

**COPERNICUS Alliance Conference 2016**  
**15 September 2016 at BOKU, Vienna, Austria**

# Working towards a robust reference framework to strengthen integration of sustainable development in university teaching

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## Why is this task important?

1. **MISSION:** make sure that sustainable development is integrated in teaching at universities (as well as in research and operations)  
-> *adaption* of the system, not *revolution*
2. **CHALLENGE:** How can fundamentally *independent* faculty staff/institutions be encouraged to integrate sustainable development in their teaching when they are *overburdened* with duties, work in highly *competitive* disciplinary research environments, and face *decreasing security* of funding?

### 3. **Criteria for assessing progress and increasing recognition would help!**

#### **PURPOSE:**

1. **Self-evaluation:** am I on the right track as a teacher?
2. **Support progress in department/faculty:** what steps are needed to integrate sustainable development in our curricula? and what innovative potential do these steps contain for our discipline?
3. **Increase recognition within the university, strengthen university's reputation:** how can the added value of integration be justified within the system?

# Our rationale for transformative learning and engaged science

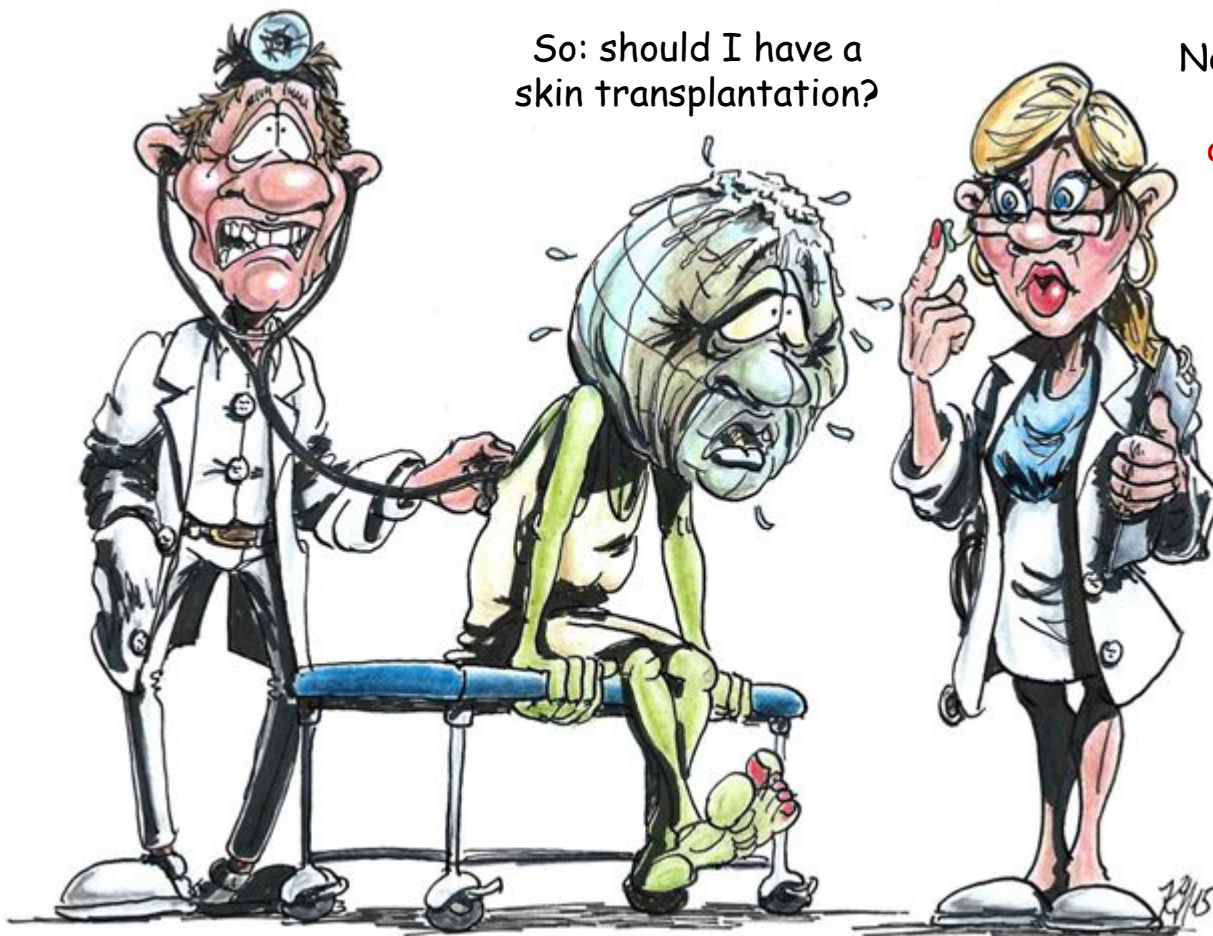
You're suffering from parasites; cosmetics won't be enough to cure you.

So: should I have a skin transplantation?

No... **We need a major transformation... and change agents.**

Universities prepare such change agents...

... but their **current reference frameworks** impede transformation.



Let's get there **step by step** to overcome the challenges

## Four degrees of integration (see Sterling and Thomas 2006):

1) denial (*no change*)

2) 'bolt-on' approaches (*education about sustainability*)

3) 'build-in' approaches (*education for sustainability*)

4) and finally curriculum redesign (*sustainable education*)

- Degrees 3 und 4 require a **competence orientation** in teaching, as well as **transformative learning**.
- The dominant science paradigm built on a fact/value dichotomy and a competition model makes it difficult to adopt such an orientation; there's an increasing need for a **new understanding of science and teaching**, and for **institutional change**...
- BUT: we also need to encourage and allow for **progress at all levels!**  
*All progress is welcome and constitutes a step towards transformation...*
- A **sound and robust reference framework** can help

The example of the University of Bern, Switzerland:

**Integrating sustainable development into teaching** (*mainstreaming*)

- **Sustainable development (SD) in University's strategy** (2014-2021)
  - **Performance mandates for the Faculties and Centres** (since 2013)
    - ***Vision for education:*** no student should leave the University without having heard at least once about SD (but this has been communicated to all only since 2016)
    - ***(Required) implementation:*** at least 2 hours per curriculum should be devoted to SD
    - ***Support:*** 2 projects, using a combined top down and bottom up approach
      - Online [Guidelines and Tools](#) for integrating SD in teaching
      - ESD Competence-Enhancing Support for faculty staff as multipliers

# The University's Guidelines and Tools for integrating SD into teaching (*Leitfaden*)



## Foundations (*Grundlagen*):

- Sustainable development (SD) according to the United Nations
- Tension between scientific understanding and value orientations in the university setting
- SD in research, education, and operations at the University of Bern
- Education for sustainable development (ESD) at the university level
- Educational content, skills, and appropriate teaching and learning arrangements for ESD

## Special Foci (*Vertiefungen*):

1. Concepts, instruments, instructions, tips, and examples
2. Case studies
3. Further assistance (workshops, coaching, ...)
4. Teaching materials (slides, videos,...)

## In addition to the Guidelines and Tools...

- 4 Consultation Workshops (2014-2015)
- 1 Early Adopter Workshop (2016)
- 1 High-level workshop with deans
- 7 Coachings on demand: with deans/faculty representatives
- 3 Link Workshops

As of 2017:

- Professional development (1 module for teachers)
- Continuation of coaching and tailored link workshops
- Website with updated tools, interactive options, assessment tools, ....



# What shall do we now?

1. Discuss criteria for self-assessment of early adopters
2. ... for supporting the integration process in institutions
3. ... for a university's monitoring + incentive system



Or do we want to  
achieve only one of  
the 3 outcomes?



## Interactive procedure

- Discuss the purpose(s) of a reference framework (10 mins)
- Decide whether 1 or 3 Outcomes
- Work on the 3 outcomes;
  - step 1:** individual wildcards for each of the Outcomes (10 mins)
  - step 2:** mutual organisation and negotiation of ideas (20 mins)
  - step 3:** further examples (10 mins)
  - step 4:** develop the reference framework together (20 mins)
- Envisage possible future collaboration (5-10 minutes)

**OUTCOME 1:** Criteria enabling disciplines and approaches to recognize their relation to social-ecological systems and commit to an SD orientation

**OUTCOME 2:** Criteria for assessing the progress of departments' reflection and implementation processes leading to integration of SD in teaching

**OUTCOME 3:** Criteria for institutional support of a university's monitoring and evaluation of SD orientation in teaching