

Career and employability learning through storytelling for the sustainable development goals

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ABSTRACT

For responsible management education to have a meaningful impact on business practice through future business leaders, it is imperative to integrate career and employability-related learning. If 'Education for Sustainable Development' and employability are delivered in siloed learning design programmes, students may not recognise and leverage opportunities to design career paths that meet personal aspirations alongside supporting broader global goals. Responding to the need for a more integrated and holistic approach to ESD and employability, this paper explores how to facilitate connections between sustainability-related disciplinary learning and subsequent career decision-making and behaviours. A pioneering instructional resource is shared here that enables students to identify, develop, and communicate sustainability-related competencies and attributes to employers. Through the novel application of 'Career and Employability Learning' (CEL) constructs to 'sustainability storytelling', the underlying design of this resource illustrates how to shape and impact future workplaces in support of the SDGs. Empirical findings of implementing the masterclass across 18 universities provide cross-institutional student, educator and career professional feedback and testimonials. This paper offers multiple insights through an innovative methodological design, an innovative instructional resource, and an integrated pedagogic approach to sustainability and employability learning.

1. Introduction

If Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is to have a lifelong and life-wide learning impact, it needs to be related to career and employability learning. There exists an 'employability-sustainability learning gap' (Cripps & Velasquez-Hoque, 2023) where sustainability and employability are delivered in tandem (i.e., through separate teaching sessions) rather than integrated. This means the talent pipeline is constrained if students are unaware of how to leverage learning to workplace opportunities. This is especially marked when sustainability is not an explicit qualification outcome. In such cases, it is arguably even more important for education programmes to support students in showcasing and communicating a keenness to contribute to organisational sustainability-related tasks to employers. Job market shifts require the increasing integration of 'green skills in non-specialist roles' (Deloitte and IEMA, 2022), and can be seen similarly beneficial in a broadened scope to how aptitudes connected to the Sustainable Development Goals can be attractive for career building from the perspective of individuals and employers alike.

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Table 1

The 5 Cs of Career Construction applied to the masterclass.

The Five Cs	Masterclass Application
Concern	Awareness-raising of the applicability of the SDGs to identifying what you care about, and linking this to careers
Control	Empowering individual behaviours in seeking a meaningful and impactful career through learning resources provided
Curiosity	Encouraging aspirational goals and exploration of sustainability-related career opportunities
Confidence	Nurturing self-belief through increased self-awareness of strengths
Commitment	Encouraging students to work on follow-up actions after the teaching session that help them continue to build experiences and develop their narrative.

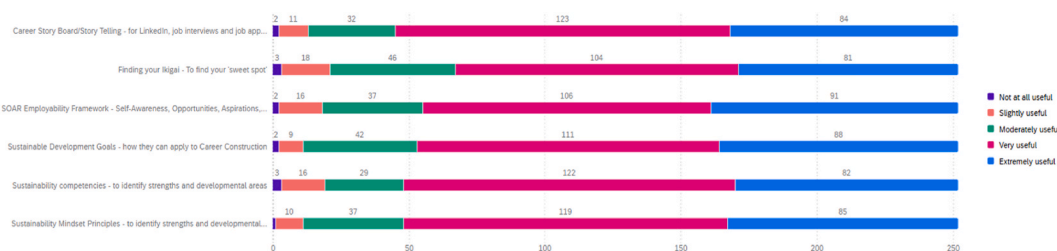
The [Institute of Student Employers \(2024, p. 81\)](#) reports that when asked about future recruitment plans, 63 % of employers strongly agreed/agreed that Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) issues will be increasingly important in “what and how we recruit”. Amid current discussions on the specific lens of environmental sustainability, there is a critical need for a future workforce equipped with technical, sector-specific and more transferable soft skills ([Economist Impact, 2024](#)). Research by Cripps and Climate Change Coaches (2024) into sustainability leaders empirically illustrates the perceived importance of soft skills over technical skills. Similarly, the global accreditation body, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), states that “the value of soft skills is not expected to decline even as the need for technical competence rises” ([AACSB, 2018, p. 19](#)).

The Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME), an initiative of the United Nations Global Compact, promotes skills development for future leaders to address global challenges, including those related to social, environmental, and economic prosperity. In discussing the pedagogy for students ‘being the change’, Ibrahim and Storey (2025, p. 2) highlight that “there exists a skills gap, and now more than ever, the workforce needs leaders and managers with holistic skill sets”. This illustrates the need for business and management programmes to clearly define how the scope of sustainability-related technical through to soft skills (which might also be termed as transferable, cross-functional or similar) are developed. As a sector, it is important to articulate how softer, transferable skills are integral to ESD in light of [LinkedIn’s \(2024, p. 15\)](#) ‘Global Green Skills’ report which suggests that “academia is far behind the rapidly moving green skill space” and Gen Z “are insufficiently aware of the enormous range of roles”. It is a disservice to students and institutions not to explicitly connect ESD commitment to shaping job roles and career trajectories in line with the global goals.

The employability-sustainability nexus is apparent through the ‘Framework for Embedding Employability’ by ‘Advance HE’ (2024) (a UK professional body), which details ‘sustainability’ as one of eight components for holistic approaches to employability pedagogy. However, it can be challenging for educators to integrate employability-related material into sustainability programme design or vice versa. University career services may offer ‘green careers’ events, but these can be variable in availability depending upon the institutional expertise of a rapidly evolving job market and may not be accessed by all students ([Cripps, 2023](#)). This paper presents a theoretically informed and empirically evaluated teaching masterclass resource designed to address the nexus between employability and sustainability. It is grounded in career construction theory ([Savickas, 1997](#)) and is designed to empower students to construct career narratives through the lens of sustainability story-telling rooted in the SDGs. Exploratory insights are detailed here into this developing area of educational practice with objectives to.

1. Explore the application of career construction theory in narrative building through sustainability story-telling as a tool for career construction.
2. Design, implement and evaluate a masterclass at a cross-institutional level that enables student engagement in sustainability-related career and employability learning.

The following section provides the theoretical basis for career construction theory and sustainability storytelling, setting the context for the selected frameworks in the design of the masterclass resource. The methodological approach to delivering the masterclass across 18 institutions is then discussed. Findings are presented through collective feedback from students, educators, and career professionals on the masterclass. Analytical insights elucidate the pedagogic value of sustainability storytelling as part of career and employability learning. The paper is a call to further opportunities to apply and extend the masterclass through research-informed teaching aligned with the increasing demands for sustainability-related skills across global work contexts.

**Image 1.** Feedback survey responses to ‘How interesting and/or useful did you find these aspects of the session?’

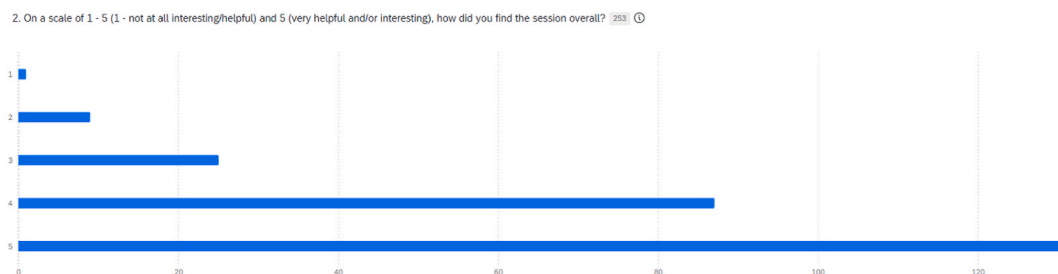


Image 2. 'Feedback survey responses to 'How interesting and/or useful did you find the session overall?'

2. Literature review

2.1. Career construction through and for the sustainable development goals

The United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are adopted in the design of this masterclass to trigger student interest and engagement in constructing careers both *for* the SDGs (i.e., to leverage career opportunities to progress towards the global goals) and *about* the SDGs (i.e., to draw on the SDGs to inspire individual career trajectories). The beneficial pedagogic application of the SDGs has been exemplified across management education projects (Avelar et al., 2025; Weybrecht, 2017). However, Moratis and Melissen (2022, p. 215) illustrate the SDGs as replete with “paradoxes, trade-offs, and tensions”. Bearing this in mind, their application here is pragmatic, working from the perspective that an individual’s career is interconnected with and influenced by contexts (De Vos et al., 2020). The SDGs represent a critical and contemporary context for modern-day career trajectories, as adopted by global policy and organisations, and are a relevant framework for application in personal and professional development.

‘Careers and Employability Learning’ (CEL) (Healy, 2023) is selected as an informative pedagogic perspective in this study as it provides congruence between ‘employability-outcome’ focused learning on one end of the spectrum and ‘Career-Development Learning’ on the other. Healy (2023, p. 10) describes CEL as “enabling a sustained, transformative learning journey toward personal and professional self-actualisation, social connectedness, and careers and employability success”. University careers services and curriculum content related to ‘employability’ address concepts such as graduate attributes and outcomes (Jorre de St Jorre & Oliver, 2018). ‘Career Development Learning’ adopts more of a psychological view of careers as a process of learning and identity-building (Spurk, 2021). Current professional body guidance on embedding employability in Higher Education (Advance HE, 2024) specifically includes ‘Career Development Learning’ regarding the skills and attitudes to equip students to manage careers. CEL is adopted here as it can be positioned alongside ‘whole person’ (OECD, 2022) and ‘transformative’ learning (Mezirow, 1997) pedagogy, which will be discussed later as core to the design of frameworks adopted in the masterclass.

The synergy between transformative learning and careers is effectively illustrated as a pathway to the ‘right work’ through encouraging reflection on values and re-evaluation of perspectives applied to career goals (Brandhorst et al., 2024). Within a pedagogy of CEL, this study’s first objective drew specifically on Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 1997) which recognises that individual framing of career choices requires ‘person-environment adaptation’ to changing life and career situations. ‘Adaptability’ refers to the ability to respond to evolving circumstances throughout career trajectories and is well exemplified by the scale and speed of change required for the SDGs. Entrants to today’s workforce operate in a highly uncertain environment, which requires flexibility and adaptation. For instance, contemporary analysis of ‘green’ jobs concludes that in response to technological and economic uncertainties, training and skills programmes are needed to build “worker resilience and flexibility to change” (Valero et al., 2021, p. 7).

The masterclass shared here responds to De Janasz and Peiperl’s (2024, p. 176) call for educators to provide “tools to discern students’ interests, motivations, and values as a jumping-off point for developing themselves and connecting to a greater *purpose* as they navigate their career journeys”. Protean career concepts (Hall, 2004), which encompass adaptive, values-driven, and self-directed career management, are central to career construction within an unpredictable and changing environment. Following the view of De Vos et al. (2024, p. 400), to develop a ‘career with impact,’ it is essential to “challenge students to not only think about how the context influences their career but also view it as an opportunity to make a positive impact on this context.” The masterclass resource shared here encourages students to look for opportunities to align roles and actions with SDGs of personal interest and value, which means they can develop intrinsic motivation associated with ‘subjective career success’ (Heslin, 2005). Such intrinsic alignment is key to enabling ‘personal fit’ in finding a fulfilling career, with the benefit that it can also ‘do good’ (Todd, 2023). Deloitte (2024) and Windö (2024) confirm the importance of purpose-driven work to Generation Z and millennials. Using the SDGs as a reference point for CEL can enable students to develop practical approaches to recruitment and, subsequently, to carry out their roles effectively. Accordingly, this masterclass resource inspires student thinking and behaviours around career construction aligned to personal values and global goals. This can be helpful to students in recruitment and beyond, whether in SDG-aligned organisations or not.

2.2. Supporting students’ career construction through sustainability storytelling (SusTelling)

The study’s first objective was to explore sustainability storytelling as a tool for career construction, enabling students to build a compelling and memorable narrative for use in recruitment processes. Akin to transformative learning pedagogy, the formation of a

personal narrative provokes student reflection on what drives behaviours at both individual and societal levels (Lange, 2023). Landrum et al. (2019) suggest that storytelling as pedagogy is undervalued by educators, which, although concerned with the context of storytelling as an alternative teaching tool to relay information to students, carries the same messaging terms of enabling memorability from listeners through eliciting emotional investment – as applies within recruitment contexts.

Molthan-Hill and Fischer (2022) propose that storytelling for teaching and learning about sustainability in higher education has only just begun to be recognised. The United Nations Global Compact Network UK (2024) programme called ‘The SDG Storytelling for Sustainability for Businesses’ underlines the masterclass resource’s contemporary nature and its workplace relevance. Del Corso and Rehfuess (2011, p. 3) state that “the only stable, consistent structure in a person’s life is themselves. Therefore, it is vitally important that individuals know themselves and their story”. By developing students’ awareness of themselves and their context, career construction narratives can support “intentionality” in behaviours (Savickas et al., 2009, p. 245). For example, heightened self-awareness may trigger the desire to seek employment in a values-aligned organisation. Stories are said to enable the sense-making of both ourselves and the world around us, bringing psychological benefits through an enhanced sense of meaning-in-life (Einam et al., 2024).

The masterclass design was inspired by Fischer et al.’s (2022) ‘SusTelling’ which comprises ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ characteristics. ‘Inner’ characteristics comprise the ‘character’ and the ‘plot’ that forms the narrative structure, which in this masterclass are the student as a prospective candidate embarking on transitions into employment. ‘External’ characteristics comprise the setting in which the story unfolds (which captures contextual aspects such as a ‘green jobs’ economy), the ‘medium’ of communication (which might be any recruitment tools such as application forms, video media, or interviews), and the ‘theme’ (which in the masterclass is the SDGs). ‘SusTelling’ concerns empowerment through ‘competency development’ and ‘self-determination’ to improve environmental and social outcomes based on a typology of explorers, visionaries, and enlighteners (Fischer et al., 2022).

‘Explorers’ are characterised as curious and inspired to gain knowledge; a central component in CEL through discovering both self and opportunities. Macy and Johnstone (2022, p. 34) compellingly note, “When we find a good story and fully give ourselves to it, that story can act through us, breathing life into everything we do.” The premise of masterclass design is that enabling students’ capacity to discover and articulate a compelling story rooted in the SDGs can be transformative as part of lifelong and lifewide learning.

The next stage of the ‘SusTelling’ framework is ‘Visionaries’, which are characterised by a solution-oriented approach and self-activation toward shaping a sustainable world. In the context of this masterclass, this aligns with career-constructing behaviours for the SDGs as a form of “solution-focused stories” that generate positive belief and action (Baden, 2020, p. 96). The final typology of ‘Enlighteners’ is characterised by mobilising others through persuading and informing. This is positioned within the masterclass by empowering students to communicate a persuasive pitch about what they can offer an organisation in support of sustainability-related actions.

3. Masterclass design

The second study objective was to ‘design, implement, and evaluate a masterclass at a cross-institutional level that enables student engagement in sustainability-related career and employability learning’. The project was enabled through modest financial funding for travel to deliver the masterclass across universities through the UK and Ireland Chapter of the United Nations-supported initiative ‘Principles of Responsible Management Education’ (PRME) under its ‘Developing Innovative Pedagogic Approaches and Teaching Practices in PRME’. Due to limited funding, the geographic scope was restricted to colleagues in nearby regional PRME institutions, with some online sessions also offered to those further afield. In designing the study for delivery in institutions where ESD was already well established, the masterclass needed to provide a unique ‘CEL-sustainability’ value proposition.

The masterclass was intentionally shaped to suit interdisciplinary students. To ensure appeal and learning effectiveness across institutions with varying degrees of prior curriculum content related to sustainability and employability, as well as mixed-level and disciplinary groups, the resource also needed to be applicable from entry-level to more experienced student groups. This includes PowerPoint slides and an accompanying ‘storyboard’ worksheet (see additional resource links 1 and 2). An instructor resource (see Appendix 1) details the consideration of PRME (2023) ‘Impactful Five’ (i5) pedagogy for leadership education, which matches each activity to the five characteristics of joyful, socially interactive, actively engaging, meaningful, and iterative learning. It is recognised that these characteristics could be further extended. Still, they are helpful here in illustrating how this resource aligns with the i5 pedagogy that has been developed and utilised through the global PRME community.

Application of i5 here provides both a resource and empirical evaluation of how to develop holistic skills through innovative pedagogy that is “student centered, action oriented, and hopes to change the world through sustainable business education (Ibrahim & Storey, 2025, p. 12). Engaging in the i5 pedagogy also provides educators with the opportunity to explore professional identity, as a tool for reflection in their own journey of career constructivism (Radclyffe-Thomas et al., 2025). The masterclass design further illustrates the alignment between i5 and employability. For example, ‘actively engaging’ and ‘socially interactive’ learning aligned to components of ‘co-creation’ and ‘active learning’ from Advance HE’s (2024) framework for embedding employability in higher education, as each session emphasised interaction and discussion in which students could enjoy increased self-awareness of both themselves and others. The premise of selecting an SDG of personal resonance was based on ‘joyful’ and ‘meaningful’ learning through deep personal resonance within an iterative design of building up ‘layers’ of a personal SDG narrative.

The i5 pedagogy is based on a constructivist epistemology through meaningful, collaborative, reflective and exploratory activities in the pursuit of transformative learning (Blair, 2024). It is a good fit with the career constructivist design to sustainability storytelling (which underpinned objective 1), whereby each learning activity was also mapped to the ‘five Cs’ of career construction theory:

Concern (future awareness), Control (purposeful in pursuing goals), Curiosity (exploring options), Confidence (faith in own ability), and Commitment (determination to act) (Savickas et al., 2009), as illustrated in Table 1. This is a helpful typology to embed career construction theory in teaching design.

The rest of this section addresses the overarching framing of sustainability storytelling, structured according to the four stages of the SOAR employability framework. Each of these stages of learning is then examined in turn, considering the pedagogy of two core learning activities that draw on sustainability competencies and mindset. Sustainability storytelling design drew on 'The Hero's Journey' by Campbell (1993, p. 1949 repr.) and the subsequent practical guide by Vogler (2007). This is premised on the archetype of a 'hero' on a journey that leaves the 'familiar' behind and passes through tests and transformational experiences before reaching rewarding outcomes, and as such, it is a helpful and positive psychology and self-development coaching tool (Adson, 2004). The Hero's Journey has been applied in pedagogic research that illustrates its value in enabling reflection and creation of 'meaning' in life (Einam et al., 2024; Rogers et al., 2023), and in the study of millennial career changers' narratives, in which it was to enable 'meaning making in transition' (McCaie & Kotera, 2023, p. 70).

Returning to Fischer et al.'s (2022) 'SusTelling hero' which is described as someone who "shines through reaching goals together, being humble, and being free" (Selm et al., 2022, p. 70), this storytelling narrative lends itself to CEL concepts of self-actualisation and social connectedness (Healy, 2023). The specific wording of 'hero' was, however, avoided in the masterclass to avoid any concerns related to either its gender-based or individualistic connotations. It is also recognised that this narrative structure is primarily Western, and for example, 'tragedy narratives' might be more compelling to some cultures (Rogers et al., 2023). The masterclass, therefore, draws on the Hero's Journey as just one of the structures used to help develop a pathway in which students can see how they draw on one or more of the elements, with or without seeing themselves as a mythical 'hero'.

Five stages of 'The Hero's Journey' extended story structure were selected: 'Call to adventure, Meeting the mentor, Crossing the threshold, Seizing the treasure, and Return.' Aligned to the 'SusTelling' typology of 'explorer,' this story structure positioned the SDGs as a 'Call to adventure' through which students could develop their career narrative. The stages of 'Meeting the mentor' and 'Crossing the threshold' align with the 'SusTelling' typology of 'visionaries' in building behaviours for transformation. The final stages of 'Seizing the Treasure' and 'Return' focus on giving back to society and the planet through career development. This aligns somewhat with the 'SusTelling' typology of 'Enlighteners' as it inherently implies mobilising others if only by leading by example, to embed sustainability within career trajectories.

Core learning activities were sequenced according to the four stages of the SOAR employability framework (Kumar, 2015, 2022). As a reformulation of the widely known 'DOTS' career planning framework (Decisions, Opportunities, Transitions, Self) (Law & Watts, 1977), SOAR begins with building 'Self-awareness,' followed by identification of 'Opportunities' for employability learning. This informs the formation of implementable 'Aspirations' and, finally, 'Results' through intentionally driven transitions into personal and professional goals. SOAR is premised on an 'inside out' pedagogy of inner development (Kumar, 2015, 2022) initiated through 'self-awareness', enabling new actions and behaviours. Supporting students to develop self-belief through self-efficacy is linked to greater aspirations (Bandura, 1977; Luthans et al., 2007).

From a career constructionist perspective, the SOAR framework enables students to take ownership in creating career narratives. This ownership is enabled through roots in positive psychology thinking of appreciative inquiry (Cooperider & Fry, 2012), and holistic, whole-person pedagogy (Kolb, 1984), which can help enable a sense of student self-efficacy. Kumar's work has explicitly linked the framework as fundamental to student empowerment in developing competencies that can purposefully align with the SDGs (Kumar, 2021). Beyond applications of the SOAR framework in enhancing employability (Reddan & Raichle, 2017), this masterclass study is, however, novel in its empirical application of SOAR as part of pedagogies for ESD.

The first section of the masterclass on 'Self-awareness' introduces the SDGs and asks students to choose one SDG as their 'Call to adventure'. McGill University (2022, p. 4) highlights that "starting a career with a focus on one of the SDGs allows one to extend naturally into working towards other SDGs". This design is, therefore, highly intentional in encouraging personal value alignment with one of the SDGs. In an exploration of the psychological role of storytelling through the use of the hero's journey, Einam et al. (2024) illustrate the importance of individuals finding their 'why' through the identification of their goals and desires. This enables a more profound sense of motivational commitment to pursuing goals, rather than just focusing on 'how' goals will be pursued. Similarly, the use of the hero's journey to help people to tell their story may enhance a sense of psychological resilience through seeing themselves as "more capable, psychologically and behaviourally, to tackle their problems" (Rogers et al., 2023, p. 770).

The narrative structure of 'mentors' is then introduced through UNESCO's (2018) eight 'sustainability competencies,' enabling students to reflect on their strengths and developmental areas. It was essential to incorporate the competencies as a globally influential ESD framework, which has informed subsequent guidance from leading professional bodies, such as The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education and Advance HE (2021), as well as subject benchmark standards for business and management degree programmes (QAA, 2023). The competencies have informed university approaches to embedding employability by enabling students to make connections between how sustainability connects to disciplinary content and related competencies, and notably, how to communicate these to future employers effectively (Winfield & Howarth, 2023). The next stage of SOAR, 'Opportunities', represented by the story narrative of 'Crossing the threshold', centres around student societies, clubs, and volunteering programmes. This opens up thoughts in the broader context related to the student's selected SDG of interest and how to build the story's plot with new experiences.

The third stage of SOAR, 'Aspirations', introduces students to a 'Mentor' who helps shape the narrative of the Sustainability Mindset Principles (Rimanoczy, 2021). The Sustainability Mindset is defined as "a way of *thinking* and *being* that results from a broad understanding of the ecosystem's manifestations, from social sensitivity, as well as an introspective focus on one's personal values and higher self, and finds its expression in actions for the greater good of the whole" (Kassel et al., 2018, p. 7). The principles provide a tool to enable inclusive 'framing' and intentional decision-making by building awareness of differing perspectives, both internal and external.

The principles have been applied in several studies concerning responsible management education (Cripps & Smith, 2023; Tomasella et al., 2022; Wersun et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2021) and reinforce sustainability competencies. In the masterclass, they are applied as part of working towards aspirational goals by drawing on desirable job role descriptions and considering how the principles can be used to develop a compelling and memorable narrative around their person-job fit.

The final stage of SOAR, 'Results,' is represented by the story narrative phases of 'seizing the treasure' and 'return'. These concern intentional behaviours that bring personal reward and, hopefully, also contribute to broader societal or planetary goals by giving something back, or at least not causing harm. At this stage, students construct a complete narrative in response to typical competency-based interview questions, drawing on the previous masterclass activities. Recognising the implicit and possibly limiting nature of needing to achieve 'outcomes' implied by 'results', this is framed as a stage on the professional learning journey, transitioning from one life stage to another as part of a developmental process.

In summary, the three guiding structures employed in the SOAR masterclass—sustainability competencies and the Sustainability Mindset Principles—align with a pedagogy of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1997), positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), and appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Witney, 1999). The masterclass design aligns directly with the findings of Purohit's (2024) review of pedagogical innovations in management education, which concluded that few authors utilise transformative learning theory for pedagogic innovation, focusing more on knowledge and skills-related outcomes rather than aspects such as attitudes, empathy, and a desire for change.

The masterclass resource explicitly seeks to provide a learning experience based upon self-reflection on values, strengths, developmental needs and aspirational goals for personal and collective change in the context of Careers and Employability Learning and sustainability storytelling. This theoretical underpinning, along with the incorporated learning frameworks, illustrate heutagogy principles of 'self-determined' learning through ownership of career journeys (Hase & Kenyon, 2013). The masterclass structure begins with self-awareness and builds upon it, designed to work at the level of intrinsic motivation as the premise for seeking careers aligned with global goals.

4. Methods in delivering the masterclass

Building on an initial design of the masterclass as detailed in Cripps and Velasquez-Hoque (2023), this project was delivered between September 2023 and March 2024. It was communicated via the PRME UK and Ireland regional networks, inviting any interested academic colleagues to ask the research team to deliver the masterclass at their institution. As outlined under design considerations, offering an innovative resource that added value was vital to gaining the trust needed to facilitate delivery.

Over the course of six months, this led to the delivery of the masterclass at 18 universities (including the authors' institutions), primarily located in Southeast or Southwest England ($n = 15$), alongside two from Scotland and one overseas in Turkey. Most were held in person ($n = 13$), two wholly online, and three in a hybrid format (with the research team online and educators with students on campus). This geographic scope reflected the authors' locations and the funds available to travel to other universities. Session sizes varied from small groups (less than 10) to large lecture halls. As registers were not consistently taken, the total number of students attending the sessions could only be estimated at around 800. Most took place within curriculum-timed sessions, generally within sustainability-related modules (which were mandatory for students to attend), or, in fewer cases, as part of extracurricular events, possibly in conjunction with careers teams (which were voluntary to attend).

The majority of students were enrolled in undergraduate programs related to Business and Management ($n = 12$ university groups), followed by postgraduate programs ($n = 3$ university groups), and a further cohort at the lead researcher's university, which included undergraduate and foundation level degree courses. The three extra-curricular masterclasses included cross-disciplinary students across levels (from undergraduate through to PhD). Sustainability-related learning was featured in most programs and was a core specialist focus for only a minority of students in one of the master's-level programs. This provided a good balance between students with a keen interest in sustainability and possibly planning a related career and those without any specialist interest or sustainability-related career aspirations.

The workshop needed to be carefully designed to be flexible for differing levels of familiarity with both sustainability and career stage experience and readiness. As attendance was mostly mandatory as part of curriculum learning, this meant that the student cohorts were not necessarily interested in or aware of sustainability. In the case of extra-curricular events with voluntary attendance, it was more likely that the students had some interest but did not necessarily have much prior sustainability-related knowledge. At the end of each masterclass, students were invited to complete a brief, anonymous feedback survey administered through Qualtrics, with full ethical approval from the lead author's institution. This was designed to meet objective 2 in evaluating the masterclass at the cross-institutional level. The survey needed to be deliberately short so that it could be completed within a few minutes of the end of the masterclass sessions. The first two questions required a rating of how helpful and/or interesting the session was overall, and the second asked for the same rating regarding the six components of the masterclass. The third question asked for open responses on the most interesting and why, and the fourth question asked what students might apply from the masterclass to their current or future personal/work lives. The final question asked for recommendations for further development of the masterclass.

Students were also invited to submit a masterclass worksheet, which was introduced during the session. Students were given the opportunity to enter the worksheet into a competition, with prize money available from the project funds. As a result, three winning students from across institutions were invited to speak about their insights at a project webinar. The worksheet enabled reinforcement of learning, and were encouraged to return to it as a future resource when crafting applications. Students were invited to post on LinkedIn about what they had gained from the session. This served to further embed the importance of professional networking and personal branding as a form of "employability learning experiences" (Healy et al., 2023, p. 122). They were invited to create a post

using a common hashtag (#sdgcareerstories) to facilitate mutual connection by following this tag, and to contribute to the resulting collection of student posts and collaborating educator/career professional testimonials, thereby providing an ongoing and living legacy from the project.

The masterclass’s delivery over six months enabled an iterative design whereby enhancements and adaptations were made to the resources based on ongoing teaching experience. These were minor presentational and timing adjustments, and the core components/structural design remained unchanged. This is a testament to the careful design as part of objective 1 in pedagogic underpinning. Of the 18 universities involved, the lead author delivered at 17, providing an overarching depth of insight based on the frequency of engagement in delivery, which added reliability to the analysis alongside feedback survey responses and LinkedIn testimonials from students and collaborating educators. This led to the final version of the resources being launched at a webinar along with the student survey feedback. The webinar attracted 105 registrations (including academics, students, and professional career teams), further adding to its reach and potential impact as other educators pick up the resource materials from the publicly available online web-based platform (see Cripps et al., 2025).

5. Masterclass feedback findings

The feedback findings presented here further confirm the pedagogical value of the masterclass design outlined in the previous section, which applies career construction theory and sustainability storytelling (Objective 1) to address the nexus between employability and sustainability. Building on this, the main contribution of this paper is an innovative teaching resource that has been implemented across institutions and evaluated through student feedback, as well as student and educator testimonials (Objective 2). This section discusses how the masterclass was assessed through a brief student feedback survey, which included basic ranking questions and open-ended comments. Further supporting evaluative insight was enabled through comments provided in storyboard worksheets and extensive publicly available testimonials from students and collaborating educators. The student feedback survey received 253 responses. As the number of attending students could only be estimated at 800, this represents an estimated 31 % response rate, with some variation in response rates across the five questions. Therefore, This is not considered statistically significant but is interpreted in the spirit of an integrated consideration of multiple forms of feedback.

The feedback survey contained two rating questions regarding the masterclass’s perceived overall use and interest, followed by questions about each session component. Three open questions followed, which concerned what was most interesting and why, what students might apply in current and future personal/professional contexts, and any recommendations for masterclass development. A majority of 86 % (n = 218) rated the masterclass as ‘extremely’ or ‘very’ helpful and/or interesting (see Image 1).

The second question asked how interesting and/or useful students found each of the six components of the session. Marginally, the highest combined responses under ‘extremely’ or ‘very useful’ are shown for ‘career storytelling for LinkedIn, job interviews and job applications’ (n = 207, 82 %), closely followed by ‘sustainability competencies’ and ‘Sustainability Mindset Principles’ ‘to identify strengths and developmental areas’ which equally represented 81 % (n = 204) of responses (see Image 2). Notably, the responses confirmed all six components’ perceived interest/use.

The remaining three survey questions were qualitative open-ended responses, asking what students found most interesting and why. This generated rich and varied responses through short statement answers (n = 214), coded using NVIVO 12.0 software. Indicative quotations are synthesised in Table 2, in which all components were assigned a-priori codes according to the masterclass activities. A sub-theme emerged inductively from this analysis, titled ‘Active Learning’ (based on Advance HE’s 2024 employability framework). The thematic coding provided support for interpretive insights rather than facilitating more numeric analysis. However, it was evident that the most common response themes regarding the perceived value of self-awareness, the SDGs, and active learning through the provided tools generated between 35 and 53 mentions. It is particularly noteworthy to observe the perceived value of applying the SDGs as a novel approach to career and employability learning in a career context.

Table 2
– Survey feedback responses to what students found most valuable and why.

Masterclass component	Illustrative survey responses
SOAR – Self-awareness	“Talking about my passion for my goal as I realized I care more than I thought.” “Realising I can have a job that combines personal and professional interests.” “It got me thinking about how to gain extra points in an interview by just being myself.”
Sustainable Development Goals – and how they apply to yourself and your career	“It was interesting to look deeper into SDGs and how they can connect to personal career choices.” “The part that we had to think about the SDG Goals and decide which ones resonate the most with us. This will help to show a prospective employer how we will contribute to the overall sustainability drive.” “Helping us discover what SDG triggered us and made us realize that we could do something.”
Career storytelling – for LinkedIn, job interviews and applications	“Linking all the parts of the story together to form a persuasive and powerful career narrative.” “The concept of interlinking an SDG that we relate to our story and building it up in a way where we could or have already made a change.”
Active Learning (from Advance HE)	“Crafting my story. I have a large range of experience, and this can be challenging to articulate succinctly.” “How we can relate our competency to our chosen SDG and how that can be applied in a job interview, to show how we deeply care about sustainability.” “Focusing me to think about what one thing I am actually interested in rather than the multiple external factors that might be influencing me during career planning.” “Learning how to actually bring in sustainability into job applications in other sectors.”

Source: Authors based on student feedback survey responses and Advance HE (2024)

Overall, it is evident from the quotations in Table 2 that students appreciated linking tools and concepts about sustainability that they may have encountered in prior learning but had not yet applied to the context of their career and employability learning. The benefits of extracurricular learning opportunities with mixed discipline and cohort levels were also indicated, as per the comments below. Extra-curricular sessions such as this are helpful to attract students with an interest in sustainability, which may not be the case in formal, timetabled learning in which this topic does not naturally appeal to students, as illustrated in the students' comments below:

“Meeting people that are as passionate about sustainable development as me as there isn’t enough accessible networking around”.

“I found the discussions I had with others who attended this masterclass helped me reflect on myself further. I found it very interesting to hear about others’ experiences, especially since many of them are currently studying PhD and Master’s programmes and have had many life experiences thus far in their lives”.

The fourth survey question asked what students might apply from the masterclass to their current or future personal/work lives. Over 200 responses were categorised, with some illustrative quotations provided in Table 3, according to the Advance HE (2024) employability framework component of ‘Career Development Learning’ through practical applications, such as developing LinkedIn profiles and approaching interviews using the provided frameworks. The quotations thematically presented under ‘Co-Creation’ demonstrate the importance of interactive, collaborative learning and how students express their intention to apply this learning across their personal and professional lives.

The survey’s final question asked for recommendations for further development, which generally focused on operational design, such as delivering it over a more extended session, and an interest in receiving practical, sustainability-related career searching advice (which was only covered through the provision of an extensive resource sheet as a post-session resource and had not been seen at the time of the survey). Overall, these comments contribute to the time challenges in design, as all masterclass components were well-received (as indicated by the survey results), with a few students recommending more session time and practical career search advice. This emphasises the importance of managing student expectations about the masterclass’s aim of storytelling and highlighting both the resource sheet and other career services support as a follow-up.

Further impressions were gleaned through a content analysis of 14 student voluntary submissions of a digital storyboard worksheet. These provided additional evidence of the session’s effectiveness in terms of students reflecting on and articulating the nexus between themselves, their career planning, and opportunities for sustainability-related careers. The perceived benefit of ‘co-creation’ from discussions with others arose again here:

“The more I think about it, the more I realise that working in a job that promotes SDG 2/15 could combine many of the things I loved and also play to the strengths I exhibited/developed during that summer. It’s certainly something I’m going to look into more after this”.

I could join a society such as the ‘People and Planet Society’. One of the other attendees to the masterclass highlighted this society to me. They pointed out that I could use this society to connect with other people who value the Climate Action SDG, and who are actively working towards careers in this field”.

Twenty students across institutions posted about the masterclass on their personal LinkedIn profiles, tagging the project/research team. This provided meaningful experiential learning alongside an enduring legacy from the project, which will be referred to in ongoing iterations of the masterclass. It also enables contribution to a ‘group story’ through an ongoing community of practice. Additionally, 18 endorsement posts from collaborating educators and career teams across institutions provided compelling evidence of the need and value of this masterclass. All student and educator testimonials are included on a project website to build a legacy and ongoing community of practice (Cripps et al., 2025), and a selection is provided in Table 4.

The combination of feedback survey findings, including ratings and qualitative comments, students’ masterclass worksheet comments, and 38 endorsement and testimonial posts from across 18 institutions, indicates a pedagogic impact in addressing the employability-sustainability gap through storytelling.

Table 3
Student feedback Survey responses to what students might apply in their current or future personal/work life.

Career Development Learning	<i>“I will definitely aim to develop my SDG story in interviews, and work related discussions to express where my passion for helping people comes from, so that they can get to know me better as a person”</i> <i>“I can show the SDGs in my work, and I can contribute to the world by changing the way I work”</i> <i>“I’ll rethink the way I look at my past experience - there’s more there than I thought”</i>
Co-Creation	<i>“I will be looking to apply learning today by considering other people’s opinions and how we can work towards a common goal, even if they don’t have the same opinion as me”</i> <i>“I would love to apply the learning by helping people out and making them aware about certain SDGs”</i> <i>“I will be using all that I learnt for my current and future personal and work life to influence my community and work towards the SDG I chose. I will look into joining societies and clubs where I can have influence and make a difference”</i>

Source: Authors based on student survey feedback responses and Advance HE (2024)

Table 4
LinkedIn student and educator testimonials from across institutions.

Student LinkedIn testimonial (by first name)	Educator LinkedIn testimonial (by institution)
"The insights I have gained from this interactive experience has been invaluable in shaping my career goals. PRME has helped me to identify my values and experiences, as well as express my interest in how future career can contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals" (Sophie)	"A neat framework and scaffold for student reflections and planning all in support for employability" (Nottingham Trent University)
"Opportunity to gain valuable insights into how careers can contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals and how to effectively communicate this to employers" (Giulia)	"A creative, impactful and energetic session" (Glasgow Caledonian University London)
"The masterclass was very empowering and excited to begin my career search" (Alice)	"The activities align with our commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals but also empower our students to weave these crucial elements into their career narratives" (Middlesex University)
"The session broadened my perspective of the world of work with the lens of the Sustainable Development Goals. Provided insights and practical frameworks to craft a career narrative to prepare for the challenges of the job market" (Tracy)	"Truly inspiring, showcasing the power of storytelling in creating awareness, effecting change and highlighting the most sought-after skills for impressive CVs" (Coventry University)
"It really helped me grasp the essential role that sustainability plays in shaping my job opportunities during these changing times" (Vaishali)	"A fresh perspective on building career aspirations with sustainability values encapsulated" (University of Winchester)
"A pivotal role in shaping my understanding of the intersection between sustainability and job opportunities" (Shubham)	"The workshop buzzed with energy as students shared their diverse passions and skills" (University of Surrey)
"I hugely valued the opportunity to discuss employability with people who really 'get' why a sustainability-centered future is a non-negotiable for me" (Lauren)	"The session was a hit with the students and was found to be incredibly useful, even our 'Future Career' Team enjoyed it" (Middlesex University)
"I was given the opportunity to learn how to communicate my sustainability narrative, determine the type of impact I want to have, and most importantly to develop my own career story" (Oluwatobi)	"Students took a deep dive into their career journeys, exploring how they align with the UN SDGs. The energy and insights shared were truly remarkable!" (University of Bedfordshire)
"Gave me the opportunity to expand my network with like-minded individuals, find the link between sustainability and employability, reflect on my own contributions and where my competencies need to be strengthened and emphasised further" (Ciara)	"What an amazing group of students, keen on pursuing diverse careers in sustainability, addressing very real challenges laid out by the UN SDGs" (Birkbeck University of London)

Source: authors (based on LinkedIn testimonial posts)

6. Discussion

This study has contributed an interdisciplinary teaching resource to address the gap in existing employability and sustainability materials. Invitations to deliver the masterclass at 18 institutions confirm educator and career professional interest and the need for such a resource. The publicly available testimonials demonstrate its positive contribution to curricular and extracurricular programmes. Evaluation of student feedback surveys provides indicative evidence, based on both quantitative rankings and qualitative insights, into the masterclass design and implementation, strengthened by publicly available testimonials from students and educators. The application of career construction theory through CEL, aligned with the conceptual framework of sustainability storytelling, offers a novel pedagogical contribution.

Winfield and Ndlovou (2019) note that while explicit links between increased self-awareness, sustainability literacy, and graduate employability are challenging to specify, the added value of sustainability is evident across graduates. This assertion is corroborated in more recent research by Alimehmeti et al. (2024). While it is beyond this study's scope to compare the masterclass and any forthcoming personal or professional experiences, it can be reasonably posited from the empirical findings that the resource can enrich students' Career and Employability Learning from both a process and outcome perspective (Healy, 2023). The masterclass provides a pedagogical approach for closing the "gap between skills employers seek and those employees possess" (AACSB, 2018, p. 19) through integrated resources that enable students to identify and articulate self-awareness of values, competencies, mindset, and developmental opportunities aligned to ever-changing organisational and employment contexts.

Practical career self-management skills are central to successful employability strategies (Bridgstock et al., 2019). Accordingly, this masterclass resource integrates a sustainability perspective into a student job search 'toolkit' premised on self-awareness and narrative building. The masterclass aligns with what Wohlgezogen and Cotronei-Barid (2024) describes as a 'purpose approach' to career guidance based more on personal relevance and intrinsic values. It became clear from delivering the masterclass across multiple settings that students appreciated the opportunity to apply the SDGs (which they might have encountered as part of disciplinary subject learning) to the context of their individual actions and career journeys. This is especially important when career educators lack knowledge and expertise in sustainability-related teaching and learning. Similarly, educators with expertise in sustainability might not be aware of how to address employability within learning. Therefore, the teaching resources provided here provide a practical tool for others to adopt and further develop the "sustainability-to-employability pipeline" (Alimehmeti et al., 2024).

Through the analysis, it is evident that students valued applying storytelling techniques to job search processes and the practical job application-focused nature of activities using leading global ESD resources such as the sustainability competencies (UNESCO, 2018) and the sustainability mindset (Rimanoczy, 2021). An interesting aspect that emerged from the analysis of qualitative insights in survey feedback was the appreciation for feedback that was themed as 'co-creation' and 'active learning' within Advance HE's (2024) employability framework. Throughout the masterclass activities, students were asked to open up to each other to discuss personal

values (linked to the SDGs), and much like in recruitment situations, they did not have much time to prepare responses. As per the ‘disorienting dilemmas’ ascribed to transformative learning pedagogy (Mezirow, 1997), students might feel a sense of discomfort initially in articulating ‘unpractised’ responses, and equally, educators might feel a sense of discomfort in navigating both sustainability and employability (in which the latter is less likely to be their ‘core’ discipline). It is helpful here to draw on Finnegan and d’Abreu’s (2024, p. 10) thoughts in a discussion of climate education that “as educators, we do not need to have all the answers”. Here, this concerns enabling students to unravel what they care about most and how to articulate life experiences related to this.

Highly aligned to the premise of transformative learning, the masterclass resource encourages students to move from ‘safe’ to ‘brave spaces’ (Winks, 2018), linked to the storytelling phase of ‘Crossing the threshold’, to communicate a career narrative around sustainability-related values and experiences. This was new to many students, and putting this into practice through conversation with peers was clearly perceived as beneficial. Considering storytelling as an approach to enhance social connectedness and social networks, which can, in turn, enhance physical health (Einam et al., 2024) this masterclass amplifies the well-being benefits of sharing stories connected to shared global concerns. The masterclass can be considered a form of ‘pedagogical nudging’ to develop “footprints in the mind” (Neergaard et al., 2023, p. 262) through personal and community identity building for life-wide and lifelong learning.

Publicly available LinkedIn testimonials support the feedback survey by further evidencing the value of the masterclass, while also contributing to skills development and public profiling (see Cripps et al., 2025). Although the testimonials only provide exploratory insight rather than conclusive evidence, methodologically, they illuminate opportunities for integrated pedagogical assessment (of both students and educators) as recommended by Purohit (2024), and might be developed for further research applications. LinkedIn testimonials are also helpful in building an even broader collaborative sense of sharing and building stories of learning impact among students from differing institutions, united as part of ‘tomorrow’s workforce’. Using the hashtag associated with the project, students can remain connected with similar posts for as long as they wish – potentially the trajectory of their career.

7. Limitations

The main contribution of this masterclass is a pioneering teaching resource rather than the empirical data itself. The feedback survey data is descriptive, and 254 survey respondents are not large and comprehensive enough to draw definitive empirical claims. The feedback questions were appropriate to ascertain the perceived value of learning design but cannot claim conclusive evidence of learning gains. Survey design limitations are linked to delivery time constraints and the need to ask students to engage at the end of the masterclass session to maximise responses. In some institutions, session delivery was limited to 50 min due to the nature of the timetable, which also restricted both the depth of learning and the time available for completing the feedback survey. The return of storyboard worksheets as part of a student competition was also low, and this was likely due to the requirement of additional effort outside of class time. As a stand-alone masterclass, it was not possible to offer follow-up encouragement to complete the task.

Funding limitations prohibited delivery to more institutions due to the travel costs involved. The flexibility of delivery across different groups of students (Undergraduate, Postgraduate, and mixed), various delivery modes (online, in-person, and hybrid), and differing session lengths was necessary to access multiple institutions. The students from 18 universities in this research, located in the UK and overseas, would be interesting to understand more about how their home country or national contexts influenced the survey results. However, it is not possible to identify any specific characteristics that impact the workshop’s effectiveness from this study.

Anecdotally, in-person masterclasses were perceived as more impactful in facilitating richer conversations between students and educators. A more extended session would undoubtedly be helpful for students who have less prior knowledge of the SDGs or are unaccustomed to reflective exercises related to employability. It is reasonable to question the depth of learning and transformation that can be achieved in a single session. Accordingly, it is suggested that the masterclass offers the potential to trigger transformative insights and provides a blueprint for addressing the sustainability-employability nexus through sustainability storytelling. As a stand-alone teaching resource, it must be integrated with other programme design inputs to constitute a transformational learning pedagogy.

8. Recommendations

It is hoped that this masterclass will inspire the development of further resources and discuss how employability and sustainability can be more holistically integrated and embedded across programme design. This masterclass illustrates how students can apply disciplinary-related learning on sustainability and identify related competencies and mindsets in the context of career and employability learning. It can be added to curricular and extracurricular programmes, as illustrated here, or it could be used to develop longer sessions around each component detailed within the masterclass resources. There is particular value to be gained from offering the session alongside more practical job search strategies and business engagement panels discussing sustainability skills and recruitment as part of a broader offering of sustainability careers events. The design can also be easily flexed as a training and learning tool beyond a higher education context, broadening an inclusive and diverse application to new and mid-career professionals seeking to pivot towards a sustainability-related career direction.

Moving on from the research design here, which was premised upon developing confirmation of the value of each of the masterclass components, the following steps will involve gauging the masterclass’s impact by identifying at the start how many have intentions/interest to pursue their career with sustainability-related aspirations (and if so, what) and how this compares at the end of the masterclass. This may be informed by an analysis of differing work motivations for considering how sustainability-related interests can inform career trajectories, as well as student readiness to communicate sustainability-related values and interests to employers before and after the masterclass. There is also ample opportunity to review this masterclass as part of a deepening understanding of the role of intrinsic motivation versus extrinsic motivators, such as financial reward in career and employability choices.

Feedback survey analysis could be extended to include more detailed information on the students' prior/program learning on sustainability/employability and the specific program of study to compare against their evaluation of how interesting and/or useful the masterclass components are. It would be interesting to consider how national and institutional context might influence attitudes and goals toward both sustainability-related careers and attitudes toward the masterclass. Greater insight could be gained by profiling the individual responses according to the program of study, prior learning, university attended, and home/overseas student status, and gathering the impact of learning through a pre-post evaluative design.

Longitudinal research could be carried out one-year post-graduation (and every three years subsequent) to discover if and how students used any learning from the masterclass. Such research design could draw upon Das (2024) 'Career Course, Coach, and Cohort' (3C) approach which offers an ongoing community of practice among educators and students. This could be developed by offering personalised support in applying masterclass learning to recruitment processes, thereby enhancing students' career self-efficacy and enriching educators' insight through their own 'experiential learning' of the students' employability journey.

9. Conclusion

Career and Employability Learning pedagogy has been creatively applied to sustainability storytelling in the development of a masterclass resource, with empirical testimonies from educators and students in a multi-institutional study. A storytelling design based upon principles of career construction theory offers a creative pedagogical approach to engage student interest and concern in contributing to achieving the SDGs while finding personal and career meaning and growth. It is recognised that "no single story will achieve the Sustainable Development Goals" (Riedy, 2020, p. 77), and a single learning experience alone may not be transformational. However, the collective impact of individual commitment to exploring opportunities for career-related actions, informed and motivated by a desire to contribute to the SDGs, can trigger transformative insights that ultimately and collaboratively transform the system. Educators must enable students to recognise personal values aligned with global goals, seek out learning opportunities, and articulate the potential contribution of softer, more holistic, whole-person skills and mindsets to organisational and worldly challenges. The sharing of this instructional teaching resource and innovative methodological design will hopefully inspire more action through growing the ecosystem of delivery of the masterclass materials. It provides an actionable resource, a symbolic fractal of light, as part of a much-needed movement towards addressing the sustainability-employability talent pipeline.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Karen Cripps: Conceptualization, Funding acquisition, Project administration, Resources, Methodology, Investigation, Data curation, Formal analysis, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **Milena Bobeva:** Conceptualization, Funding acquisition, Investigation.

Declaration of competing interests

Nothing to declare.

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Appendix 1. – Instructor session plan

The notes at the bottom of each PowerPoint slide (accessible through 'notes view') provide specific instructor guidance, including questions that students might be asked and instructions on using the animations.

Slide, SOAR stage and *storyboard worksheet number	Section content & suggested instructions (to be adapted as suited over a suggested period of a 2 hour masterclass)	PRME IS characteristics
Slide 1 Ikigai	Introduce the overall purpose of the session: Present the IKIGAI concept to frame the session's intentions to help students reflect on what they love, identify what they are good at and what they can be paid for and how this can help work towards a more just, equitable and sustainable world. (5 mins)	Make learning meaningful
Slide 2 Aim and objectives	Introduce the session aim, objectives and structure Introduce the focus on developing a career story to use in application processes	n/a

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Slide, SOAR stage and *storyboard worksheet number	Section content & suggested instructions (to be adapted as suited over a suggested period of a 2 hour masterclass)	PRME 15 characteristics
SOAR framework	and pitches, structured around the global Sustainable Development Goals. The session follows the SOAR framework for employability to help to do this and will involve a number of activities such as sustainability competencies and Sustainability Mindset Principles to help in constructing a career narrative (story). (2 mins)	
Slide 3 Sustainability is..?	Definitions of sustainability: This sets out there are multiple views of sustainability from diverse viewpoints. This session sees the following interpretation of what sustainability means in the world of work today. Sustainability is more than 'green' or environmental skills, ESG reporting or technological development. It is wholly relevant to all workplaces. Information is then provided on the current growth in 'green jobs' that students can leverage in their career. <i>[Educators may wish to adapt with localised job market information]</i> (5 mins)	Make learning meaningful
Slide 4 Opportunities for personal impact according to organisational sustainability	Opportunities for finding a job with personal impact: Ask students what kind of organisation they wish to work for and if it is important that the organisation is well-regarded for sustainability practices. This matrix illustrates that in the bottom right-hand corner is a space where organizations may be less currently engaged with sustainability, thereby offering a potential opportunity for personal impact to introduce and create ripples of change. In the top right-hand corner, organizations might be highly engaged in sustainability, potentially offering lots of opportunities but also making it more competitive. Positions on the left are to be avoided – either by helping the organization to get involved (bottom left), or finding opportunities to get involved with what is happening (top left) (3 mins)	Make learning meaningful
Slide 5 Introduction to LinkedIn profile Storytelling	A student example profile: Ask students if they have a LinkedIn profile, and if they have developed the 'about' profile section Outline that this session is to support students to create their own sustainability changemaker story. Here is one example - Adam Lister's changemaker story from pre and post graduation. It illustrates clear strengths, interests and aspirations that can shape a powerful employability story. <i>[Educators may wish to upload a LinkedIn profile from their own university students]</i> (3 mins)	Make learning meaningful
Slide 6 Introduction to story writing and stages of a story	Scripting a storyline: Ask students to think about their favourite film/book/play and what they like about the story Briefly outline the stages of a compelling plot, using the stepped tiles, and link this to developing a convincing employment narrative that moves towards empowered, meaningful responses to the world's sustainability challenges. (2 mins)	Make learning meaningful
Slide 7 SOAR: Self-awareness	Introducing the SDGs: Ask students some basic questions about the SDGs to gauge existing knowledge Introduce the wedding cake model of the SDGs, in the context of stirring early thoughts on which layer triggers/interests students most – biosphere, society or economy. (5 minutes)	Make learning meaningful
Slide 8 SOAR: Self-awareness *SB1 & *SB2	The SDG call to adventure: Through paired/small group discussion, invite students to select one SDG that resonates with them and note it on the story worksheet as per the prompts for SB1. Students then reflect on <i>why</i> they chose it, prompting them to think about related skills, interest and experiences (*SB2). After they have discussed, they should write some brief notes in the storyboard worksheet document. (20 mins)	Develop supportive social interaction
Slide 9 SOAR: Self-awareness	Meeting the mentor; Introducing the UNESCO sustainability competencies: Explain that as well as recognising and gaining knowledge about the key issues encompassed by the SDGs, we also need to respond to their call. This means not only gaining knowledge but also developing the skills, values and attributes needed to address them. Core sustainability competencies, that employers actively seek, are outlined in the 8 UNESCO competencies (2017) model and so can serve as a guidance tool – like a mentor. The competencies can be briefly introduced (see the guide at the bottom of the worksheet) (5 mins)	Make learning meaningful
Slide 10 SOAR:	Raising self-awareness of sustainability competencies: Explain that the 8 competencies are categorised into 3 groups (ways of	Facilitate active engagement & Foster joy and wellbeing <i>(continued on next page)</i>

(continued)

Slide, SOAR stage and *storyboard worksheet number	Section content & suggested instructions (to be adapted as suited over a suggested period of a 2 hour masterclass)	PRME 15 characteristics
Self-awareness *SB3	thinking, practising and being). Working from 3 of the competencies provided here (or drawing on all 8 if desired), students reflect and discuss on one they feel they excel at and another they would like to learn more about or develop. They should discuss in pairs/small groups and then make notes in the worksheet (10 mins)	
Slide 11 SOAR: Opportunities *SB4	Exploring opportunities for volunteering and student societies: Invite students to 'cross the threshold' and take a leap into action to build their employability potential. Stress how valuable this experience can be in demonstrating purpose and drive and how seizing these opportunities can help them gain valuable experience and stand out from the crowd. They can look for new opportunities relevant to their chosen SDG. [Educators can replace the links so as to feature volunteering and/or society opportunities at the relevant university and/or local community]. If they have internet access, students can explore these in class and share ideas (including talking about what they are currently involved in). (10 mins)	Facilitate active engagement
Slide 12 SOAR: Aspirations The Sustainability Mindset Principles	The Sustainability Mindset Principles (SMPs): 'Cross the threshold' into trying out new ways of responding to job role specifications. Introduce the SMP's; there are 4 dimensions Isabel Rimanoczy identified through researching leaders and CEOs that were sustainability champions in their fields. Building on SDG knowledge and sustainability competencies, the SMPs explore ways of thinking, being and behaving for the greater good. Much of this is not always visible and requires reflection on the values, norms and behaviours that drive 'unsustainability'. See the Power Point slide notes and information at the bottom of the worksheet for an overview of the principles (5 mins)	Make learning meaningful
Slide 13 SOAR: Aspirations *SB5	Use the SMPs to inform a job role 'fit': Share this example of a management graduate scheme application that can illustrate how the SMPs can be used to develop the applicant's response. The examples given provide a strong rationale for the candidate's 'fit' for the job and will help them stand out from the crowd. On the worksheet, students can practise developing their own written response to the job criteria, drawing on the SMP of choice. [Educators may wish to replace with a job role profile of choice] (10 mins)	Facilitate active engagement
Slide 14 SOAR: Results	SOARING to IKIGAI: Review the stages of the SOAR model outlined in storytelling for the SDGs so far, using the steps outlined in the slide. With 80, 000 hours in the average career span - there is enormous potential for the 'world of work' to create a positive and impactful career story (seizing the treasure) and opportunity to meaningfully respond to the sustainability challenges the world faces - (the 'return' stage of the plot). Stress here that Results are ongoing, iterative and lifelong - that they need to be consciously and intentionally refreshed and reframed as a career unfolds in response to a changing world. (3 mins)	Make learning meaningful
Slide 15 STAR technique for SDG storytelling *SB6	Interview: question practice: This activity presents typical interview questions that students can respond to referencing the SDGs, Competencies and Sustainability Mindset skills they have identified in their SDG storyline earlier. Allow time to reflect on each of the stages of the STAR framework outlined before 'interviewing a partner' stage. This works well if students can stand up and mingle around the room, talking to differing partners and refining their story on each articulation. The final 5 minutes can be used for a whole group feedback on what they felt in talking and listening to each other (30 mins)	Design for iteration & Foster joy and wellbeing
Slide 16 Organisational SDG stories	SDGs in the world of work: Illustrate that through looking out for the SDGs that organisations explicitly (or perhaps without knowing) address, students can match individual values with organisational values. Recommend students look out for how organisations tell their SDG stories. (1 min)	Make learning meaningful
Slide 17 Session summary	Session summary: Summarise the key elements of the session framed around IKIGAI & The SOAR framework. Signpost the resource sheet link to helpful job site websites and books. Stress this is the first iteration of a sustainability focused story, that will be revised, refreshed and rewritten multiple times throughout their working	Design for iteration

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Slide, SOAR stage and *storyboard worksheet number	Section content & suggested instructions (to be adapted as suited over a suggested period of a 2 hour masterclass)	PRME I5 characteristics
	careers. invite them to revisit and reflect the SDGs, the competencies and the SMP in their own time and to develop the knowledge, skills and attributes needed to accompany them on their career journey. (1 min)	
Slide 18	Reference List	

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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