Teaching techniques in reducing the impact on the environment

Initiative
Hosam teaches the Environmental Engineering part on the second year unit “Introduction to Biotechnology and Environmental Engineering”. Throughout his lectures, he strived to inspire the students to consider sustainability as a mission and a way of life rather than just material to be covered for the exam. To demonstrate credibility and to “practice what he preaches”, he took the following initiatives to reduce the environmental impact of teaching this unit:

- Did not print the lecture notes or slides, but made them available electronically on Blackboard.
- Changed coursework from the printed posters of previous years to a completely electronic one by giving the students three options for electronic submission: a) “Pecha Kucha” presentation, b) video clip and c) poster to be projected on screen in class.
- The topics of the posters included current environmental issues such as use of plastic bags, disposable cups, electric vehicles, etc.

The students took to these options enthusiastically; about half the submissions were Pecha Kucha, one video clip and the rest posters projected on screen. In addition to the environmental benefits and raising the students’ environmental awareness, it also encouraged them to think about how to communicate their ideas in innovative ways.

How Hosam has made a difference
This initiative saved the printing of 183 booklets of lecture notes and 31 A0 colour posters. This not only saved many resources including trees, water and fuel consumed in the production of paper and ink, but also reduced the emissions and waste associated with their production, transportation and eventual disposal. Thus demonstrating to the students the impact on the whole “life cycle” of those products from “cradle to grave”. Furthermore, the topics for the coursework were chosen to reflect some of the issues the students face in their daily lives thus raising their awareness of their responsibility towards society.