



Success Story: Victoria University of Wellington

Project:

Whakawhitinga kōrero: Interdisciplinary place-based video dialogues on the SDGs

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The learning and teaching resource, Whakawhitinga kōrero: Dialogues on sustainability, entails a series of videos that introduce the SDGs as they relate to local and global sustainability challenges, with a prioritisation on addressing the place-based context.

A staff-driven collaborative production of Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand, this resource was developed in response to the need to educate students in holistic concepts of sustainability while encompassing diverse interdisciplinary perspectives and that reflect regionally and culturally-significant sustainability issues. The SDGs function as the framework for the videos where they reinforce the inherent interdisciplinarity and interconnectivity of broad-reaching sustainability concepts – from poverty to climate action, and from gender equality to the requisite partnership for the goals themselves. Each video centres on one-to-two specific SDGs, and these are addressed via dialogue between university staff, alumni, and local business and government representatives from across fields and sectors. The interjection of multidimensional viewpoints affords a balanced and democratic frame of reference in understanding the SDGs, while also offering an interpretation of the goals in a manner that more accurately mirrors the complexity and universality inherent in the SDG framework. Within the place-based context, students are introduced to cultural concepts that foster an understanding of sustainability as they relate to Māori (the indigenous people of New Zealand) values, including: mātauranga Māori (indigenous knowledge of native New Zealanders), kaitiakitanga (guardianship, care and conservation of nature, people, and ideas), and whanaungatanga (the close relationships that are formed through collective experiences, as evidenced through the interdisciplinary and collaborative learning and teaching environment).

By inviting engagement through these lenses, students are given the opportunity to reflect on and identify with the wider challenges of sustainability through a more personalised, multi-faceted understanding. This interdisciplinary approach was selected as a means to offer an alternative to the disciplinary-specific curricula that, while offering valuable expertise within a given subject, entails a risk of educating students according to a limited understanding of sustainability. The intention of developing this learning and teaching resource is to enable education on the SDGs to be embedded into existing and new courses and to provide students with opportunities to learn reflexively through exposure to differing visions for sustainable development, including indigenous perspectives. Used in this way, the video dialogues support critical and creative thinking as well as dimensions of global competence. Based on student interviews and written reflections, research regarding the impact of the video dialogues was collated with positive results. Critical success factors include increased engagement, critical thinking, and supported understandings of interconnectedness.

Contact

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Video resource is available at:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLV_dIHIN2dYDhSCYMkaotRT9LJKu7jBPC

Most relevant SDGs:

