Sustainability & Modern Society

- UCC Adult Continuing Education Seminar Series (Oct – Nov 2012)
- Economics & Politics, International Studies, Philosophy, Planning and Sustainable Development, Process & Chemical Engineering, Biological Earth & Environmental Sciences, Art & Design, Physics, Sociology, Government/Adult Continuing Education, Law

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- Status quo and (historical) context (Byrne, Chapman, Fitzpatrick)
  - over-production and over-consumption, finite global limits
  - “reductionist simple thinking”: over-specialisation in “world”
    disciplinary silos”, “knowing more and more about less and less”
  - sustainability issues: supply of energy/water/food, climate change
    (problematic of greenhouse-gas/artificial micro-climate generation,
    e.g. CO2/H/temperature) + limits of ressources
  - environmental sociology: society–nature interactions
  - socio-metabolic transitions
  - cultural separation, inequality
  - science became a reductive economic knowledge
  - path theory
  - technology-economy-limited use of knowledge: e.g. GDP as
    measurement as measures of success
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**What is lacking / need for future change / (Byrne, Fitzpatrick, Gabuzda, Mullally, Ó Tuama, Parkes) – “real realisation”**
- transdisciplinary processes, integrate social triple-loop-learning
- interconnections between different disciplines
- shift from reductionism to complex system thinking: “dynamic self-eco-re-organisational systems” (Morin, 2005)
- display important role of other disciplines apart from business and technology (missing parts)
- space for “non-western” thinking / non-anthropocentric view
- realising relationships, whole person “body and soul” engagement
- realising natural limits of growth on planet earth
- global ethic: Quakerism: critical approach to find equality, truth, integrity, peace, simplicity

**Challenges / (Brady, Byrne, Mullally)**
- over-production /-consumption
- modern culture, impressed modernity paradigm, human environment replaced most of “real” nature
- private behaviour: don’t forget the “fun factor” of individualistic persons where flows can change quickly vs. “serious” measures like economics / frame / structure / state / government are often not so dynamic
- time, uncertainty, predictions
- human urge to separate / simplify
- ideal planning system: complex setting seems overwhelming if take into account “every”thing e.g. National Planning Policy

**Good practices / approaches towards strong global sustainability (Fitzgerald, Gabuzda, Mullally)**
- transition management approach (Dutch model) socio-technical-ecological systems
- art with Nature: using visual media and art to show and change
- transdisciplinary work: path breaking of “business-as-usual” e.g. NGOs, changes in behaviour
- Transition Towns (Ireland)
- Renewable self-supply-villages/municipalities (Austria)
- Common Welfare Economy (Austria)
- new economic system using measures of well-being in society, Environmental Sustainability Quakers (worldwide)
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• Personal overall reflections
  – involvement of public possible
  – more integrated/interactive than usual
  – better interlinked/embeddedness of different speaker contents
  – identifying an overlapping “heart of similarities” through all disciplines
  – starting to identify strong ability to sustain, resilience (ecological, social, network, organisational, ... )