

Teaching and Learning (T&L) Activity **Submission** Framework<sup>1</sup>

Requested format for **final, published** curriculum ideas for the Edmonds Community College Sustainability Initiative Website.

- 1) **Abstract:** title of activity; your name and email address; your discipline/department; a paragraph-long overview of your integrative assignment. Be sure to mention what sustainability and disciplinary “big ideas” are involved.

**“Who Tells the Stories about Sustainability?”**

**Johnetta Moore, Edmonds Community College Learning Resources, Faculty Reference and Instruction Librarian, [johnettamoore@edcc.edu](mailto:johnettamoore@edcc.edu)**

**This is an information literacy activity design to help students better understand how to critically evaluate the information they receive about sustainability issues by learning how to identify and evaluate the sources that provide the information. This activity focuses on two “big ideas”; Evaluating Resources and Health Equity. It is still very much in draft form and subject to revisions.**

2) **Introduction and Overview**

- a) Introductory information about context, rationale, and purpose for this activity. Context would include the type(s) of courses for which this activity would be appropriate.

**This activity is designed to help students critically evaluate the sources of the information on sustainability issues that they find in their research so that they can better understand what and how information is provided to various audiences. The hope is that by understanding where information comes from and how it is provided they will be able to more critically evaluate the quality of the information.**

- b) Timeframe: how much class-time, and/or how much of the course, this activity will require to carry out. Also, where you use this activity in the term: early, middle, late.

**This activity will probably take a two hour class-period, allowing 20 minutes for the introduction of the activity, 20 minutes for instruction on how to search databases and how to evaluate the information sources, 50 minutes for students to work on the project and produce a report and 30 minutes to present their findings. The activity should be at the beginning of any research project students will be doing on sustainability issues.**

---

<sup>1</sup> This submission 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.

- c) The assignment: a brief description of the integrative assignment that includes both the “big idea” in your discipline and the sustainability “big idea;” also any skills or habits of mind you hope the activity will foster.

**The assignment is to evaluate and compare articles from three different subject periodical databases on the same health equity event or issue, such as the current health care forums currently held around the United States during summer 2009. The three subject databases to be used are business, mainstream and social justice/alternative.**

### **3) The actual teaching-and-learning activities:**

- a) a description of the set-up or preliminaries;
- b) the main learning activities; and
- c) the assignment task.

**Students will be placed in groups and each group will be given a single sustainability issue or topic to research. Together the students will search each database and select an article on their topic. The three databases will be *Hoovers* (business), *ProQuest* (mainstream) and *Ethnic NewsWatch* (alternative).**

**After reading each article, students will work together to review it for the following criteria:**

- **Authority (author’s credentials)**
- **perspective (intended audience)**
- **publisher or sponsor of article or publication**
- **coverage of article**
- **currency of article**

**Using the criteria they have identified for each article, the students will then work together to compare the articles and answer the following questions:**

- 1. What information is included and emphasized in each article and what is left out or deemphasized?**
- 2. How does the criteria identified in each article impact the selection and presentation of the information?**
- 3. How does the selection and presentation of the information in each article effect what you find out about the issue from that article?**

**The students will prepare a one page report for each article comparing it to the others. Each student will then write an individual one summary paper reflecting on the activity and how it will impact their research and evaluation processes in the future. All papers will be turn in to the instructor.**

NOTE: Keep the number of the “big ideas” as low as possible to focus your activity and the student learning on the main, key ideas you want students to learn. Using only one idea in your discipline and one idea in sustainability is recommended.

**Optional Assessment elements** --- if not already described in (3), describe how you will assess student learning in this assignment.

**The assignment will be assessed with a rubric to score how well the students are able to identify the five criteria for each article and interpret these criteria to effectively identify the perspectives of and information provided in each article.**

- 4) **Resources, if needed:** Community partners, websites, written material, videos/film, etc. Limit these to resources that support or extend this activity, not resources related to your entire course.

**The students will be given instruction on how to search periodical databases and evaluating information sources. Portions of the attached PowerPoint will be used.**

- 5) **Optional Teacher notes:** Any reflections or cautions, or special suggestions or observations related to the student learning you have observed.

**This can be an effective information literacy activity to help students develop skills to critically evaluate the information they find on sustainability issues and the perspectives on these issues. However, it is essential that the purpose, outcomes and steps of the activity are clearly explained to the students and that they understand how to complete the activity as a group. In addition, the instructor will need to spend considerable time searching the databases for find practical topics, issues and events to assign to the class. Remember, the purpose is to evaluate the information found and the sources that provide it. Students are not trying to find the best information on their topic in this activity.**