School of Sustainability
Arizona State University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
Tamsin Foucrier

will defend her dissertation

Training Future Entrepreneurs – Developing and Assessing Sustainability Competencies in Entrepreneurship Education

Thursday, April 16, 2020
10AM
Zoom Meeting ID: 358 644 666

Faculty, students, and the public are invited.

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Arnim Wiek, Chair
Dr. George Basile, Member
Dr. Matthias Barth, Member

Abstract

Employee-owned businesses, benefit corporations, social enterprises, and other sustainability entrepreneurship innovations are responding to challenges such as climate change, economic inequalities, and unethical business behavior. Academic programs to date, however, often fall short in sufficiently equipping students with competencies in sustainability entrepreneurship – from a coherent set of learning objectives, through effective and engaging pedagogies, to rigorous assessment of learning outcomes. This dissertation contributes to bridging these gaps.
The first study proposes a process-oriented and literature-based framework of sustainability entrepreneurship competencies. It offers a general vision for students, faculty, and entrepreneurs, as well as for the design of curricula, courses, and assessments.

The second study presents an exploration into the nature of sustainability entrepreneurship courses, with a focus on teaching and learning processes. Using pioneering courses at Arizona State University, the study analyzes and compares the links between learning objectives, pedagogies, and learning outcomes. Based on document analysis and semi-structured interviews with course instructors, the study identifies cognitive apprenticeship from input processing to experimentation, constructive alignment from learning objectives to assessments, and curriculum-level coordination across courses as key success factors of sustainability entrepreneurship education. The result of this study can inform instructors and researchers in applying and further substantiating effective educational models for future entrepreneurs.

The third study addresses the key question of competence assessment: what are reliable tools for assessing students' competence in sustainability entrepreneurship? We developed and tested a novel tool for assessing students' competence in sustainability entrepreneurship through in-vivo simulated professional situations. We tested this tool in different settings and evaluated it against a set of criteria derived from the literature. To inform educators in business and management programs, we discuss and conclude under which conditions this assessment tool seems most effective, as well as improvement for future applications of the tool.