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Transforming Students Through Two Literacies: The Integration of Sustainability Literacy into Information Literacy Classes

Toni M. Carter
Auburn University

Gregory J. Schmidt
Auburn University

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Transforming Students Through Two Literacies: 
the integration of sustainability literacy into 
information literacy classes

Toni M. Carter
Gregory J. Schmidt
Auburn University Libraries

Georgia International Conference on Information Literacy August 2013
Why Sustainability?

- American College & University Presidents’ Climate Commitment (ACUPCC)
  - Institutional “climate neutrality”
  - Sustainability in the curriculum

- Sustainability literacy
  - A socio-environmental concept
  - Thinking, problem solving, decision making, and actions
Auburn University: Sustainability at the Institution

- Historic: crop rotation, soil tillage, energy efficiency
- 2004: Sustainability initiative
- 2008:
  - Office of Sustainability organized
  - Sustainability Studies minor created
- 2010: AU Libraries and academic sustainability
  - Librarian liaison
  - Materials budget
• Megan R. Stark (2011) “...little has been written on the connections between library instruction and sustainability.”
• Higher education engagement
• Embedding the green message
• Various names for sustainability literacy
• Interdisciplinary courses
• Librarians sometimes left out of curriculum
English composition

• Students have choice of themed class
• Two to three library sessions
• Similar outcomes (based on ACRL) covered in most classes
• Active learning
English composition

Topic development
- Introduction to sustainability vocabulary

Keywords/synonyms
- More exposure to sustainability vocabulary

Databases
- How and where to find scholarly sources on sustainability

Evaluating sources
- How to evaluate sustainability sources on the Web
- Sustainability is a legit academic pursuit
Sustainability Studies

- Sustainability Studies minor
  - SUST2000 – Introduction to Sustainability
  - 9 hours of electives
  - SUST5000 – Senior capstone

- Library instruction for SUST courses
  - Interdisciplinary
  - Fundamental skill development
  - and exposure to subject databases as needed.
Introduction to Sustainability - 2 session program

• Session One
  ➢ Objective: reinforce information literacy outcomes
  ➢ Topic development, keywording, source evaluation

• Session Two
  ➢ Introduction to sustainability–specific resources
  ➢ Subject–specific databases: social sciences, engineering, business.
Sustainability departmental electives

- 9 hour requirement
- 41 courses; 19 academic units
- Courses not restricted to students in the sustainability minor
- Library instruction infrequent

Environment:

- FORY 4970/7970: Urban Ecology (3)
- ARCH 4900: Readings in Landscape Architecture (3) PR permission of instructor
- CPLN 5500 and 5600: Environmental Planning (3) PR junior or senior standing
- HIST 3550: American Environmental History (3)
- HIST 3620: Landscape and Culture (3)
- RSOC 5650: Sociology of Natural Resources and the Environment (3) PR junior or senior standing
- GEOG 2020: Physical Geography (3)
- GEOG 5010: Urban Geography (3)
- GEOG 5210: Climatology (3)
- AGRN 5000: Soils and Environment Quality (3) PR AGRN 2040
- AGRN 5400: Bioenergy and the Environment (3) PR junior standing
- BIOL 3060: Ecology, PR 8 hrs Biology (3)
- BIOL 5090: Conservation Biology (3) PR Biology
- BSEN 3230: Natural Resource Conservation Engineering (3) PR CIVIL 3110
Urban Geography (GEOG5010)
Library instruction and collaboration

Research project – sustainability proposal for Auburn, AL

- Library Instruction
  - 50 Minutes
  - Light on fundamentals
  - Focus on useful resources

- Librarian Participation
  - Project scope
  - Presentation reviewer
The future

- Library engagement with academic sustainability
  - Continued outreach effort to Sustainability Office
  - Departmental elective courses

- Assessment
  - Seek out collaborative relationships
  - Assessment within library instruction classes
Questions? Thank you!

Chapter in *Focus on Educating for Sustainability: Toolkit for Academic Libraries* (Maria A. Jankowska, editor) 2013

Toni Carter  tcarte@auburn.edu
Greg Schmidt  schmigr@auburn.edu