

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
INSTITUTE OF APPLIED AGRICULTURE
Chesapeake Project--Sustainability across the Curriculum
Revised assignments for INAG 111: Written Communication
Fall 2010

I have taken a developmental approach to integrating Sustainability into the *INAG 111: Written Communication* course, and I have revised four assignments. First, I introduce students to sustainability during the third week of class by asking them to write a think log entry defining sustainability in their respective career fields. The following week of class, we discuss communication principles including word choice and connotation, so I have asked students to research how businesses in their career fields are using the word “sustainable” in their external communication.

Once the students have explored the concept of sustainability in agriculture, the third assignment requires them to identify an organization that they believe is promoting sustainable practices and write a persuasive letter nominating it for the Sustainable Sites Award.

Students are required to write a business proposal, so the final assignment now gives the students the option to propose a sustainability plan for an organization.

Assignment 1

Think Log Entry

Week 3 prompt

In many ag-related industries, “sustainability” has become a buzzword. Read “*What is Sustainable Agriculture?*” published by UC Davis <http://sarep.ucdavis.edu/concept.htm>. After reading the report, how do *you* define Sustainable Agriculture? What makes a golf course, landscape company, horse farm, sports field, etc. (chose your industry) sustainable?

Assignment 2

Word Choice, Perception, and Persuasion Essay on Sustainability

Do an internet search for companies in your major (golf course, landscape, horticulture, sports turf, etc.) that are using the word “sustainable” in marketing products and services. Select one company and research its products, services, and practices. Or, you may use a company with which you are already familiar. Write an essay (750-word minimum) addressing the following questions:

1. What do you think the word sustainable means to the company?
2. What do you think the word sustainable means to the company’s target audience?
3. Do you think using the word “sustainable” is an effective way to promote their goods and services?
4. Is it ethical? Why or why not?
5. Is the company implementing sustainable practices? If so what are they? If not, what do you think the company needs to do to live up to your definition of sustainable?

Assignment 3

Write a Persuasive Letter

The DC Branch of the Professional Grounds Maintenance Society (PGMS) is looking for nominations for the “Sustainable Sites Award.” The purpose of the award “is to recognize people, properties or organizations in the DC Metropolitan area for innovative landscape practices that are economically, ecologically and socially sustainable.”

You are to write a persuasive letter nominating an organization, property or person for this award. You may nominate the University of Maryland College Park or any other organization. Remember to include examples of specific maintenance practices that qualify this nominee for the award. Address your letter to:

Michael Gildea, PGMS President
6100 Connecticut Ave.
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

After I review and grade your letters, you are to make revisions if needed and submit your nomination.

Assignment 4

Business Proposal

OBJECTIVE: You are to write persuasive business proposal that provides a solution to a problem. Or, you may write your report to an organization proposing practices that can be implemented that would make it more sustainable. You may select a problem/sustainable practices that relate to work, school, community, professional organization, students club, social organization, or volunteer organization.

Goals of your Business Proposal

- Clearly states the purpose of the proposal
- Problem/need is understood & clearly defined
- Solution is innovative & presented convincingly
- Benefits outweigh costs
- Personnel are qualified
- Solution can be achieved in timely manner
- Proposal is honest, factual, realistic & objective
- Presentation is professional & attractive

Required Elements of your Proposal

1. Cover letter or memo
 - Addressed to decision maker
 - Introduces proposal to the reader
 - Highlights proposal contents
 - Encourages action
 - Gives contact information
2. Title page

3. Table of contents
4. Proposal Summary
5. Purpose Statement
6. Problem or Need
 - States the problem being solved or the need being met
 - Must clearly show there is a need or problem
7. Background
 - Gives data on problem or need
 - Explain how problem developed and what is currently being done
8. Benefits
 - State how reader/company will benefit if proposal is implemented
 - Make sure benefits are realistic and concrete
9. Description of Solution
 - Give complete description of the solution and how to implement it
 - Specify what you are proposing, who will do it, when it will be done, where it will be done, how it will be done, and why it should be done
 - Include all information that the decision maker needs
 - Make sure it ties into your other sections
10. Evaluation Plan
 - Provides a way to judge success of your proposal if implemented
 - Explain how to determine whether the benefits are achieved
11. Time Schedule
12. Cost
13. References

Business Proposal Timeline

See Chapters 10-12 in your text

Monday, October 25—Purpose Statement due.

Monday, November 8—Description of problem or need due.

Monday, November 15—Background due.

Friday, December 3—Rough Drafts due for in-class review.

Friday, December 10—Final papers due.