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GREENBRIDGE Methodological guidebook

Green Skills – 1.1 Introduction to Sustainability and Environmental Ethics

1. Introduction

The aim of this methodological guidebook is to provide VET teachers with a clear understanding of the methodologies and approaches used in the course Green Skills – 1.1 Introduction to Sustainability and Environmental Ethics, as well as practical guidance on how to deliver the material to colleagues and learners. The document is intended as a hands-on resource, offering both an overview of the course structure including modules, subtitles, and teaching methods, also a lesson plans that outline learning outcomes, expected duration, content, and practical teaching tips. Additionally, it provides advice on how to adapt the course for different target groups, tailor it to specialized contexts, or incorporate additional activities. Designed to support VET educators in planning, delivering, and adjusting the content effectively, the guidebook serves as both a reference tool and a practical roadmap for implementing the course in diverse educational settings.

2. Teaching approaches

The following chapter provides VET teachers with an overview of the teaching approaches used in the Green Skills – 1.1 Introduction to Sustainability and Environmental Ethics course, helping them understand the course structure and teaching methods. The first part - structure of the Course, presents the modules, explains the logic behind their sequencing, and offers a brief overview of the syllabus content. Followed by teaching methods used in the course, introduces the various teaching approaches used in the course.

2.1. Structure of the course

The course on *Green Skills – 1.1 Introduction to Sustainability and Environmental Ethics* is organized into three main modules, each designed to build both theoretical knowledge and practical skills for VET educators.

Module 1: Foundations of sustainability introduces key sustainability concepts and their relevance for vocational education and the labour market, highlighting the three pillars of sustainability (environmental, social, and economic), the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the circular economy as a driver of innovation. It also presents good practices to raise awareness and overcome barriers to sustainable development.

Subtitles include: 1.1 Introduction to sustainability and sustainable development, 1.2 Connection between sustainability, circular economy, and SMEs, and 1.3 Good examples of sustainability practices implementation in companies.



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Module 2: Environmental ethics – principles and practices aims to familiarize educators with the concept of environmental ethics and its core principles, including sustainability, justice, environmental responsibility, and the intrinsic value of nature. The module also covers relevant practices such as actions, policies, and lifestyle choices, illustrated with real-life examples of how environmental ethics principles are applied.

Subtitles include: 2.1 Introduction to environmental ethics and key principles, 2.2 Practices of environmental ethics, and 2.3 Good examples of integration of environmental ethics principles.

Module 3: Education for sustainability and environmental ethics – pedagogy and practice focuses on equipping educators with practical tools and methods to teach sustainability and environmental ethics in engaging ways. It explores active learning approaches, visual and digital teaching tools, and student-led projects and action plans that allow learners to identify sector-specific sustainability or ethical issues and propose solutions.

Subtitles include: 3.1 Active learning for sustainability and environmental ethics, 3.2 Visual and digital tools for teaching sustainability and environmental ethics, and 3.3 Student-led projects and action plans.

Together, these modules provide a coherent and structured approach to building knowledge, skills, and practical strategies for integrating sustainability and environmental ethics into VET teaching.

2.2. Teaching methods used in the course

The course employs a variety of teaching methods to support diverse learning styles and ensure engagement with the content. Across the modules, short explanatory texts are used to present core ideas, while video scripts help summarise key points and offer an alternative way to understand the material. Reflective activities encourage participants to think critically about their own context and make connections between labour-market demands and the digital skills needed in their sector. Practical examples from businesses are included to illustrate real situations and support problem-solving, and self-paced study through the learning platform allows learners to explore the content independently at their own pace. In addition, a set of supporting resources, including the course presentation and methodological guidebook, provides useful tools and references to assist with lesson planning and delivery. These methods are designed to be flexible, allowing educators to adapt them to their teaching environment and learners' needs while fostering active and meaningful learning.

3. Lessons plan

This chapter provides VET educators with a detailed framework for delivering the Green Skills – 1.1 Introduction to Sustainability and Environmental Ethics course, outlining the learning goals, content, and practical guidance for each lesson. By the end of the course, educators are expected to understand sustainability concepts and their significance in vocational education, explain and apply environmental ethics principles in teaching, integrate sustainability into subject-specific curricula, use interactive and learner-centred methods, and embed teaching resources that promote sustainable practices among students. The chapter presents a structured lesson plan for each module and subtitle, detailing the expected duration, content and comments.



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3.1. Module 1 - Foundations of sustainability

Expected duration	Content	Comments
20 min	<p>Subtitle 1.1: Introduction to sustainability and sustainable development</p> <p>This subtitle introduces learners to the concept of sustainability, emphasizing the balance between social, economic, and environmental systems and the interconnectedness of these pillars. Educators will present the historical development of sustainable development, including the Brundtland Report, and examine key frameworks such as UNESCO's definition and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The lesson highlights how environmental, social, and economic sustainability interact in practice, using examples such as the lifecycle of products, and demonstrates how sustainability principles can be applied in VET contexts and the labour market. Teaching methods include lecture, video presentations, and reflective discussion, with practical notes encouraging learners to relate concepts to local contexts and real-life examples.</p>	<p>Encourage learners to share examples of sustainability challenges they have observed in their communities or workplaces.</p> <p>Pause after introducing SDGs to ask learners how each goal relates to their sector or profession.</p> <p>Highlight the relevance of sustainability in the context of future employment and the labour market.</p>
20 min	<p>Subtitle 1.2: Connection between sustainability, circular economy, and SMEs</p> <p>This subtitle focuses on translating sustainability concepts into practical strategies through the circular economy. Learners should distinguish between linear and circular economic models, understand circular principles such as reuse, repair, and material recovery, and examine how these approaches foster innovation, economic resilience, and sustainable business practices. Special attention should be given to SMEs, highlighting opportunities and challenges for integrating circular practices and linking actions to EU initiatives such as the Circular Economy Action Plan and the European Green Deal. Teaching methods include case studies, discussion, and self-paced research, with notes emphasizing adaptation of circular strategies to learners' vocational contexts.</p>	<p>Use diagrams to visually compare linear and circular economy models for clarity.</p> <p>Invite learners to identify circular economy opportunities in their own workplaces or industries.</p> <p>Highlight EU initiatives (Circular Economy Action Plan, Green Deal) as supportive frameworks, but focus on actionable steps rather than policy details.</p>
20 min	<p>Subtitle 1.3: Good examples of sustainability practices implementation in companies</p>	Show video clips or images of the case study companies to



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	<p>This subtitle presents concrete examples of SMEs successfully integrating sustainability into their operations. Educators explore case studies such as Botanic Lab (Bulgaria), Kramp & Kramp GmbH (Germany), and Koter Szkołka Krzewów Jagodowych (Poland), illustrating practices in urban landscaping, eco-friendly construction, and sustainable agriculture. The lesson emphasizes practical benefits, such as cost savings, operational efficiency, and enhanced competitiveness, showing that sustainability can be a driver of innovation and long-term value creation. Teaching methods can include video presentations, group discussion, and reflective activity or further exploring the case studies. Another aspect is to inspire learners to consider sustainability in their future careers.</p>	<p>make examples more tangible. Can be local or regional practices.</p> <p>Ask learners to discuss what practices could be adapted to their own sectors.</p> <p>Use these case studies as inspiration for project-based activities or assignments in their own teaching.</p>
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3.2. Module 2 - Environmental ethics – principles and practices

Expected duration	Content	Comments
20 min	<p>Subtitle 2.1: Introduction to environmental ethics and key principles - sustainability, justice, environmental responsibility, and the concept of intrinsic value beyond human needs.</p> <p>This subtitle introduces learners to the foundational concepts of environmental ethics, inviting them to move beyond a human-centered perspective and consider the moral standing of nonhuman entities. Learners explore key principles including sustainability, justice (including environmental and intergenerational justice), environmental responsibility, and intrinsic value beyond human needs, supported by philosophical frameworks such as biocentrism, ecocentrism, and Leopold's land ethic. Real-world dilemmas are presented to illustrate the challenges of applying these principles in practice, encouraging critical reflection on questions like obligations to future generations or balancing competing ecological interests. Teaching methods can include lecture, guided discussion, and reflective exercises, with practical guidance for relating ethical principles to VET contexts and inspiring learners to consider how their future professional decisions can reflect moral responsibility toward the environment.</p>	<p>Begin with a provocative question, e.g., "Do we have moral duties to nonhuman entities?" to engage learners.</p> <p>Use examples from everyday life and workplaces to make abstract concepts relatable.</p> <p>Encourage debate on real dilemmas (e.g., balancing human needs with ecological integrity) to foster critical thinking.</p> <p>Link the discussion to sustainability in VET contexts and future employment relevance in local and European context.</p>



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20 min	<p>Subtitle 2.2: Practices of environmental ethics - actions, policies, and lifestyles choices</p> <p>This subtitle focuses on translating environmental ethics into concrete actions at individual, organizational, and systemic levels. Learners explore lifestyle choices such as sustainable consumption, ethical food decisions, low-impact transportation, and waste management, alongside public policies, economic incentives, and international agreements that operationalize ethical responsibility. The lesson also highlights broader systemic changes, including circular economy models and education-based advocacy, showing how these approaches reduce environmental impact and promote social and economic sustainability. Teaching methods can include case studies, videos, discussion, and problem-solving activities, with notes for educators to encourage learners to identify actionable practices in their own sectors and demonstrate that environmental ethics is both practical and deeply relevant to daily and professional life.</p>	<p>Encourage learners to reflect on their own practices and identify small actionable changes.</p> <p>Highlight both personal and collective responsibility to make abstract ethics tangible.</p> <p>Engage learners in brainstorming exercises to identify ways to integrate ethical practices into their teaching or workplace.</p> <p>Emphasize that ethical action is achievable and beneficial, not just theoretical.</p>
20 min	<p>Subtitle 2.3: Good examples of integration of environmental ethics principles</p> <p>This lesson presents learners with real-world examples of companies that successfully integrate the core principles of environmental ethics: sustainability, justice, environmental responsibility, and intrinsic value, into their strategies and operations. Case studies include LEGO, IKEA, Volvo, and Werner & Mertz (Frosch), illustrating how ethical values guide product design, materials sourcing, supply chain management, circular business models, and stakeholder engagement. Learners will explore how these companies embed ethics into practical decisions, demonstrating measurable impacts such as reducing emissions, promoting fairness, enhancing resource efficiency, and fostering circularity. Teaching methods can include case study analysis, video presentations, and group discussion, with practical guidance for educators to inspire learners to identify, adapt, and innovate ethical practices in their own vocational sectors, reinforcing that</p>	<p>Present the case studies (LEGO, IKEA, Volvo, Frosch) with visuals or short videos to make the examples concrete and engaging.</p> <p>Encourage learners to analyse the practices and identify which ethical principles are being applied in each case.</p> <p>Facilitate group discussions or brainstorming sessions to explore how similar strategies could be adapted to learners' vocational contexts.</p>



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	environmental ethics is both actionable and transformative for business and society.	
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3.3. Module 3 - Education for sustainability and environmental ethics – pedagogy and practice

Expected duration	Content	Comments
20 min	<p>Subtitle 3.1: Active learning for sustainability and environmental ethics</p> <p>The subtitle emphasizes engaging learners through hands-on, participatory approaches that make sustainability and ethics tangible. Educators guide students through project-based learning, problem-solving tasks, simulations, and role-playing exercises to explore real-world challenges relevant to their vocational field. Students might, for example, design energy-efficient solutions for buildings, develop circular waste strategies, or plan community sustainability projects. Tools such as Design Thinking frameworks, checklists for ethical evaluation, and impact assessment templates help students structure problem-solving while considering environmental, social, and economic implications. Reflection activities like journals, peer discussions, or portfolios reinforce ethical reasoning, trade-offs, and the long-term impact of decisions, connecting theory to practical application and future careers in sustainability-related professions.</p>	<p>Begin with a motivating example or local sustainability challenge to engage learners immediately.</p> <p>Use collaborative exercises to foster teamwork, negotiation, and peer learning.</p> <p>Integrate practical tools like Design Thinking or checklists to make ethical reflection structured and actionable.</p> <p>Encourage reflective discussion after each activity to connect experiences to broader sustainability and ethical principles.</p>
20 min	<p>Subtitle 3.2: Visual and digital tools for teaching sustainability and environmental ethics</p> <p>This subtitle focuses on using interactive and visual tools to bring abstract sustainability concepts to life. Educators can incorporate videos, infographics, virtual tours, simulations, and digital platforms to illustrate real-world examples of environmental ethics, circular economy models, and renewable energy projects. Learners create their own infographics, analyse carbon footprints, participate in gamified challenges, and collaborate on digital whiteboards to map solutions to sustainability problems. These tools help learners visualize complex data, actively engage with content, and</p>	<p>Encourage learners to create their own digital outputs, such as infographics or interactive maps, to deepen understanding.</p> <p>Integrate gamification, quizzes, and collaborative apps to maintain engagement and interactivity.</p>



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	<p>develop critical thinking while linking ethical principles to tangible actions and measurable outcomes.</p>	<p>Show learners how digital tools can measure, reflect, and track environmental impact for practical learning outcomes.</p>
20 min	<p>Subtitle 3.3: Student-led projects and action plans</p> <p>This lesson centers on learner ownership, where students identify sustainability challenges, research solutions, and implement or simulate actionable projects. Educators guide teams to define problems using SMART objectives, conduct research, develop prototypes, plan actions, implement solutions, and reflect on outcomes. Students may design energy-efficient initiatives, circular waste strategies, or eco-innovation campaigns, while documenting their ethical reasoning and measurable impact. This approach develops practical skills, collaboration, ethical reflection, and project management while connecting theoretical concepts of sustainability and environmental ethics to tangible, real-world applications and emerging green careers.</p>	<p>Encourage learners to select challenges relevant to their vocational field to increase engagement and practicality.</p> <p>Provide structured milestones, including research, prototyping, and reflection, to maintain momentum.</p> <p>Facilitate teamwork and peer evaluation to develop collaboration, negotiation, and accountability skills.</p>

4. Adapting the course for different contexts

This course can be adapted to a wide range of vocational settings and learner profiles. VET teachers may choose to place greater emphasis on Module One, exploring sustainability in depth by examining global frameworks and policies, as well as discussing the local context in relation to government strategies and measures that support sustainability. Educators can also incorporate hands-on learning by analysing case studies from local, European, or international companies to highlight successful examples of sustainability integration.

Module Two offers an opportunity to engage learners in the more philosophical dimension of environmental ethics, encouraging them to reflect on actions, policies, and lifestyle choices. Depending on the audience, VET educators may prioritise theoretical or political perspectives or alternatively use case studies as practical activities to foster critical thinking. This helps learners connect new information with real-world scenarios, particularly suitable for more advanced groups.

Module Three equips learners with practical tools for teaching sustainability and environmental ethics in engaging and effective ways. Educators can choose to test one of the concepts in their own classrooms, providing hands-on experience and incorporating reflective activities to consolidate key learning points. Another option is to facilitate brainstorming sessions where learners consider how the tools could be integrated into their teaching practice or propose additional approaches and good practices they would like to apply.



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5. Conclusion

This guidebook equips VET educators with the knowledge, methods, and practical tools to bring sustainability and environmental ethics to life in their teaching. By combining core concepts, real-world examples, and active learning strategies, educators can make these principles tangible and relevant for learners. The flexible approach encourages adaptation to different contexts, sectors, and learner needs, empowering teachers to create meaningful, engaging experiences. Ultimately, this guide supports educators in inspiring learners to think critically, act responsibly, and contribute to a sustainable and ethical future.



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