

Activity 2.1



Case study analysis

Curriculum, research and community engagement innovations at Rhodes University, South Africa

Read Case Study 2. This provides some insights into how a university can implement curriculum, research and community service innovations.

Activity and questions

Using the insights gained in Module 2, review the work that has taken place at Rhodes University. Suggest alternative strategies that can be applied at this university.

Review the relationship between teaching, research and community engagement work in the case study. What strategies did staff at the university use to increase the synergy between these aspects of university work?

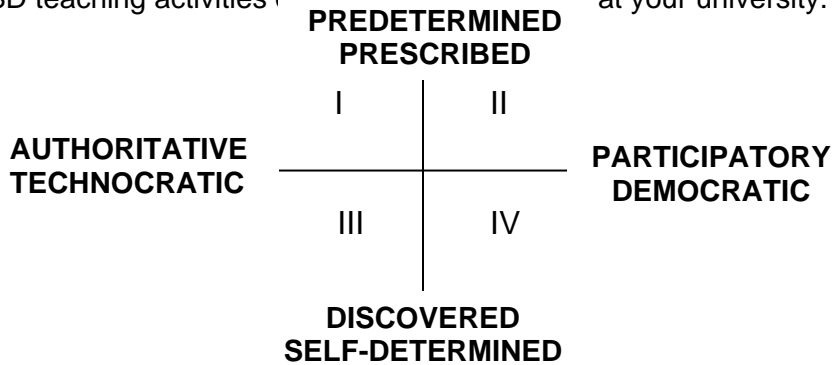
How could you draw on the insights gained from this case study to inform innovations in your own university context?

Activity extension



Develop a framework for evaluating the ESD teaching innovations at Rhodes University using the heuristic that follows provided by Wals (2005, after Wals & Jickling, 2000). Use this to evaluate your own

ESD teaching activities or the teaching activities at your university.



- I = Education as reproduction, no participation
- II = Education as reproduction, participation limited or within boundaries
- III = Education as discovery learning and problem-solving, focussing on pre-determined and pre-defined issues and options, limited participation in democratic decision-making and making of key choices
- IV = Education as reflexive, participatory learning, genuine participation in all aspects of the learning process (including the focus and topics being investigated, the methodologies and approaches, and reviews of outcomes).

Wals (2005) explains that sustainability allows for the contextualisation and joint exploration of meanings. Through dialogue, discourse, mediation, joint fact-finding, etc. people can arrive at their own interpretation of sustainability as relevant to their own context within a broader context of ecological responsibility and ethical defensibility. Education **for** Sustainability is therefore only a legitimate goal when learners are given the space for autonomous thinking, deliberation, negotiation and for deciding what counts as sustainable living. A precondition for ESD should then be consideration of power relations in the teaching and learning process, valuing and allowing for diversity of opinions and perspectives, and discussions on values and valuing in the learning process. There should also be room for outcomes that are not pre-determined or that require students to conform to the 'norms'. Thus notions of democracy and participation are important aspects of the ESD learning process. Do you agree?

References

Wals, A. (Ed). 2005. *Curriculum Innovations in Higher Agricultural Education*. The Hague. Elsevier Overheid.

Wals, A. & Jickling, B. (2000). Process based environmental education: Setting standards without standardising. In Jensen, B.; Schack, K. & Simovska, V. (Eds).



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