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Educating experts for sustainable development : the master's degree in sustainable development at the University of Basel

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There is a growing demand for scientifically trained experts in Sustainable Development(SD). However, it is far from clear what skills and knowledge an SD-curriculum has to offer SD-students. SD-science is not considered to be a true scientific discipline. There are no common theories, no commonly accepted methodologies and standards, and the range of scientific contributions spans a variety of different disciplines encompassing the natural sciences, the social sciences, and economics. Against this background, we argue that a curriculum for an SD-Master's program has to address three types of learning objective ("systems knowledge", "transformation knowledge", and the theoretical foundations of the different SD-approaches) and is challenged to integrate three complex features: the relation (i) between disciplinary and interdisciplinary competences, (ii) between theoretical knowledge and practical skills, and between (iii) normative and non-normative elements in SD. This paper presents how these challenges are solved for the Basel's Master in SD and how the program has been developed since it started in 2005.

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