Abstract:
The potential of higher education in advancing sustainability has been widely accepted and even partly realised, although a wholesale reorientation of core activities and curricula toward and embedded with sustainability is still an exception. But even big changes start small and modules that address sustainability have both strategic and symbolic value particularly in disciplines and departments where it has not previously been explicitly, or at all, addressed. This paper discusses a project which aims to introduce sustainability considerations into the criminology and criminal justice curriculum by way of a new and innovative module "Criminology for a Just Society", developed with the support and funding from the central university sustainability initiative. The module aims to facilitate a broad and nuanced understanding of sustainability and criminology's potential to further it, focusing on the current ecological, cultural, socio-political and economic problems and ways of addressing them. This is done through a framework of (in)justice which allows students to embed new understanding within familiar disciplinary context and language. The pedagogical approach is interdisciplinary, emphasising service learning through volunteering placements and active student engagement, and assessment which embeds critical reflection and knowledge exchange. "Criminology for a Just Society" was piloted in 2014-2015 and the paper reflects on the project, drawing from both student and staff experiences to evaluate its impact and map further developments.

Introduction

Awareness of the rapidly increasing environmental devastation and the resulting social and economic breakdown is widespread if often superficial. The role of the Higher Education (HE) sector in deepening the understanding is not new, although considerable momentum was gained during the United Nations' Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2014.[1] It placed particular responsibility on universities regarding research, learning, leadership and curricula development to facilitate Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and promote its underlying values of human rights, social and economic justice, intergenerational responsibility, protection and restoration of ecosystems, respect for cultural diversity and commitment to peace[2].

This is particularly crucial as universities and academic knowledge become increasingly commodified.[3,4] Echoing Furedi,[5] Walters[6] argues that the value of education is measured in market terms, not for its implicit educational value, or even social or personal empowerment. ESD represents a countermovement of sorts to this, valuing education for its transformational potential, not just for the individual but for the world at large. Barth and colleagues[7] see this not just equipping people with knowledge and skills to further sustainability, but also encouraging reflection on and responsibility for decisions and behaviour of oneself and others.

The current paper reflects on a project aiming to introduce sustainability considerations into the criminology and criminal justice curriculum by way of a new and innovative module "Criminology for a Just Society" (CfJS). The spark for the project was of a personal and professional nature, and the introduction discusses its pedagogical and disciplinary underpinnings as well as practical development, providing a brief overview of the module itself.

ESD encompasses ideas of other values-driven/adjectival educational and curriculum movements seeking to embed human rights, citizenship education, inclusivity/diversity, and democratic/collaborative approaches[8,9] and can in many ways be considered an umbrella term for all. The philosophical roots of ESD and other such values-driven movements reside in liberal education and the concept of a free university, the work of Von Humboldt and Hegel, later John Dewey and John P Miller[10]. The approach aligns with our personal values and view of HE as playing a role in developing not just knowledgeable and skilled individuals but aware, responsible and active

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[1] P. Jones, D. Selby and S. Sterling, "Introduction", in P. Jones, D. Selby, and S. Sterling (eds), *Sustainability Education: Perspectives and Practice across Higher Education.* (London, Earthscan, 2010).

[2] UNESCO, *United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-14): Draft International Implementation Scheme* (Paris, UNESCO, 2004).

[3] R. Walters, "Critical criminology and the intensification of the authoritarian state" in A. Barton, K. Corteen, D. Scott, and D. Whyte (eds.), *Expanding the criminological imagination: Critical readings in criminology* (Cullompton, Willan, 2007).

[4] A. Barton, K. Corteen, J. Davies and A. Hobson, "Reading the Word and Reading the World: The Impact of a Critical Pedagogical Approach to the Teaching of Criminology in Higher Education" (2010) 21 *Journal of Criminal Justice Education* 24-41.

[5] F. Furedi, *Where Have All the Intellectuals Gone?* 2nd ed. (London, Continuum, 2006).

[6] Walter, *supra* n.3

[7] M. Barth, J. Godemann, M. Rieckman, and U. Stoltenberg, (2007) "Developing key competencies for sustainable development in higher education" (2007) 8 *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education* 416-430.

[8] A. Ryan, *Education for sustainable development and holistic curriculum change: A review and guide* (London, Higher Education Academy, 2011). See: http://efsandquality.glos.ac.uk/toolkit/AR_HEA.pdf (accessed 02 June 2015)

[9] D. Tilbury, *Education for Sustainable Development: An Expert Review of Processes and Learning,* (Paris, UNESCO, 2011). See: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001914/191442e.pdf (accessed 26 Novem2016)

[10] Ryan, *supra* n. 8

ones; the 'tree of knowledge' being of and for the good[11]. It also reflects Canterbury Christ Church University's (CCCU) values of *"transforming individuals, creating knowledge, enriching communities and building a sustainable future"*[12] and its strategic aim to embed social and environmental sustainability throughout teaching and research[13].

Sustainability has traditionally been understood in relation to the environment and issues of 'green development'[14]. Contemporary understandings have advanced this concept to include three key spheres of sustainable development: environmental, economic and social[15]. While each strand is relevant to criminology and law, social sustainability with its emphasis on ethics and wellbeing has particular resonance, highlighting the broad and interdisciplinary nature of sustainability. Indeed, current research highlights how the negative effects of climate change are most experienced by lower-income and other disadvantaged groups, who often contribute least toward its causes.[16] This differentiated responsibility was acknowledged at nation state level as the recent COP21 Paris Agreement[17] placed obligations on developed countries to provide financial assistance to the developing states. Therefore, the different spheres should not be considered as separate, but rather viewed as interlinking aspects of sustainability which work together to create a sustainable society:

> *"A truly sustainable society is one where wider questions of social needs and welfare, and economic opportunity are integrally related to environmental limits imposed by supporting ecosystems."*[18]

Additional attention has been given to the importance of implementing such measures in ways which enhance and respect diversity and individual cultures, giving birth to cultural sustainability as a fourth strand[19].

In spite of the range of these overarching themes, the links between sustainability and other disciplines are often overlooked. Specific theoretical approaches within criminology illustrate clear overlaps with the sustainable development agenda. Building on a longstanding tradition of critical social research, *critical criminology* seeks to highlight aspects of crime and victimisation generally neglected within society, championing the 'view from below', giving voice to the voiceless and enabling grassroots change[20]. In parallel, the critical legal studies and critical jurisprudence approaches have continued to draw attention to the intersections of political and economic interests

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[11] D. Maskell and I. Robinson, *The New idea of a University* (London, Imprint Academic, 2002).

[12] CCCU, *Our Mission and Values*. See: http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/about-us/our-mission-and-values.aspx (accessed 02 June 2015)

[13] CCCU, *Strategic Framework 2015-2020*. See: http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/about-us/docs/Strategic-Framework-2015-2020.pdf (accessed 02 June 2015)

[14] W.M. Adams, Green development: Environment and Sustainability in a Developing World, 3rd Edition (Oxon, Routledge, 2009)

[15] UNESCO, United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014): International Implementation Scheme (Paris, UNESCO, 2005). See: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001486/148654e.pdf (accessed 02 June 2015)

[16] Banks, N. et al. *Climate change and social justice: an evidence review,* (York, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2014) See: https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/climate-change-and-social-justice-evidence-review (accessed 02 February 2016)

[17] UN, Adoption of the Paris Agreement, (Paris, UN, 2015) See: https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/l09.pdf (accessed 22 February 2016)

[18] J. Agyeman, R. Bullard and B. Evans, Just Sustainabilities: Development in an unequal world. Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 2003) p. 78

[19] *supra* n. 15

[20] P. Scraton, *Power, Conflict and Criminalisation* (London, Routledge, 2007)

and law, as well as the social divisions and injustices this can propagate[21]. More recently *zemiology*, which involves a move away from a focus on crime towards a broader consideration of social harms, has demonstrated a further alignment with many of the problems which sustainable development seeks to address[22]. Similarly, Loader and Sparks'[23] call for a *public criminology* which both engages with lay understandings of crime and has a greater impact on policy and practice reflects the emphasis on action and change emphasised by the sustainability movement. *Green criminology* with its broad focus on ecological risks and harms, wildlife crime and animal abuse[24,25] is an increasingly active area of research and theorising. Perhaps the most explicit connections between criminology and sustainability are those made by Agyeman and colleagues[26,27] focussing on the concept of justice. Issues of inequality and injustice can be linked to the four areas of sustainability outlined, and it is noted that *"justice and sustainability are intimately linked and mutually interdependent, certainly at the problem level and increasingly at the solution level"*[28].

The issue of 'solutions' is particularly poignant, for we must go beyond the talk of the harms and crimes, to transcend description and critique in order to facilitate students' understanding of *"human, legal, and civil rights as well as criminal and social wrongs, resistance as well as oppression and redress as well as injustice."*[29] In light of this, CfJS aims to facilitate a broad and nuanced understanding of sustainability and criminology's potential to further it, focusing on the current ecological, cultural, socio-political and economic problems and ways of addressing them. This is done through a framework of (in)justice which allows students to embed new understanding within familiar disciplinary context and language. The module is organised around the four themes of environmental, social, economic and cultural justice, the topics of academic sessions reflecting these and covering such issues as wildlife crime, multiagency working in communities, modern slavery and rights of indigenous peoples. Incorporation of service learning through embedded volunteering forms a key part of the module, and this will be discussed at some length later on.

The module was developed in 2013-14 with the support and funding from CCCU's Futures Initiative, a strategic seed-funding and capacity development programme seeking to integrate sustainability perspectives into the curriculum[30] and piloted in 2014-15. It was planned in close collaboration with the students who helped shape the subject content, teaching, learning and assessment strategies through a series of focus groups, and who then took the module the following year. As the HEA/QAA guidance[31] suggests, student involvement in curriculum development can facilitate a collaborative, more democratic learning environment, creating a sense of ownership and personal responsibility, important not just for ESD but for learning in general. The students agree:

[21] R.M. Unger, *The Critical legal Studies Movement: Another Tine, A Greater Task* (London, Verso, 2015)

[22] P. Hillyard, C. Pantazis, S. Tombs and D. Gordon (eds), *Beyond Criminology: Taking Harm Seriously* (London, Pluto Press, 2004)

[23] I. Loader and R. Sparks, *Public criminology?* (New York, Routledge, 2010)

[24] P. Beirne and N. South, N. *Issues in Green Criminology: Confronting Harms Against Environments, Humanity and Other Animals* (Cullompton, Willan, 2007)

[25] N. South and A. Brisman, *Routledge International Handbook of Green Criminology* (London, Routledge, 2012)

[26] *supra* n. 16

[27] J. Agyeman, *Introducing Just Sustainabilities: Policy, Planning, and Practice* (London, Zed Books, 2013)

[28] *supra* n. 16 p. 3

[29] *supra* n. 4 p. 34

[30] P. Rands, "Five Years of the futures Initiative (2011-16), Building capacity for an uncertain world" (Canterbury, Canterbury Christ Church University, 2016). See: https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/about-us/docs/sustainability/Futures-Initiative-report-2016.pdf

[31] HEA/QAA, *Education for sustainable development: Guidance for UK higher education providers* (London, HEA, 2014). See: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Education-sustainable-development-Guidance-June-14.pdf (accessed 02 June 2015)

"Having a voice to say what you have in your education is really important because we had a chance to say what we wanted to go into a lecture, what we wanted from the assignments, which made us really motivated." (Samantha)

"It feels more personalised, you feel such a part of it whereas in other lectures you feel like you're just a student and one of many, but then this gets you more involved." (Charlotte)

Structure of the paper

Sipos and colleagues[32] use Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains of learning[33] in their model of 'transformative sustainability learning' which engages head, hands and heart. This provides the organising structure for the current paper. The 'Head' section briefly outlines the academic content of the module, focussing on the changes in knowledge, developing understandings of sustainability, its links to criminology and the interdisciplinary approach adopted. In the 'Hands' section we discuss the service-learning and volunteering elements of the module and why these are particularly suited for ESD. Links to employability are also explored. The 'Heart' section considers the role of critical reflection in facilitating transformative learning, and the, sometimes difficult, process of changing understandings, attitudes and behaviours ESD can initiate. Finally, we will discuss plans for future developments.

Including the student voice

Student involvement was key to the development and running of the module, and students' experience provides the core for evaluating its success. Throughout, the paper uses the student voice to illustrate and evidence the different aspects of CfJS and its impact. The quotes are drawn from two sources: students' reflective blogs which formed a key part of the assessment (see 'Heart' section below for more detail) and a focus group discussion conducted at the end of the module.

Focus groups are well-suited for capturing understandings of any shared experience among a group of individuals[34], facilitating the creation of a dialogue among participants with minimal input from the interviewer. This format also provides opportunities for consensus or disagreement among participants, illuminating significant opinions and conflicting views, made apparent here e.g. with students giving contrasting accounts of what the term sustainability means to them. Power relationships in research are often problematic and a focus group risks some participants dominating the discussion while less vocal members are overshadowed. However, the students knew each other well having been in class together each week throughout the academic year and were comfortable participating in group discussions. Similarly, as the student participants were arguably less powerful than us as facilitators and lecturers, an additional concern was over social desirability. However,

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[32] Y. Sipos, B. Battisti and K. Grimm, (2008). "Achieving transformative sustainability learning: engaging heads, hands and hearts" (2008) 9 *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education* 68-86.

[33] B.S. Bloom, B.B. Masia and D.R. Krathwohl, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Two Volumes: The Affective Domain & The Cognitive Domain)* (New York, NY, David McKay & Co, 1964)

[34] R.D. Wimmer and J.R. Dominick, *Mass Media Research: An Introduction, 9th Edition* (Wadsworth, Cenage Learning, 2011)

having been involved in the module development students were familiar with providing honest and constructive feedback.

The focus group formed a part of a pedagogic action research study designed and conducted in adherence with the BERA Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research[35]. Given that the group discussion element was similar to regular class discussions and the subject matter was not sensitive, there were no significant risks of harm to the participants or the researcher. In any research project where participants are recruited coercion is a concern, and it is important to be aware that an individual's choice about participation may be constrained[36]. As the students involved were all awaiting their final marks for the module, it was made clear that their decision to participate would have no positive or negative impact on these and that there were no incentives involved. Informed consent was gained through information sheets and adhering to principles of confidentiality and anonymity students were also offered pseudonyms in the writing up of the research, although all waived this right, choosing to use their real names. At the same time, consent to use students' reflective blog entries for the purposes of this article and beyond was sought and granted. Indeed, we have been explicit in our desire to share the module experience widely and discussed the various research and publication plans openly with the students throughout the module. The response has always been one of excitement and enthusiasm. It should also be noted that the first draft of the current article was read and commented on by the students whose feedback helped to shape it further.

Head: Developing Interdisciplinary Understanding

A key pedagogical approach that CfJS adheres to is interdisciplinarity. Criminology, as we often describe it to our students, is a discipline that waits in the dark alley, mugs other disciplines and then searches their pockets for useful theories, concepts and methods. While its repeat victim is sociology, it also steals from psychology, economics, public administration, biology and evolutionary studies. As something that integrates rather than just adds multiple perspectives[37] interdisciplinarity is therefore already a core criminological approach and explicitly embedded into CfJS' intended learning outcomes. The content and readings which cover the four dimensions of sustainability draw heavily from beyond criminology, guest speakers from other disciplines and outside academia, and assessments all encourage students to consider the 'bigger picture'. This section will illustrate the development of our students' understandings of sustainability and the embedding of this within a framework of justice.

Given the broad but shallow proliferation of information about the problems which sustainable development seeks to address noted earlier in this paper, all participants demonstrated some pre-existing personal interest in issues associated with the sustainability agenda, perhaps explaining their selection of the module:

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[35] BERA, "Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research" (London, British Educational Research Association, 2011) See: https://www.bera.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/BERA-Ethical-Guidelines-2011.pdf (Accessed 15 June 2015)

[36] J. Mason, *Qualitative Researching, 2nd Edition* (London, Sage, 2002).

[37] P. Jones, D. Selby and S. Sterling "More than the Sum of their Parts? Interdisciplinarity and Sustainability", in P. Jones., D. Selby and S. Sterling (Eds.) *Sustainability Education: Perspectives and Practice across Higher Education* (London, Earthscan, 2010)

> *"I watched something years ago and it was about fair trade bananas and it just really switched something on in my head."* (Laura)

This example of personal consciousness regarding fair trade demonstrates an initial awareness of economic injustice, although not couched in this framework. In spite of such comments, participants all recounted being largely unfamiliar with sustainability at the beginning of the module, with statements such as *"I didn't know what [sustainability] was at all."* (Samantha) being common. When asked what awareness of this area they did have, this was largely rooted in the environmental aspects of sustainability, and answers such as *'Pollution'* (Abbie) and *'Climate change' (*Laura) reflected the conception that sustainability is solely a 'green' issue[38], a notion which the module sought to both expand upon and move away from. By the end of the module the students had developed understandings of sustainability which were divergent and individualised yet overlapping and reflective of its content:

> *"[Sustainability means] equality and making sure that everyone has equal opportunities and chance to get things."* (Charlotte)

> *"In one of our early sessions there was that quote about how we should leave the world better than we found and it and that has stuck with me through all of the lectures, and that's how I kind of see sustainability and can be applied to all of the strands."* (Laura)

Such comments also indicate a move away from an understanding solely of the problems which sustainability seeks to address, and demonstrate a more focussed critical consideration of solutions to these problems through sustainable development. This more sophisticated academic knowledge was evidenced through the students' observations of the connections between the various strands of sustainability studied in class:

> *"Cultural justice, because a lot of it was protecting indigenous people but it was also people destroying their environment to make a company that was going to pollute it, so it was like social, cultural and environmental."* (Abbie)

By the end of the module, we were delighted to observe that our students held a holistic and multi-faceted understanding of sustainability which reflects the integrally linked nature of the social, environmental, economic and cultural dimensions advocated by Agyeman *et al*.[39].

The overlap between criminology and the sustainable development agenda noted earlier in this paper provided a fertile ground for fostering systemic thinking which integrates, adapts, connects and complements, understands and manages complexity, and considers consequences of actions[40]. As well as a more nuanced understanding of sustainability, students' awareness of the connections between this concept and criminology were apparent by the end of the module. This was in spite of initial insecurities about disciplinary boundaries which led to questions such as *"how does this fit in*

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[38] *supra* n. 14
[39] *supra* n. 24
[40] *supra* n. 2

with my degree?" (Samantha). Social justice appeared to resonate most strongly with the group, with suggesting that this aspect of the sustainability agenda was most obviously linked to their studies thus far:

> *"I kind of find the poverty and social justice bit the most interesting so that's the bit that I had read most about.... But I suppose you have to find out what it means to you really."* (Laura)

Given the focus on issues such as social exclusion and its broader structural indicators by left realism theorists such as Jock Young[41] and the tradition of attention to marginalised groups such as females and victims evidenced by early feminist and victimologist criminological perspectives, the propensity for social justice to be the most obviously relevant strand of sustainability to criminology is apparent[42,43]. Yet as the year progressed our students began to identify aspects of sustainable development which they felt to have a personal significance, the transformative impact of which will be discussed later in this paper, both within and beyond social justice:

> *"With the environmental [justice] I didn't really think anything other than climate change and then when we had stuff about wildlife crime I found that really interesting, because when I think of crime I think of it as people on people, and then the stuff about the big companies and oil and stuff, it never clicked in my head that it was criminology."* (Laura)

> *"But it's people that are doing these crimes and doing it to the environment has an effect on everyone else, like socially and the environment around you."* (Charlotte)

These comments demonstrate real critical engagement with the intersections between crime and the problems facing the sustainable development agenda. The ability to make these connections parallels the 'deep learning' approach theorised by Marton and Säljö[44,45]. While surface learning involves absorbing information for the purpose of the task at hand, deep learning involves evaluating this knowledge and relating it to previous information in the context of the broader topic to develop a critical understanding which actively questions the material at hand. The students' accounts demonstrated a tangible change in their awareness of sustainability and associated issues as not only relevant but integral to the criminological agenda. This was encouraging to see from our own perspective and affirmed that modules such as these which may have small beginnings can have a big impact. This also prepared and impassioned students to apply this knowledge and evaluate policy and practice in the context of their volunteering placements.

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[41] J. Young, *The Exclusive Society: Social Exclusion, Crime and Difference in Late Modernity* (London: Sage, 1999).
[42] S. Schafer, *The Victim and His Criminal* (New York: Random House, 1968).
[43] C. Smart, *Women, crime, and criminology: A feminist critique* (London, Routledge, 1976).
[44] F. Marton, and R. Säljö "On qualitative differences in learning: 1. – Outcome and process" (1976) *46 British Journal of Educational Psychology* 4.
[45] F. Marton, and R. Säljö "On qualitative differences in learning: 2. Outcome as a function of the learner's conception of the task" (1976) *46 British Journal of Educational Psychology* 115.

Hands: Enacting Sustainability and Learning through Service

The use of experiential projects including service-learning is one of the key teaching and learning methods for ESD[46]. It is closely related to the ambiguous if fashionable concept of community engagement, of which student volunteering has become the most visible and easily recognisable aspect[47]. Such community action has a long tradition going back to the 1960s and right back to the University Settlements for the urban poor provided in the 19th and 20th centuries[48]. The difference is that unlike the student activism of 60s and 70s, the current initiatives are formalised and supported by the universities themselves rather than being student-led via the student unions[49].

Research estimates that as much as 63% of students volunteer during the course of their university degree[50]. It is seen to bring substantial benefits both to the students and to the communities, but these are often assumed rather than proven and the current research is limited to case studies (ibid) as is of course the current paper. It should be noted that we have not (yet) sought to evaluate the impact of students' volunteering on their placement organisation and the discussion below therefore gauges the student, rather than community, impact.

Reflecting the ESD ethos of active and service-learning, a built in volunteering placement is central to CfJS. Not only does this demonstrate a commitment to CCCU's value of *"the development of the whole person"[51]* by embedding employability skills and personal development within the curriculum, it also enhances the links between the university and external partner organisations. While students were responsible for arranging their own placement, the remit for this was broad provided that they were able to identify some links to justice and sustainability. The assessment for the module is comprised of three elements and integrates the volunteering placement in each. There are two pieces of written coursework: a reflective blog focussed on the student's volunteering experience which is to be completed across the course of the academic year and a case study requiring students to critically evaluate the policies and practices of their chosen volunteering organisation in relation to theories of sustainability and justice. The final assessment is a student-led 'end of module conference', which required students to give a short presentation on their experience to their volunteering organisations, allowing them to gain an understanding of academic knowledge exchange.

The experiences and benefits reported by the students on the CfJS module echo those of the vast majority of student volunteers[52], citing significant learning and development through the volunteering placement. It was noted that embedding service learning within the module pushed students to obtain this practical experience:

[46] D. Cotton and J. Winter "It's not just Bits of Paper and Light Bulbs: A review of Sustainability Pedagogies and their Potential for use in Higher Education" in P. Jones., D. Selby and S. Sterling (Eds.) *Sustainability Education: Perspectives and Practice across Higher Education* (London, Earthscan, 2010)

[47] C. Holdsworth and J. Quinn "Volunteering in English Higher Education" (2010) *35 Studies in Higher Education 113*

[48] J. Wyatt "Persistent ghosts: Romantic origins of the idea of the university communities" in I. McNay (ed) *Higher education and its Communities* (Buckingham, Open University Press, 2000)

[49] *supra* n. 43

[50] G. Brewis, J. Russell and C. Holdsworth, *Bursting the Bubble: Students, Volunteering and the Community Research Summary* (Institute for Volunteering Research, 2010) See: https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/NCCPE%20-%20Bursting%20the%20bubble.pdf (Accessed 02 June 2015)

[51] *supra* n. 12

[52] *supra* n. 46

"I've never really actually pushed myself to go out and do it [volunteer] and I thought 'Oh, I actually have to go out and do it now'" (Charlotte)

A common observation was that volunteering presented new challenges for students. While the personal developments stemming from this experience will be outlined in the subsequent section of this study, it is worth noting that for most students the focus of their selected placements was often beyond their pre-existing experiences:

"I'd never worked with children before, I didn't know what to expect. It took me a few weeks to settle in, I was some sort of new figure of authority and they wouldn't listen to me." (Abbie)

"Some of the stuff we were told about that the offenders had done I found really difficult not to let it affect me." (Laura)

In relation to developing understandings of sustainability, participants suggested that applying the knowledge gained in class to the practical setting of their volunteering work allowed them to see how sustainability in action:

"Social inclusion and making everyone feel welcome, the atmosphere there was like anyone can come or go whenever they please." (Charlotte)

"It was very difficult for me to make the connections because they weren't as obvious. I don't think the scouts is very justice focussed… But the longer I stayed there I kind of realised that actually they do do things to help the environment, they do do things to help inclusion, like social and cultural inclusion." (Abbie)

The second comment above suggests that even where the links to sustainability were less apparent, students were nevertheless able to make their own connections through their classroom learning to service based elements of the module. Indeed, community engagement should not be considered not as a separate 'third mission' of universities but as an integral part of teaching and research[53], able to strengthen both through contextualisation[54].

"I really feel that this training tested all aspects of my education at university as well as teaching me so many new skills that I can take with me in my future career." (Laura)

The links between volunteering and employability are prominent in the current discourse. However, such instrumental emphasis on skills acquisition and future benefits can undermine the community commitment and active citizenship ethos by trivialising the inequalities or even reinforcing them by

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[53] P. Inman and H.G. Schuetze, "The community engagement and service mission of universities: An introduction by the editors." in P. Inman and H.G. Schuetze (eds.) *The Community Engagement and Service Mission of Universities* (Leicester, Niace, 2010).

[54] H.G. Schuetze, "The 'third mission' of universities: Community engagement and service" in P. Inman and H.G. Schuetze (eds.) *The Community Engagement and Service Mission of Universities* (Leicester, Niace, 2010).

positioning local communities as beneficiaries of charity[55]. The discourse of students receiving enhanced learning while target/local communities gain social justice is problematic as it assumes the two groups are separate, ignoring the heterogeneity within both[56]. CfJS sought to mitigate this in various ways. During development we worked closely with a local community network, facilitating student volunteering opportunities but also benefitting from critical input on social justice and capacity building in the local communities. The assessment strategy encouraged critical reflection on the volunteering organisations, the students' role in them and the degree to which they furthered the different aspects of justice and sustainability. The end of module conference was attended by representatives from the students' volunteering placements, providing an opportunity for further dialogue. The students found the approach both challenging and rewarding and the next section explores the role of critical reflection and its ability to facilitate transformational learning further.

It is clear that students' ties are often not just to the community immediate to the university. Furthermore, the developing allegiance to sustainability and community engagement as concepts and practices must be both contextualised and de-contextualised, transcending the classroom and the volunteering placement. Ideally, outcomes of such opportunities become sustainable beyond the lifespan of the module, which can act as a catalyst for individual change and long-term adaptation of sustainable practices. This is evident in our group of CfJS students, all of whom plan to continue volunteering while for some the experience is set to have even more profound consequences. One student who volunteered with children with special educational needs is considering applying for a PGCE in primary education. Another student found herself so interested and passionate about her experience of volunteering with adults with mental health problems that she applied, and was accepted, onto a Masters programme in social work.

Heart: Transformational Learning through Critical Reflection

While the term 'reflection' appears vague, Boud et al. describe it as *"an important human activity in which people recapture their experience, think about it, mull it over and evaluate it"[57].* In the academic context the outcome is generally specific to learning, action or clarification.[58] Ryan[59] posits that reflection is comprised of two key elements: examination of recent experiences and reorientation of attitudes to future actions. Embedding reflection in teaching therefore has an integral transformative potential. Such personal development is gaining increasing importance in higher education, and this *"emphasis on refection signals a fundamental shift in the meaning of studentship and the purposes of higher education"[60].* A central problem with facilitating reflection in higher education parallels the broader distinctions between 'deep' and 'surface' learning identified

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[55] *supra* n. 43

[56] C. Holdsworth and J. Quinn "The Epistemological Challenge of Higher Education volunteering: "Reproductive" or "Deconstructive" Volunteering?" (2012) *44 Antipode 38.*

[57] D. Boud, R. Keogh and D. Walker "Promoting Reflection in Learning: A model" in D. Boud, R. Keogh and D. Walker (eds.) *Reflection: Turning experience into learning* (London, Kogan Page, 1985) p.19

[58] J. Moon, *A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning* (London, Routledge Falmer, 2004).

[59] M. Ryan "The pedagogical balancing act: teaching reflection in higher education" (2013) *18 Teaching in Higher Education 144.*

[60] S. Clegg and S. Bradley "The implementation of progress files in higher education: Reflection as national policy" (2006) *51 Higher Education 465*

by Marton and Säljö[61][62]. Learner reflection is carried out at varying levels of engagement, ranging from surface level reviewing of an experience to in-depth critical reflection which is transformative in nature.[63][64] It is this later level which embodies Ryan's second element, whereby future experience is reimagined and personal development takes place, reflecting 'deep' and transformative learning.

The learning and assessment strategy of CfJS explicitly solicits reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action of the volunteering placements[65]. In the parlance of Willmore and Tweddell[66], this is an 'embedded elective opportunity' where pedagogy of a specific unit of study is learning through reflective action. This brings variation to the Applied Criminology curriculum where opportunities for reflection are scarce, with one participant highlighting that *"You never really do that at uni, it's usually writing about a topic"* (Charlotte). The approach allowed students who previously had no opportunity to engage in reflective writing to break from the norm, with some presenting a particular aptitude for this form of assessment and ultimately achieving higher marks. A reflective blog approach rather than a reflective essay had the advantage of requiring consistent reflection throughout the course of study rather than one final reflection after the placement, combatting the surface learning approach of learning for assessment rather than learning through it. The key benefit of a reflective blog as a learning tool is the potential to facilitate transformation through reflection which has been discussed thus far.[67] Students on the module demonstrated this level of deep critical reflection in their blog entries, going beyond merely describing what happened to illustrate how this experience has been reconceptualised and will impact on future behaviour:

> *"I can understand how easy it is to get to emotionally involve especially when you were trying to help people. I knew the boundaries and I over stepped those boundaries. When you are volunteering, you forget you have a conduct that you should follow… I do 100% take full responsibility for what has happened and have learnt from the experience and will take that experience to the next volunteer placement I chose to go to."* (Samantha)

Our students noted the importance of developing these critically reflective skills. Both the focus and format of the module provided them with learning opportunities highlighted as beyond those usually available within their programme. While this paper has already touched on the merits of volunteering for applying academic knowledge and engaging with communities, the propensity for this reflection on- and in-action to facilitate deep transformative learning at a personal level must be emphasised:

> *"I think the module's given me a lot of skills to take away from the university with me that I haven't got from other modules and that I would never have got from other modules."* (Abbie).

[61] *supra* n. 40
[62] *supra* n. 41
[63] J.D. Bain, R. Ballantyne, C. Mills, N.C. *Lester Reflecting on Practice: Student teachers perspectives* (Flaxton, Post Pressed, 2002).
[64] R. Grossman "Structures for Facilitating Student Reflection" (2008) *57 College Teaching 15*.
[65] D. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner* (San-Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass, 1983).
[66] C. Willmore and H. Tweddell, "Experiences of 'Reflective Action': forging links between student informal activity and curriculum learning for sustainability" in W. Leal Filho (ed) *Transformative Approaches to Sustainable Development at Universities: World Sustainability Series.* (Switzerland, Springer International Publishing, 2014)
[67] R.D. Garrison and H. Kanuka "Blended learning: Uncovering its transformative potential in higher education" (2004) *7 Internet and Higher Education 95.*

> *"It helped me to understand myself a bit more and how to improve on what I've been doing. If I think I've done something not as well as I could have done, then [I've learned] how to change that."* (Hannah)

Schön's[68] portrayal of the 'reflective practitioner' illustrates that reflection arguably lends itself more to disciplines which are vocational in nature and involve experiential learning. Criminological study tends not to hinge on learning through practice, making opportunities for critical reflection such as those outlined rare, yet this form of thinking is a crucial component of ESD. Cotton and Winter[69] note the need for time in the curriculum for exploration, discussion and reflection of sustainability issues. This reflection should be turned inward so that we may become conscious of, clarify, challenge and de- and reconstruct values and through the process start to understand how they, together with our background and culture, shape our knowledge perceptions of the world.[70] Our students noted the challenges to their understandings and in particular the heightened awareness and concern they developed surrounding some of the issues raised in the module and experienced in their volunteering placements:

> *"I was very ignorant towards this stuff before I did the module."* (Abbie)

> *"When she pulled up the map about how we are gonna run out of water and how we're gonna run out of food I just thought 'oh my god how did I not know this?'"* (Laura)

Throughout the course of the module, students' learning and experiences changed their perceptions of many of the issues covered as exemplified above. Sipos et al.[71] highlight that transformative sustainability learning objectives which focus on the heart aim to *"impart participants with a greater sense of authority and enablement to participate as decision-makers in their socio-cultural realities"*. Therefore such learning is as much about changing attitudes as it is about changing actions, particularly as habits acquired during university often become habits of a lifetime.[72] The potential for transformative learning in sustainability is therefore considerable when supported by formal curriculum which provides opportunities for reflective practice[73][74]. It is the actualisation of these changes in attitudes through the long-term embedding of sustainable practices which CfJs aims to facilitate among students, and evidence suggest that it has succeeded in doing so, at least to some extent:

> *"The big one for me is probably don't judge until you know. A lot of people are going through something that you probably couldn't even imagine what they're going through."* (Samantha)

[68] *supra* n. 61

[69] *supra* n. 42

[70] UNESCO, *Education for Sustainability, From Rio to Johannesburg: Lessons learnt from a Decade of Commitment* (Paris, UNESCO, 2002) See: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001271/127100e.pdf (accessed 15 June 2015)

[71] *supra* n. 28

[72] *supra* n. 62

[73] A. Ryan and D. Cotton, "Times of change: shifting pedagogy and curricula for future sustainability" in S. Sterling , L. Maxey and H. Luna (eds.) *The Sustainable University Progress and prospects* (Earthscan, Abingdon, 2013)

[74] *supra* n. 62

Although increased awareness of issues such as discrimination and social equality may appear insignificant in terms of tangible impact in addressing these problems, such realignment of pre-conceived ideas about marginalised groups which challenges divisions is central to addressing such social injustice. These statements support Eyler's notion that *"Once students are heavily immersed in the complexities of a social issue, they may find that they are in a position where their old beliefs are simply not adequate for dealing with the issues."*[75] Indeed, increased knowledge goes hand in hand with increased ambiguity, and the risk of cognitive dissonance: an unpleasant psychological tension arising from holding inconsistent *"thoughts, attitudes, beliefs or states of awareness of behaviours."*[76] This is particularly true for sustainability which challenges not just our understanding, but our values and behaviours.[77] The group members were all passionate about raising awareness around the problems facing the sustainable development agenda and taking action to address these, including continuing to volunteer:

> *"It's made me think about things that bigger companies do that I've never really thought about but now I can confidently speak to someone about that."* (Laura)

> *"It's given me a much broader view of what actually happens in the world and what I can do to change that."* (Hannah)

We have envisaged from the module's inception that the outcomes of the opportunities provided by CfJS would become sustainable beyond the lifespan of the module, and that learning in this context would be transformative beyond the students' usual realms of experience in university. Howatson-Jones advises students: *"Writing about your experiences will help you to make sense of them, so that your understanding lasts and contributes to your lifelong learning."*[78] CfJS certainly appeared to act as a catalyst for individual change and we hope that the adaptation of sustainable practices that our group have suggested is long term.

Future Developments

While we are extremely pleased with the impact of the module evidenced by our students thus far, the end of this pilot year provides us with an opportunity to critically reflect on our own pedagogic practice. In relation to students' understandings of sustainability and its links to justice, their academic knowledge was clearly enhanced through the interdisciplinary and varied nature of the module content. Yet they did highlight the need for *'more help'* (Abbie) with setting some of the specific issues discussed within the contextual framework of sustainability and justice. We will therefore endeavour to provide a more detailed introduction to these issues at the beginning of the

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[75] J. Eyler, J. "Reflection: Linking Service and Learning—Linking Students and Communities" (2002) *58 Journal of Social Issues 517* p. 527

[76] M.A. Hogg, G.M. Vaughan, *Social Psychology, 6th ed. (*Harlow, Pearson Education Limited, 2011)

[77] T. Ngwana "Learning and Teaching for Sustainable Development in Higher Education: Examining Dissonance and Instructional Strategy" in L. Bell, H. Stevenson and M. Neary (eds.) *The Future of Higher Education: Policy, Pedagogy and the Student Experience* (London, Continuum, 2009)

[78] L. Howatson-Jones, *Reflective Practice in Nursing, 2nd Edition* (London, Sage, 2013)

module. Similarly, the volunteering placements were successful in equipping students with applied knowledge and skills, yet a more structured system for monitoring students in these settings is needed. Where students encounter difficulties within their placements these 'critical incidents'[79] are opportunities for personal development, but there is also an increased need for pastoral support. Most significantly, there are of course challenges with implementing and engaging students in reflection, some of which were experienced within this module. It must be remembered that *"critical reflection is not an intuitive skill"*[80] and students may initially struggle with this more personal form of writing. A 'skills session' familiarised students with reflective writing techniques, yet some of our students' early entries evidenced more descriptive rather than critical accounts and our focus group raised a need for more regular guidance of this nature throughout the module.

As well as addressing these issues, we intend to expand the module in future academic years. Owing to an increasing number of electives, sustainability modules are often in competition with other specialist areas, instead of being seen as something that overarches and connects them and the number of students enrolled on them is comparatively low.[81] CfJS only attracted five students in its first year, most of whom were also involved in the module development which was highlighted as a key benefit. Students undertaking the module in 2015-16 are currently engaged in pre-module focus groups to discuss potential new content, an aspect of CfJS which we plan to continue. We hope that as the module becomes established within the school it will recruit more widely rather than being viewed by students as too different; something outside their comfort zone and prior learning, too risky especially during final year when degree classification concerns are paramount[82]. There is also scope to enhance sustainability focus within the criminological curriculum beyond the CfJS optional module format. Without significantly expanding programme content in an often already crowded core curriculum, increased embedding of the language of sustainability in core modules, for example in areas such as critical criminology or legal studies, would highlight the links to a wider range of students. At CCCU an ESD curriculum mapping tool has been developed to aid the process across all academic programmes, while an extracurricular project exploring the criminal justice and sustainability links in particular has proved another successful approach.[83] As well as highlighting the links for students, this would also evidence the centrality of sustainability in a variety of disciplines to academics themselves who may in turn reflect on where sustainability fits within their programmes. A further potential for development is the opportunity to evaluate CfJS' impact on volunteering organisations in the coming years. While we were able to speak with representatives informally at the end of year module conference, a more structured approach such as a survey would provide valuable feedback and further emphasise the centrality of connecting the university and community to the module.

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[79] *supra* n. 70

[80] *supra* n. 55 p.154

[81] A. McGoshan and S.Martin, *From strategy to implementation: the second evaluation of the Green Academy programme* (HEA, 2014) See: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/resources/2nd_Green_Academy_Evaluation_2014_FINAL.pdf (accessed 02 June 2015)

[82] Ibid.

[83] K.M. Hallenberg and M. Tennant, 'Criminology Picks Up the Gauntlet: Responses to the Whole Earth? Exhibition' (Inspire: HEA Annual Social Sciences Conference, Manchester, UK, 3-4 December 2015)

Conclusions

> *"Even if you do something really small it can have a big effect."* (Hannah)

CfJS is part of a deliberately grassroots level approach to embedding sustainability and changing culture through the cumulative effect of individual projects that CCCU has adopted.[84] Indeed, modules that explicitly address sustainability bear both strategic and symbolic relevance.[85] They not only signal the importance of sustainability to their discipline, programme and institution, but can also act as an example and catalyst for change, particularly where sustainability considerations have not previously been explicitly, or at all, addressed. [86]

CfJS has adopted an openly critical pedagogy approach, aimed to challenge practices and discourses, in education but particularly in the wider social, economic and political sphere, that reproduce inequalities and social injustice.[87] Within criminal justice, the approach problematizes the concepts of crime and deviance, highlighting their historically and socially contingent nature, the role of the state and its agencies, and brings voice to those at the receiving end of their practices.[88] CfJS encourages the students, and staff, to listen.

For the students, CfJS has clearly been an enriching experience in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills gained. It has been gratifying to witness the growing appreciation of sustainability, changing attitudes and behaviours, and the increasing enthusiasm through class interactions and reflective blogs. But such learning and development are not confined to the students. For us, the module has been a highly challenging and highly rewarding experience both professionally and personally. As educators, it has been wonderful to work with such an engaged group of students, to witness such transformation in them, and to have an opportunity to critically reflect on our own practice through the challenges an atypical module such as this brings. As academics it has been gratifying to challenge and stretch our own knowledge and understanding when it comes to the various dimensions of sustainability and justice, and to increase professional networks in this area. Moving forward, we hope that through this module we can encourage other academics to reflect on where ESD may fit for them and to recognise its interdisciplinarity. On a personal note, we have experienced the module as immensely enjoyable and downright *fun,* and when you can say that about your work, you are onto a winner!

> *"Education will need to prioritize the development of those dynamic capacities – cognitive, interpersonal and motivational – associated with the ability to continuously shape and reshape one's own existence"[89]*

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[84] S. Scoffham and N. Kemp "It's Contagious! Developing sustainability perspectives in academic life at a UK university" in W. L. Filho, U. M. Azeiteiro, S. Caeiro & F. Alves (eds) *Integrating Sustainability Thinking in Science and Engineering Curricula: Innovative Approaches, Methods and Tools* (London, Springer, 2015)

[85] *supra* n. 76

[86] Ibid.

[87] P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (London, Continuum, 1996).

[88] *supra* n. 4

[89] J. Eliot "The Curriculum Experiment: Meeting the Challenge of Social Change" in W. Scott and S. Gough (eds) *Key Issues in Sustainable Development and Learning: A Critical Review* (London, Routledge Falmer, 2004)

For all of us involved in CfJS the experience has done just that, transforming our understanding of and relationship with each other and the world that we live and learn in. We are happy that Samantha's wish…

> *"I think this is a module that should continue at CCCU and hope other students benefit from the module as much as I have."*

…is granted and the module continues to run.