growing-Green-Careers-April-2022.pdf>
- Adecco <https://www.adeccogroup.com/future-of-work/latest-insights/training-for-green-jobs-learnings-from-five-case-studies>
- Responsible Futures Accreditation programme: <https://www.sos-uk.org/project/responsible-futures>
- Global Goals mapping with SOS-UK: <https://www.sos-uk.org/project/sdg-global-goals-curriculum-mapping>
- Nesta How green is your job really: <https://greenjobexplorer.org/>
- WWF sustainable Futures: <https://www.wwf.org.uk/get-involved/schools/sustainable-futures>
- Get involved with the Global Goals Teach-in 2021: <https://www.sos-uk.org/project/global-goals-teach-in>
- Find out about our wider sustainability offerings and education work: <https://www.sos-uk.org/projects>
- From Art to Zoo Management: Embedding sustainability in UK higher and further education: <https://www.sos-uk.org/resources-file/from-art-to-zoo-management-embedding-sustainability-in-uk-higher-and-further-education>
- SOS-UK/NUS research reports:
- **The story of climate strike Leicester:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&fbclid=PAAaY1J9xdpmJl_n41pBSR-rjRzqkbYML1Avz_46NQk5JhWZ9Kilsy7bgjUg&v=IW0RoZNEorg&feature=youtu.be
- Case study example: <https://info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/careers/information-and-resources/employment-sectors/articles/case-study-environment>
- Green careers week <https://greencareersweek.com/resources-2023/#>
- World of work collaborative board game <https://careerguidancesocialjustice.wordpress.com/2024/01/30/the-world-at-work-a-collaborative-board-game-experience/>
- <https://www.sos-uk.org/research>
- Bupa Eco disruptor <https://www.bupa.com/impact/action/eco-disruptive>
- <https://sustainability.nus.org.uk/our-research/our-research-reports/education-and-employment/sustainability-in-education>
- <https://www.sos-uk.org/research/sustainability-skills-survey>
- UCU Green New Deal for Universities and Colleges: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/green-new-deal>
- https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/10969/The-future-we-choose-wallchart/large/UCU_Climate_wallchart_A1_FINAL_HIGH-RES_.png
- UNECE ESD Competencies for ESD [for educators]: https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/esd/ESD_Publications/Competences_Publication.pdf
- Better Student Outcomes through sustainability: Living Lab guide: https://www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk/better_student_outcomes_through_sustainability_