BRINGING THE WORLD IN: NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

General Guide

Newspaper Article Example: Future News

Newspaper Article Example Assignment: Future News

GENERAL GUIDE

Students read a newspaper and collaborate on assignments to explore a real-world sustainability problem or solution. Students gain a sense of currency of sustainability issues and how public discourse deals with sustainability, and develop awareness of media as a player in sustainability problems and solutions.

_Students, given the opportunity, come to see the newspaper as a bridge between the confining and often unreal world of school, and the vibrant, confusing and complex “real” world of which they are a part. Students will read a newspaper when they will not read other school materials because the newspaper records events that have meaning for them._ - John Haefner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Level: 100; can accommodate group size: 10-100+</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
<td>Freedom to explore a sustainability issue or media source of choice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Students see how sustainability problems are discussed outside of the classroom and identify and apply course concepts while analyzing them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjustments</td>
<td>Instructor must provide guidelines for selecting an article and help students grasp relevant concepts (e.g. sustainability problem, solution option, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Can bring world into class without having to coordinate with people.</td>
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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify drivers and feedback loops, as well as resulting impacts and unintended consequences of sustainability problems and solution options reported on and how they benefit and harm stakeholders. [SYSTEMS THINKING]
- Identify the role of media as a key actor in the context of the specific problem and/or solution. [SYSTEMS THINKING]
- Constructively critique existing intervention points and solution options or identify and imagine potential ones. [STRATEGIC THINKING]
- Collaborate with peers to complete assignments using tools like work plans to keep track of tasks and deadlines. [INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCIES]

ACTIVITIES

The purpose of this experience is to help students explore a current sustainability problem as it is presented by local, national, or international media. The experience consists of students reading an article and then completing additional readings, written reflections, or discussions. The instructor’s role is to pick a newspaper article about a sustainability problem, help students understand key definitions and concepts, and coach students to be critical and ethical exploring it. The students’ role is to read the article critically and complete the assignment while considering evidence, ethics, and coherence.

Timeline

- Pick a sustainability problem to explore. Sustainability problems are life-threatening, long-term, urgent, complex, place-based, and contested (Wiek, 2010).
- Find a local, national, or international newspaper article that addresses this problem or instruct students to do so.
- With students, define key terms and concepts.
- Give assignments and make examples available to students.
- Discuss assignment outputs in class with students.

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

The assignments below that can maximize learning outcomes of the Newspaper experience and produce outputs that can be assessed to determine student learning outcomes.

- **Research** the sustainability problem featured in the article and find 3 peer-reviewed articles that will help create a broader knowledge-base for it. Output: annotated bibliography.
- **Map** the dynamics of the sustainability problem (include drivers, impacts, benefitting and harmed stakeholders, feedback loops, and unintended consequences). Output: map.
• **Describe** types of futures, intervention points, sustainability strategies, and change agents featured in the story, or that could be relevant. Output: description / map.

• **Discuss** how media plays a role in the sustainability problem or solution.

Use a Likert-scale to determine if students achieved all, most, some, little, or none of the learning objective. Develop a rubric with examples of answers that demonstrate students have achieved all (5), most (4), some (3), little (2), or none (1) of the objective.

**TAKE THIS EXPERIENCE TO THE NEXT LEVEL!**

• *Visit the world* - Take field trip or do walking audit to see local manifestation of problem.

• *Simulate the world* - Assign students to take on stakeholder roles in discuss of assignments.

• *Engage with the world* - take action on sustainability problem of students choice after discuss different ways to take action and scales of potential impact.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY & RESOURCES**


Reinertsen, P., & DaCruz, G. (1996). Using the daily newspaper and journal writing to teach large introductory sociology classes. Manuscript submitted for publication, Sociology, University

**NEWSPAPER ARTICLE EXAMPLE: FUTURE NEWS**

**SUMMARY**
Students read a newspaper article and collaborate in teams of 3-4 to create coherent “pictures” of future states that can help them and others think concretely about possible, probable, and desirable futures. This experience helps students develop anticipatory competence, as well as teamwork and project management skills.

*Students who can visualize and communicate the future in a variety of ways will be better equipped to work with the diversity of stakeholders and decision-makers in the ‘real-world.’* -Lauren Withycombe

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<td>Enjoyment</td>
<td>Students have freedom to explore a sustainability problem or a media source of their choice. Exploring futures engages creativity, empathy, and critical thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Students get to see how sustainability problems are discussed outside of the classroom and identify and apply course concepts while analyzing them. Students learn to think - and help others think - concretely about the future.</td>
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<td>Adjustments</td>
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**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Identify drivers and feedback loops, as well as resulting impacts and unintended consequences of sustainability problems and solution options reported on and how they benefit and harm stakeholders. *[SYSTEMS THINKING]*
- Craft coherent “pictures” that can help people think concretely about possible, probable, and desirable futures. Consider problem drivers, impacts, benefitting and harmed stakeholders, feedback loops, unintended consequences, intervention points, and change agents. *[FUTURES THINKING]*
- Identify the role of media as a key actor in the context of the specific problem and / or solution. *[SYSTEMS THINKING]*
- Collaborate with peers to complete assignments using tools like work plans to keep track of tasks and deadlines. *[INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCIES]*

**ACTIVITIES**
The experience consists of students reading a newspaper article, rewriting it as it might be written in possible, plausible, and / or desirable future, and writing a reflection. The purpose of this experience is to help students explore a current problem as it is presented by local, national, or international media, differentiate between possible, probable, and desirable futures, explore how to create coherent “pictures” of future
states that can help people think concretely about the future (Shaw, et al., 2009). The instructor’s role is to pick a newspaper article about a sustainability problem, help students understand key definitions and concepts, and coach students to be critical and ethical in representing future states. The students’ role is to read the article critically and complete the assignment while considering evidence, ethics, and coherence.

**Before**
- Pick sustainability problem to explore that aligns with course content.
- Create assignment prompt and rubric, specifying what types of news sources are acceptable.
- Discuss with students the definitions of key terms and concepts (e.g. sustainability problems, solution options, future states - possible, probable, desirable and coherent).
- Explain importance of narratives and pictures in future thinking (e.g. help think concretely about different future states to identify goal to work towards and dangers to steer clear of. Discuss ethical challenges of exploring the future (Orson Wells' War of the Worlds and Greenpeace lawsuit situations and whose needs / values are included in visions).
- Give assignments and make examples and work plan template available to on Blackboard.

**After**
- Share and discuss students’ articles and reflections.

**Assignments and Assessment**
The assignments below can maximize learning outcomes of the newspaper experience and produce outputs that can be used to assess student learning outcomes.
- **Research** the sustainability problem presented in the newspaper article. Find 6 peer-reviewed articles to create an knowledge-based story about the future. Output: annotated bibliography, two annotations per person.
- **Write** a newspaper article about the problem in 50 years. Output: one article per team (1 page, 3 sources, 2 pictures).
- **Reflect** on the article you wrote. Output: one reflection per team (1 page):
  - Is the future you write about possible, probable, or desirable?
  - What evidence do you have to support this claim?
  - To whom would this future be desirable? To whom would it not be desirable?
  - How could you make your “picture” of the future more robust?

Use a Likert-scale to determine if students achieved all, most, some, little, or none of the learning objective. Develop a rubric with examples of answers that demonstrate students have achieved all (5), most (4), some (3), little (2), or none (1) of the objective.

**Take this experience to the next level!**
- **Visit the World** - Take field trip or do walking audit to see local manifestation of problem. Use experience to think more concretely about possible, probable, and desirable futures.
- **Simulate the World** - Assign students to take on various stakeholder roles. Discuss a desirable 50-year future for the problem and note where perspectives and values conflict or overlap.

- **Engage with the World** - Interview 3 different stakeholders about what would be important to them or their families in 50 years. Use experience to think about what constitutes a desirable future.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY & RESOURCES**

Purdue Owl. 2013. Annotated Bibliographies. 
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/01/

Reinertsen, P., & DaCruz, G. (1996). Using the daily newspaper and journal writing to teach large introductory sociology classes. Manuscript submitted for publication, Sociology, University


NEWSPAPER ARTICLE EXAMPLE ASSIGNMENT: FUTURE NEWS

SUMMARY:
In this experience, you will work in teams of 3-4 to find an article in a local, national, or international newspaper on water issues in the Phoenix Metro Area, rewrite it as it might be written in possible, plausible, and / or desirable future while considering evidence, ethics and coherence, and write a reflection on the article you wrote. The purpose of this experience is to help you explore a current problem as it is presented by the media, differentiate between possible, probable, and desirable futures, explore how to create coherent “pictures” of future states that can help people think concretely about the future (Shaw, et al., 2009), and learn to use work plans for collaborating.

INSTRUCTIONS:
1. Create a work plan for your team (template available on Blackboard).
2. Find and read an article from local, national, or international newspaper on water issues in the Phoenix Metro Area. Output: 1 article.
3. Research the sustainability problems related to water in the Phoenix Metro Area. Find 3 peer-reviewed articles that will help create a knowledge-based story about the future.
4. Write a newspaper article about the problem as it could exist in 50 years. Output: article (1 page, 3 sources, 2 pictures)
5. Reflect on the article you wrote. Output: reflection (1 page).
   - Is the future you write about possible, probable, or desirable?
   - What evidence do you have to support this claim?
   - To whom would this future be desirable? To whom would it not be desirable?
   - How could you make your “picture” of the future more robust?

Turn in all of the outputs above (1 set per team) by 5pm February 8.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
- Describe and discuss a current, real-world sustainability problem featured in the news.
- Identify drivers, impacts, benefitting and harmed stakeholders, feedback loops, and unintended consequences of sustainability problems and solution options reported on.
- Craft coherent “pictures” that can help people think concretely about possible, probable, and desirable futures. Consider problem drivers, impacts, benefitting and harmed stakeholders, feedback loops, unintended consequences, intervention points, and change agents.
- Identify the role of media in the specific problem and various futures.
- Collaborate with peers using tools like work plans to keep track of tasks and deadlines.
You will be evaluated on how far your written newspaper article and reflection demonstrate your achievement of these learning objectives.

**REMEMBER:**

- Think about the importance of narratives and pictures in future thinking (e.g. help think concretely about different future states to identify goal to work towards and dangers to steer clear of.
- Consider the ethical challenges of exploring the future (avoid H.G. Wells and Greenpeace scenarios) and think about whose needs values are and / or should be included in visions of desirable future states.