

## Winnebago Sustainability Project: Syllabus and Narrative Statement

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Art Education

In my ART 355 course, I introduce elementary education majors to interdisciplinary teaching methods and emphasize visual art integration into classroom curriculum. Last year, we explored the relationship between art and science, briefly examining two environmental issues: pollution and climate change. With the presentations and discussions from the Winnebago Sustainability Workshop as my guide, I reworked and extended the art-science unit to center on sustainability issues. I describe the unit in my syllabus like this:

### ***Sustainability-Centered Integration.....worth 20 % of grade***

To apply thematic integration methods, students will participate in a digital photography lesson based on issues of sustainability. Then, after conducting the necessary research, they will develop an age-appropriate, integrated lesson that addresses a sustainability issue.

An outline for the unit is as follows:

#### Week One:

1. Students have prepared for class by reading “Education for a Sustainable Future” by Jaimie Cloud (Chapter Two from Heidi Hayes Jacob’s book, *Curriculum 21: Essential Education for a Changing World*).
2. Introduction to thematic/big ideas/problem-centered approach to integrated methods.
3. Exploring sustainability as a centering theme for connecting the disciplines:
  - a. Preconceptions and discussion of why/how to address these issues in school
  - b. Use photos from Oshkosh to illustrate points of social, economic, and environmental justice/injustice
  - c. Discuss some organizational, institutional and personal responses to current sustainability problems
4. Discuss ways we can use the visual arts to help us explore and develop a response to some aspect of sustainability and to visually communicate our thoughts, beliefs and feelings on these issues.
  - a. Discuss “Sense of Place” as an important aspect of sustainable communities.
  - b. Introduce Photo Assignment and powerpoint presentation to illustrate photo techniques.
  - c. How have artists and designers responded to sustainability issues? Homework: Watch the three short videos and consider their key connections to issues of sustainability?
    - i. Watch Handmade Nation – addresses issues of making by hand and local economies. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evDFo6-RBVc>
    - ii. Watch Edward Burtansky’s video clip on manufacturing in China (technology). <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=67j7JIEZpQ>
    - iii. Watch Hans Rosling’s video on population issues/stresses <http://www.gapminder.org/videos/what-stops-population-growth/>

## Day Two:

1. Discuss videos:
2. Introduce students to other fine artists and designers who address sustainability in different ways:
  - a. Fine Artist: Andy Goldsworthy
  - b. Outsider Artist: Tom Avery from Baraboo, WI
  - c. Eco-designers
  - d. Visual Communication: how are graphics/images used to communicate messages about sustainability? Watch 15 minute clip of *Inconvenient Truth*.
3. Integrating Art and Science:
  - a. Discuss branches of science and list branches of visual art
  - b. Show some broad connections between art and science
  - c. Student's task is to find a connection that relates to some aspect of sustainability and build an integrated learning experience around/through it
  - d. Go through assignment guide
  - e. Show an example of integrated lesson meeting the assignment criteria

For the unit, I have prepared:

- three powerpoint presentations (one on photos of Oshkosh illustrating some aspects of sustainability, one of eco-friendly artists and designers, one on photo techniques)
- assignment guides and rubrics for both the photography project and integrated lesson
- a model lesson plan demonstrating the assignment criteria for the integrated lesson
- internet resource guide/list of artists, designers, lesson plans addressing sustainability issues