Sustainability Perceptions: Views of International Students at a New Zealand Institute

Mary Panko and Rashika Sharma
Unitec Institute of Technology
A course in Sustainable Technology

- A level-6 course as part of the Bachelor in Applied Technology.
- Has varied between optional and compulsory.
- Stress opportunities for individuals, their industries and global benefits.
- Highlights potential advantages for companies $$$ as well as social and environmental aspects.
- We have focussed on the Quadruple Bottom Line (Economy, Social, Environmental and Governance) as well as Life Cycles of products.
- Linked classroom instruction to Industrial experiences e.g. guest lecturers and field trips as well as practical investigations by students.
Methodology

- Initially attempted twice to survey students about their changing attitudes to sustainability on their return to home country, BUT - still a very poor response rate.
- Repeated questionnaire twice with class to acquire sufficient responses.
- Analysed using Google forms.
International students home countries

- Malaysia [5]
- Saudi Arabia [6]
- China [2]
- Other [9]
Students existing knowledge of sustainability prior to course

- Nothing
- Very little
- Something
- Quite a lot
- A great amount
Students’ perception of application of sustainable technologies in home country.
Does learning about sustainability make any difference?

- Widening students’ perceptions of sustainability from environmental knowledge to an appreciation of economic influences, governance issues and societal impact is effective (Walshe, 2008).

- In other words, the participants had moved from ‘egocentric’ to a more ‘ecocentric’ point of view (McMillan et al 2004).

- Leads to transferable awareness of sustainability on return to home country. (Panko & Sharma, 2014).
The impact of sustainability education on student perceptions (their view)
Impact on Students
The example of the Tuk-tuk
The electric car
Powered by a wood-burning stove
References

