

# Beyond Crime: Justice and Sustainability in the Classroom and Community

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BEYOND ESD CONFERENCE, BRISTOL, SEPTEMBER 2015

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# Aims of the Paper

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Discuss why sustainability matters to criminology/criminal justice

Reflect on a module 'Criminology for a Just Society'

- Student-centred approach to module development and delivery
- Learning in the classroom and community: Head, Hands & Heart
- Potential long-term impacts and future directions

Presents a preview of the article due for publication in a Special Issue of *The Law Teacher* in 2016

# Sustainability and Criminology?

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A number of theoretical approaches within criminology illustrate clear overlaps with the sustainable development agenda, e.g.

1. Critical Criminology
2. Zemiology
3. Public Criminology
4. Green Criminology

*“Justice and sustainability are intimately linked and mutually interdependent, certainly at the problem level and increasingly at the solution level” (Agyeman et al 2003: 3)*

→ Framework of (in)justice as a way to approach the 4 spheres of sustainability: environmental, economic, social and cultural

# Criminology for a Just Society

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

Funded development project in 2013-14, module piloted in 2014-15

Developed with students

- *“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)*

Aims: 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.

Assessment: case study analysis, reflective blog, end of module conference presentation – all linking to volunteering placement

# Head

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From no/shallow understanding...

- *“I didn’t know what [sustainability] was at all.”* (Samantha) , *‘Pollution’* (Abbie), *‘Climate change’* (Laura)

...to deeper and more connected/interdisciplinary understanding that realises the links to own discipline

- *“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)
- *“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)

# Hands

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## Enacting sustainability and justice, learning through service

- *“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)

## Significant benefits, significant challenges

- *“At the [volunteering placement] loads of members there will refer to themselves as ‘not normal’ and seen as unworthy to society and this is actually really upsetting to hear.”* (Charlotte)
- *“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)

## Making connections

- *“It was very difficult for me to make the connections because they weren’t as obvious. I don’t think [the volunteering organisation] 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)

## Importance of critical pedagogy: assessment!

# Heart

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## Transformational learning through critical reflection

- *"You never really do that at uni, it's usually writing about a topic"* (Charlotte)

## Learning THROUGH the assessment, not for it...

- *"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)
- *"I find it difficult to be positive but I'm glad I've learned that because I think the world is quite harsh anyway and if you're not...People are going to be harsh and negative but to take the positive out of something as well, even if you don't feel you've done your best it's nice to take a positive from it."*  
(Laura)

# Samantha's Journey

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Starting point: *“The first day of starting the module, we were asked what we thought sustainability was. I must have had the blankest look on my face because I had no idea, I never heard the word sustainability and to be honest, I did not even know it was a concept in the world. Therefore, I was thinking “what module have I taken?”*

Struggling with uncertainty, finding her own way

In her final blog entry Samantha talks about her own understanding of sustainability...

- *“Having the understanding of sustainability and building upon that means that we can create and maintain the conditions that we as humans and even nature can live in a world that is proactive all round by fulfilling social, economic and cultural justice throughout the present and into the future.”*

...its connections with her discipline...

- *“Who would have thought that the girl who insisted she was not becoming a tree hugger would find the environmental justice lectures interesting? It led to me to do an assignment in another module on environmental crime and I was all proud because I knew what it was so therefore it shows how this module has fitted into my crime and policing degree.”*

...and concludes how the module *“has given me something I never thought I would gain from it – the knowledge to learn about the world I live in and it is something I most certainly will continue with.”*



# Long-term Impacts?

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## Understanding, dissemination, action

- *“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)*
- Plans for continued volunteering

## Skills and impact on careers:

- *“I definitely gained a lot of confidence in comparison to the person I was before I started my placement, I would never talk to someone I didn’t know but now I’ll talk to anyone!” (Abbie)*
- *“It made me realise that I want to do social work which I had never thought about, but it made me feel confident about what I was talking about and believing in myself and really helped me to actually get it.”(Charlotte)*

# Future Developments

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Making the theoretical & conceptual links clearer

More structured system for monitoring students in volunteering placements

More focussed and regular guidance on critical reflection

Marketing the module to increase uptake

Evaluating impact on volunteering organisations

# Find out more!

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**Hallenberg, K.M. & Haddow, C.** (forthcoming in 2016) 'Beyond Criminal Justice: Connecting Justice and Sustainability', *The Law Teacher*, Special Edition on Education for Sustainable Development.

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