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**Case Study: Green Education in an
Australian University**

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis contends that conservative academic culture and the predominance of science-based courses can block the inclusion of green education into tertiary curricula. In the study, I used a participatory action research approach, embedded in a critical research paradigm, in order to work with interested students and community groups as well as academia at the University of Canberra. During the research period, I aimed to further develop green education on the campus, while observing responses of academia, students and environmentally related community groups. Data were analysed using an analytical model linking education with social change.

The thesis addresses the following questions: how do students demonstrate their interest in environmental sustainability; why are formal studies within an institution unable to respond to student interest; what characterises the gap between formal university studies and non-formal environmental education in relevant community groups; what is green education, how is it put into practice, and does it bridge the gap between formal studies and community-based environmental education.

The study found that the environmental science-based course at the university was focussed on the transmission of knowledge rather than the teaching of contemporary problem solving in the form of green education. The formal environmental education of the university setting varied greatly in terms of purpose, culture, values and philosophy from the environmental education of the community, which was compatible with the theory of green education. Communication between academia and community groups was minimal. The study also demonstrates that following

student activities, green education has now been implemented in many universities around the globe, resulting in a breakdown of the barrier between formal and non-formal education sectors. Students have set-up and maintained links with the green education practiced by community groups, and have then brought ideas of green education into universities. Recommendations are made for green education at the University of Canberra.

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