3ydd Gynhadledd Dysgu ac Addysgu

3rd Annual Learning and Teaching Conference

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# Crynoldebau / abstracts

Update on how our School University Partnership Initiative is enhancing learning and teaching in schools.

Paula Hughes

Sustainability Network Wales (SusNet): An Update on how this School University Partnership Initiative (SUPI) is enhancing learning and teaching in schools.

SusNet Wales is a Research Council UK funded project that delivers a diverse range of academic units to ‘A’ level students across Ceredigion. These academic units are united by a general theme of Sustainability and Social Responsibility and are developed, led and delivered by practising researchers within Aberystwyth University currently from the following departments: IBERS (biology and chemistry), Sport and Exercise Science, IMAPS, International Politics, Geography, History and Welsh History, Psychology, Theatre Film and Television Studies and Education. In addition the CWPSI delivers a research skills unit which is offered to all enrolled students.

The units are delivered using a blended learning approach with face-to-face and online learning activities providing the students with a total of 10 hours ‘contact’ time. The SusNet project has its own area within Blackboard and students use online submission through ‘Turnitin’ via Blackboard for completing tasks; creating an accessible and flexible working environment for pupils, teachers and researchers. This format has facilitated the involvement of schools within Ceredigion as it means students and teachers can engage with the individual academic units from any location with internet access. The blended learning approach also reduces the amount of time spent travelling to and from the university whilst still giving students quality time to engage with researches for delivery of a ‘whole’ unit.

The units have been tailored in consultation with teachers from the lead school, Penglais, to add value to and extend the range of activities within the ‘A’ level curriculum and Welsh Baccaluarate.

Involved in the project are a range of AU researchers at different stages in their careers: undergraduate students on work experience all the way through to Professors have taken part in the delivery of the units thus increasing the public engagement opportunities across the university and enhancing communication skills for all involved.

In addition the project offers research-led continuing professional development for teachers to increase their confidence and expertise in contemporary research.

Feedback from the first 2 years of the project has shown that both students and teachers have been inspired by their experience of contemporary research delivered through SusNet.