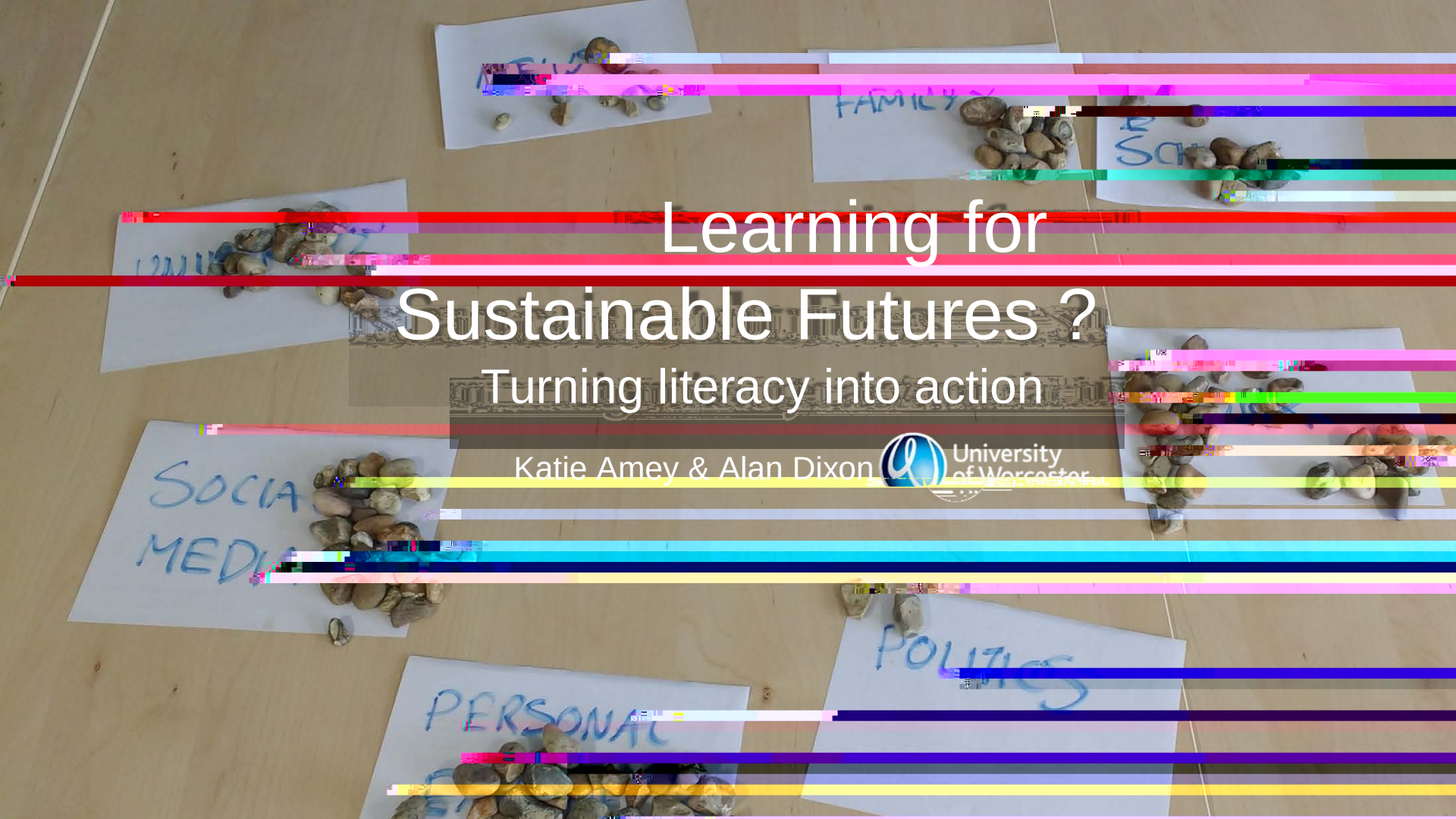


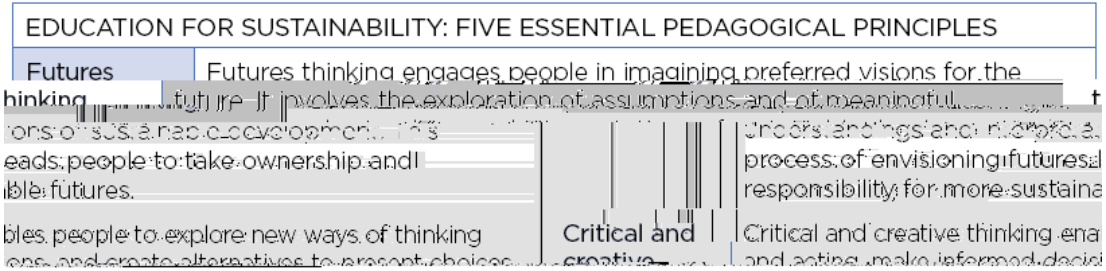
Learning for Sustainable Futures ?

Turning literacy into action

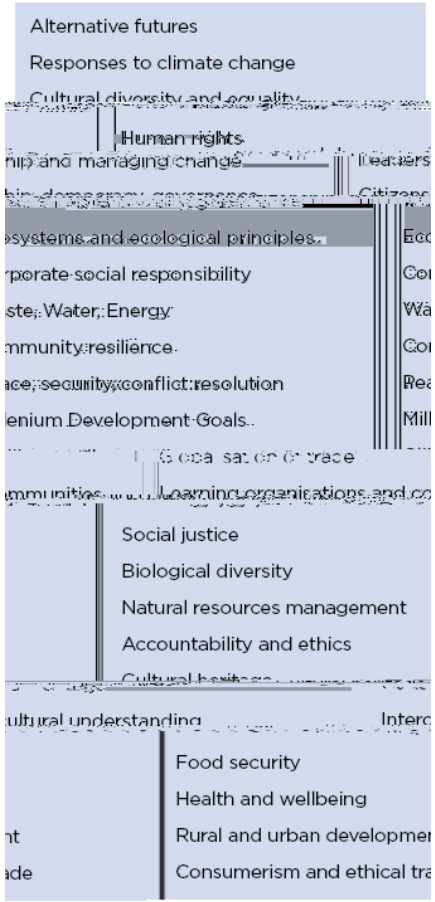
Katie Amey & Alan Dixon
University of Worcester

Education for Sustainability?

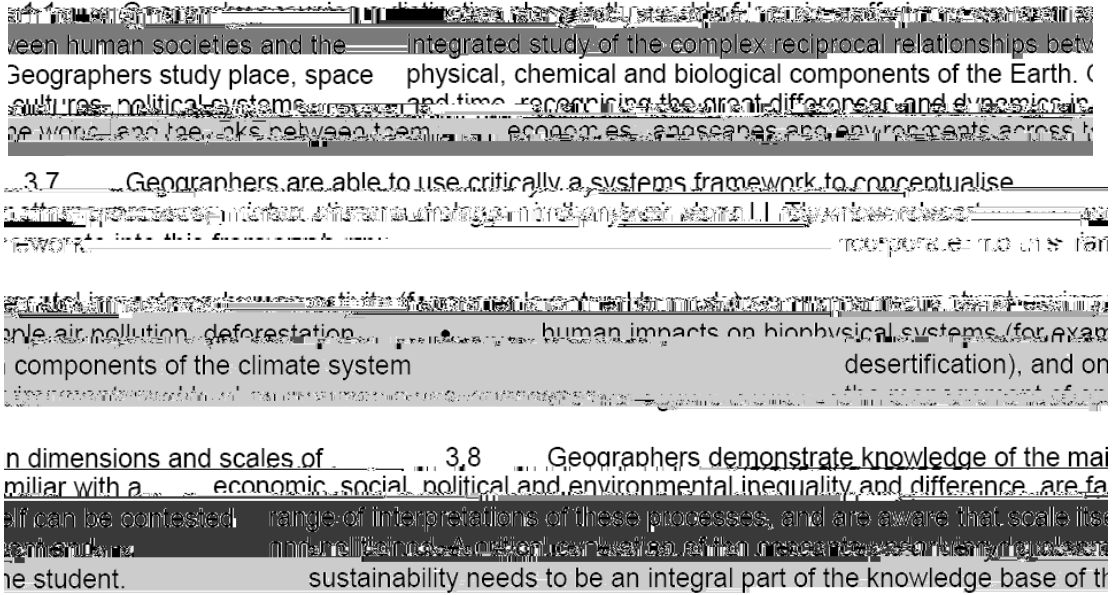
- Global challenges
- Post-Rio agenda
- EfS= educational change and equip learners to address challenges
- Beyond knowledge – more about what we do and how we respond …
- Embedding this throughout learning – where and how?



‘Indicative EfSentry points into sustainability’



= Geography?



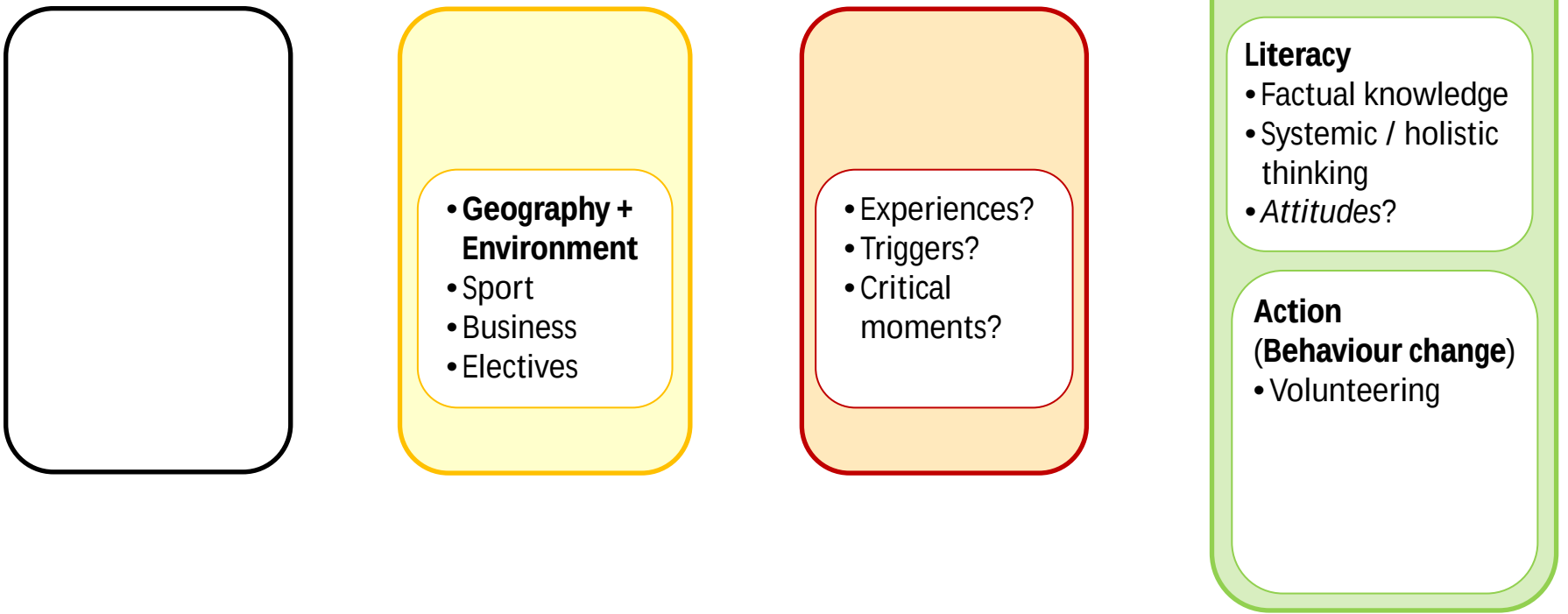
Geographers as paragons of sustainability learning? …

If so, why and how? (and if not, why not?) …

Project Aims

1. Identify the range of activities that students engage in that evidence sustainability literacy and action for sustainable development ;
2. Identify the ‘critical moments’, triggers or learning experiences within the university environment that have precipitated this engagement;
3. Explore how these experiences differ between cohorts of students from different courses and hence different ‘disciplinary’ learning environments ;
4. Identify the extent to which sustainability literacy and action is influenced by a range of factors external to the university learning environment , e.g. family experiences, personal interests, lifestyle choices etc.
5. Identify areas of best teaching and learning practice

Conceptual Framework



Methodology

Questionnaires (n=245)

ISE, ISES, WBS

2nd + 3rd year classes

Four sections:

1: Attitudes towards sustainability

2: About you

3: Learning experiences at UoW

4: Behaviour and action

Focus group

Respondent profiles

63% level 5; 37% level 6

96% didn’t do elective; 1% for others

Attitudes towards sustainability?

Action and behaviour?

97% are not members of political or environmental organisations

- Generally a lack of time, interest and awareness

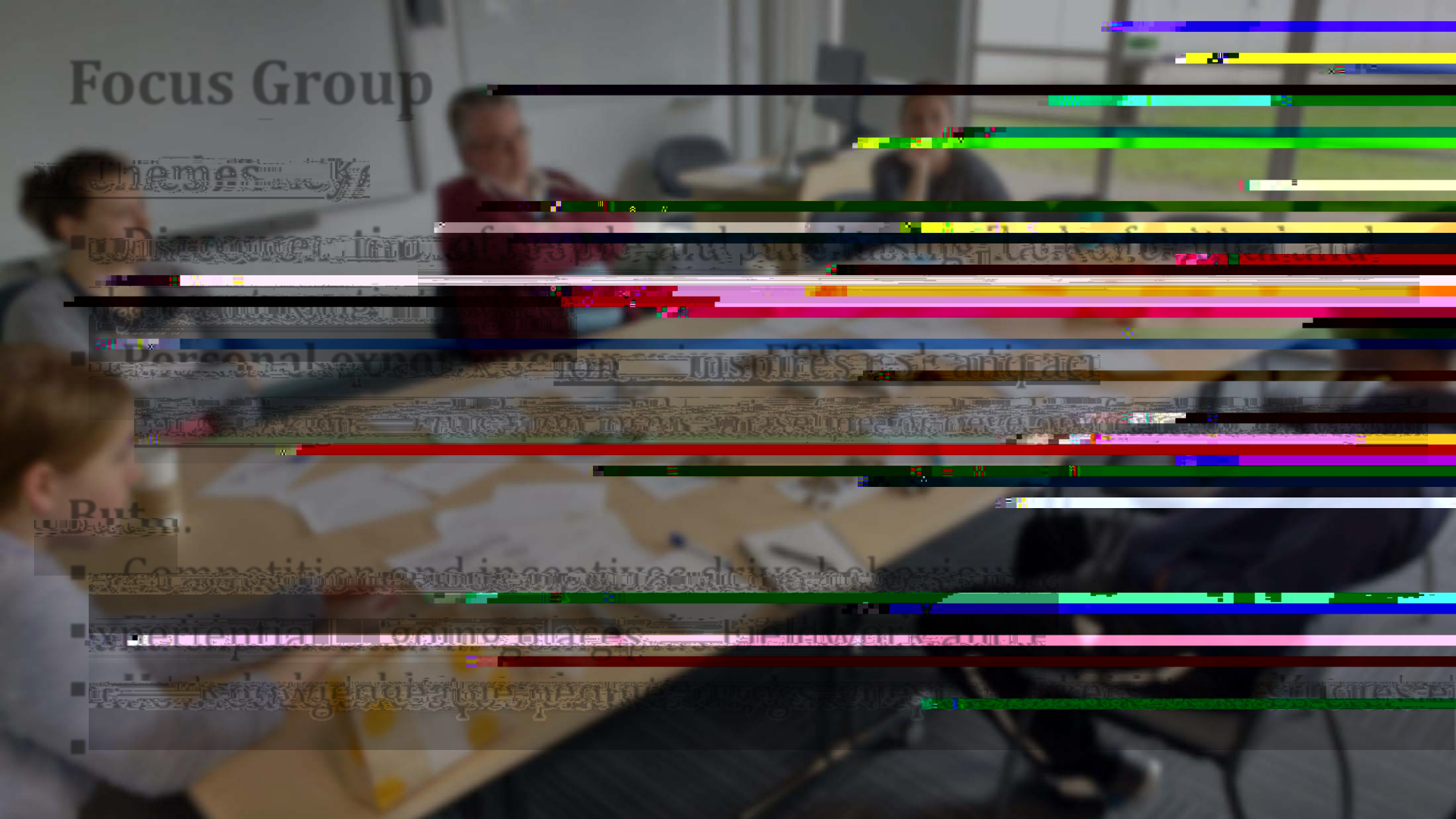
Actions showed both positives and negatives

- Generally, students performed ‘traditional’ and ‘conservative’ sustainability behaviours
    - Recycling, turning off appliances, using sustainable transport, etc.
-

Key themes emerging from questionnaires

Good sustainability literacy–

Focus Group



Making it relevant (and explicit) to everyone … but moving from a multi- to a transdisciplinary approach …

"…I mean, if we are truly looking to try and help people get educated about sustainability, it's no good having it somewhere down the line, because the peo who are interested in sustainability already, will probably look for it, because that's part of what they're looking for in their course. However, if you want to ge new converts it's got to be out there without them looking"

"It's really hard in the Business

"…if they're gonna put it in a business course, they need to kind of link it to the rest of the course, because sustainability is far more than just recycling. Like, the recycling they use is like recycling plastics, recycling paper, there's way more to recycling than that!"