Wasatch Experience
Implementation Summary

Complete this worksheet after you have modified your course, delivered it, and assessed it. Attach a syllabus/course outline, Activity Sheets for new activities, summary of your assessment, and essential copies of teaching materials to help the mentor team evaluate your achievement of workshop goals.

Course Name: ________ Introduction to International Relations

Instructor Name: ________ Prof. Benney

List your course, lesson, or activity learning goals that highlight new sustainability elements.

For POLS 2100: Intro to International Relations, I updated the course to include a full section on sustainability in IR. I also added a specific project to help test their learning in this area.

Explain the new sustainability element(s) you incorporated into your course and how they related to the learning goals above (at course, lesson, or activity level). Describe how you see these elements relating to sustainability.

In particular, I added a group project on the topic (called the Team Project). In addition, the entire end of the syllabus was devoted to issues that had a global sustainability frame to them. In each lesson, we applied the principles of sustainability to issues we discussed.

Provide a concise listing of sustainability lessons and activities and show their location in the course schedule. For selected activities attach a completed Activity Sheet.

- New lesson devoted to sustainability in international affairs
- Team project (see activity sheet)
- New curriculum (see section 5 of syllabus)
- New lessons that incorporated sustainability (see classes dated Nov 19-Dec3)
What motivated you to change your course?

I hoped that the students might see that global affairs are increasingly more about the interaction of social, political economic and environmental issues. Most importantly, I hoped they would see their place in the system and understand the complexity of the world around us.

I also feel very strongly that we underemphasize the importance of these issues in IR curriculum in favor of classic issues like war and peace. However, more and more these issues are studied from a sustainability perspective and students can benefit greatly from understanding this now – since many of them will have jobs that reflect this going forward.

Explain how you approached the modification of your course.

Because this course is taught by others in my department and because there are some basics that are required of this course – I wanted to focus on mainly modifying the last section. My idea was that it might be easier to sell to my colleagues if they would not have to update their entire syllabus if they too wanted to incorporate this approach down the road.

Did you achieve your proposed desired modification of the course? Why or why not?

While I did incorporate elements of sustainability early on in my lessons, the focus was mainly on the last section of the semester. This allowed me to go into depth and really make the issue relevant. I really think this was a great approach, as the course becomes increasingly modern and thus this subject comes across as the most cutting edge, which it is in some sense.

Describe the process you took to develop the sustainability teaching materials. What did you find particularly helpful? What did you do that was not particularly helpful?

Because I already teach an Environmental Politics course, I did not have an issue finding appropriate teaching materials. However, my mentor for the program (Ed Barbanell) was especially helpful in designing and selecting resources. It was great to have someone to bounce ideas off of. Likewise, I did find the suggestions from other faculty in the Wasatch program to be the most helpful in coming up with new ideas and the means to assess them. I also enjoyed the readings we did on the subject and found new inspiration for several of my other courses from these resources. I can’t think of any unhelpful things from the experience.
Did the students achieve the sustainability learning goals of the course, lesson, and/or activity?

The students clearly picked up the concepts and were able to translate them to the new issue areas we discussed. In addition, their group projects were outstanding and really connected the ideas we discussed.

What will you do differently in the future to continue to enhance the sustainability content and/or delivery of this course and others?

I think the most important ideas are simple – incorporating examples that highlight the issues and concepts associated with sustainability can be very powerful. Readings that address these issues are highly relevant and the students find that very appealing.

In retrospect, in what ways could the Wasatch Experience have improved your ability to elevate your teaching of sustainability content?

I am much more aware of the resources on campus. I feel solidarity with others pursuing this important goal. I also see how the topic applies to every field on campus, not just to my own or the ENVST program. I also understand how specific types of learning are more conducive to teaching about sustainability and I see the gains and possible pitfalls of moving my curriculum in this direction.