

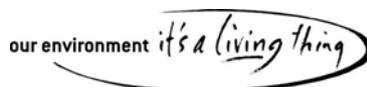
Write it up!

**Case studies of sustainability education projects
from around NSW**

Linking up for sustainability

Working together to increase the potential of empowering the wider community
towards better knowledge and practical solutions for sustainability.

By Vivian Evans, NSW TAFE New England Institute, 2008.



Linking up for Sustainability

Working together to increase the potential of empowering the wider community towards better knowledge and practical solutions for sustainability

Our Issue:

In four campuses across the New England Institute teachers were working on delivering units from the Learning for Sustainability Statement of Attainment. Whilst there was some sharing of resources and ideas we wanted to increase the collaboration of working together as well as building partnerships with likeminded community organisations to empower individuals in the wider community towards better knowledge and practical solutions for sustainability.

Our Solution:

To build a growing and evolving open collaborative online community hub in a Wetpaint wiki. Our site is <http://learningforsustainability.wetpaint.com> for all those interested in Sustainability.

The online hub connects students and teachers learning in face-to-face classrooms with students learning online and the worldwide community.

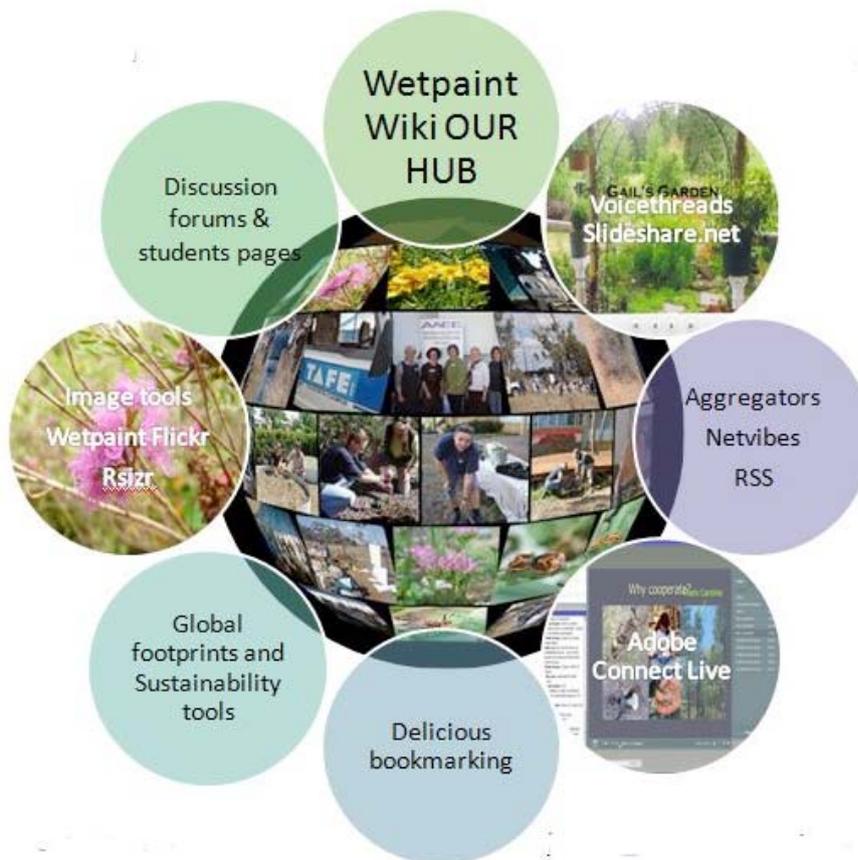
Everyone learns from each other, builds content, discussions, sharing issues, stories and resources. Our website enables learning before, during and beyond the students' enrolment in courses and units.

There is strong collaboration and engagement in the classroom, in real outdoor activities, fieldtrips and events hosted by our partners and other sustainable community events. Guest presenters, in the classroom, link up to other participants via Adobe Connect Virtual conferencing or Video Conferencing.



Our Hub <http://learnngforsustainability.wetpaint.com>
Our tag 'Esustain08'

Linking up for Sustainability



All the technologies we used are easy to learn

www.wetpaint.com

our key hub for information, discussions and connections to people and resources.

Adobe Connect for Virtual conferencing

<http://voicethread.com>
www.slideshare.net and
Photostory3 for digital stories

<http://delicious.com> for social bookmarking of key websites and for image sharing
www.flickr.com

Search the above two sites for our project tag 'esustain08'. You will find a host of images and useful websites that participants tagged as related to our project. This is a fabulous way to share resources. We also utilised video conferencing, digital cameras, podcasting, image tools & more.

Issues during the Project

Issue: The biggest issue for those students working within TAFE NSW - New England Institute was **the DET firewalls and the number of passwords** students had to remember and use. It was somewhat easier off campus but not all participants have internet access at home.

Solution: Creation of small wallet sized cards with the hub website and space for user name and password for participants. This improved issues a great deal though didn't overcome all issues re firewalls etc. Firewalls are another matter and we had to work our way around finding sites that did have access through the firewall or suggest access outside of TAFE.

Issue: Participants varied in their use and familiarity with technology.

Our solution: Create clear step by step instructions for accessing new programs. We then augmented these steps by adding audio and visual information to the steps using a program called <http://www.voicethread.com>.

Issue: Key tool not working. A key tool we had hoped to use was Adobe Connect, a virtual conference room, where participants and teachers can connect to talk, text chat and share documents live. Just as the project began an upgrade occurred which caused all sorts of issues including unreliable recordings.

Linking up for Sustainability

Our solution: Don't rely on one tool, have a multipronged approach. We explored video conferencing and other tools such as www.voicethread.com. We did persevere with the Adobe Connect with success right near the end of our project.

Issue: Managing the growing and at times chaotic site

Our solution: We had a website/project facilitator as well as teachers growing & maintaining the site. We chose to work with themes and used page templates to keep the pages similar in their style for this section. The home page evolved over the life of the project and we aimed to use this as the point for key information along with contact via direct messaging to keep participants informed. We acknowledge that we still need to improve and fine tune the website as it grows into 2009.

Most significant Impact

86 members and still growing of our website in 5 months, 100 pages of content, 185 photos, 60 discussion threads, a stronger collaboration between teachers, sharing resources, strategies and ideas across the institute and beyond. We were particularly delighted when we saw students encouraging and connecting with each other. **More significantly we have plans in place to continue and expand our delivery and connections online into 2009.**

Key advice to other Training Organisations:

Grow gradually

Weave the technology through real activity and engagement.

Capture and share everything you do – through photos, recordings and documenting online. (Give the students the cameras & audio)

You need patience, resilience and persistence to manage the wonderful chaos that evolves. The rewards are fabulous. ☺

Please note you can hear a podcast with a variation on this report on
<http://talkingvte.blogspot.com/2008/12/elearning08-panel-2-green-power.html>

See our growing collaborative digital story 'Reflection of our project' at

<http://voicethread.com/share/272597/> and our project report on

<http://nswinnovations.wikispaces.com/028>

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You are welcome to explore and join our

Learning for Sustainability Community

<http://learningforsustainability.wetpaint.com>