

The Greening of English 101 and 102

FINAL REPORT

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In the fall of 2001, my semester was designed to include topics specifically connected to goals established by President Clinton's Council on Sustainable Development, which had the purpose of categorizing topics essential to "seek economic prosperity, environmental protection and social equity together." All assignments and readings were based on environmental issues such as water quality, endangered species, American policy on Global warming and a subsequent international gathering, wetlands and other specific topics.

After 9/11, many discussions followed about terrorism, the treatment of the Afghan people, specifically the women and children, bioterrorism, and other issues that came from the attack. Students chose to write topics on their essay assignments from the above topics. During the fall semester, two speakers, a hydrologist and a retired DHEC worker who spoke on "environmental racism", presented information in their areas of expertise.

In the spring, much of the literature focused on caring for the earth, on relationships, and on issues of equality such as the treatment of the Japanese-Americans in WW II as written about in *Snow Falling on Cedars* by David Guterson. When teaching the novel, *Deliverance*, the natural environment and the building of a dam and its effects were presented to the class.

The grant was extended to fall of 2002, and I narrowed the categories from the National Goals to five areas from which students could choose writing topics: Education, Equity, Health and Environment, Economic Prosperity and Public Policy. This gave me a better “handle” and the students more focus. The essays, I felt were more successful. Also during the fall I attended the international “Crocodile Specialist Group” Conference in Gainesville, Florida, where I had the opportunity to discuss “sustainability” with biologists from Zimbabwe, Australia, Brazil, Argentina, Florida, South Carolina and Louisiana.

The results of attending the conference and narrowing my general topic areas helped me to provide a better understanding of the word, “sustainable”. Some of my students used materials I gathered at the conference for their essays. Some topics included: Health and Environment, 8 essays; Education 7 essays; Public Policy 13 essays, with many other topics on the Equity and Economic prosperity categories. Many of the subjects overlapped, such as an article on the increasing Hispanic population and immigration. I was particularly proud of the students who wrote on Wetlands devastation, the endangered birds, gray wolf, and cougar populations. Another very good essay was on dredging and replenishment of sand on the Eastern shore.

All students for their final project had to research and write on one of the above topics. I think we kept a good discussion going about current issues, and by the end of the semester, many had a better realization of the necessity to utilize resources for a healthier earth and more stable world community.

My own poetry continues to focus on nature, and I am collaborating with a photographer to develop a poetry/photograph manuscript.

Submitted by

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