

The Role of Community in Sustainability

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Abstract

This activity is planned for a developmental or early, transfer-level English composition course (English 100 & 101). Students will come to understand that resources are available in the community for them to eat in a healthy manner at an affordable cost. They will learn to write a compare and contrast essay about acquiring healthy food with the help of the community versus on their own. Referencing the sustainability “Big Ideas” co-created by Jean MacGregor and Victor Nolet,¹ the Big Idea of **Interconnectedness and Interdependence** is addressed. From a sustainability perspective, this assignment concerns the issues of **Food Security** and **Cradle-to-Cradle Design**.

Introduction and Overview

Interconnectedness and Interdependence: English 100 and 101 students are just beginning their experience as part of the Edmonds CC community. Their first “community” as students is in the classroom. Their success necessitates that they nurture a sense of themselves as both teachers and students of knowledge, i.e. as having writing and related skills to share as well as learn.

Food Security and Cradle-to-Cradle Design: Students will explore how our community can sustain us with its ability to produce food. The products, services, and system—related to food—of the Edcc campus and Seattle community can bring a quality life.

Activities Leading to Final Assignment

The activities include campus and community-based components.

- Week one:** begin a log of what eat, where purchased, and where grown. Log will also be part of a double-entry, reflective journal so that students are *writing* / taking notes for their paper due in week 5
- Week two:** guest speaker from Edcc. culinary school. The class will create and finalize a list of questions for the speaker, then write a summary of the speaker’s answers, using quotes and paraphrase.
- Week three:** visit PCC Natural Market. Students will bring a typical shopping list from home and compare and contrast what is available at PCC and what alternatives they might purchase.
- Week four:** visit CSA at Greenbank Farm on Whidbey Island. The students will learn about community service agricultural (CSA) systems and how they can learn to grow their own food and teach others.
- Week five:** write a comparison and contrast essay about the advantages of getting food wherever it is available, i.e. chain grocery stores, fast-food businesses, versus getting it from a local grower.

Assessment By Rubric

A rubric will make students aware of the criteria that will be assessed in the paper: at least three (3) advantages and three (3) disadvantages of getting food wherever it is available versus getting it from a local grower; supporting evidence specifically related to the interview questions and the two off-campus visits; a conclusion that includes thoughtful reflection (from journal) about the Big Ideas of food security and cradle-to-cradle design; as well as organization, grammar, and punctuation issues.

^{1 1} This planning framework is adapted from The Washington Center’s Curriculum for the Bioregion Initiative and from the book *Scientific Teaching* and Diane Ebert-May’s class “Pathways to Scientific Teaching” at Michigan State University.

Resources

CSA Project at Greenbank Farm, Whidbey

<http://www.agbizcenter.org/node/45>

Leonard, Annie. *The Story of Stuff: How Our Problem with Overconsumption Is Trashing the Planet, Our Communities and Our Health--and What to Do About It* (Hardcover. Available March 9, 2010)

PCC Markets, Seattle

<http://www.pccnaturalmarkets.com/>

Ryan, John C. and Alan Thein Durning. *Stuff: The Secret Lives of Everyday Things*. Seattle: Northwest Environment Watch, 1997.

Tiny's Organic Farmers' Markets (Tacoma / Seattle)

<http://www.ilovetiny.com/>