

Professor Maria Casado

LIS2004 Introduction to Internet Research

As the course final research project, students will write a web bibliography of articles.

EAP Speech courses (level 5 and 6) will serve as one of the students' presentation projects.

Name of Project: Materials Awareness¹

The objective of this project is for students to evaluate visible and invisible materials and processes in order to understand how consumer habits affect the environment.

1. Identify an everyday consumer object/product that is immediately at hand. Describe the various materials and processes that contribute to its production and disposal.
2. After identifying the visible materials, consider other relevant aspects that may be invisible:
 - Scale: how many of these objects are there in the world, and how fast do they 'turn over'?
 - Origin: where have the components of the materials come from?
 - Content: what chemicals and material types does the object contain?
 - Resources: what raw materials are used, and what are the environmental and social consequences of their extraction?
 - Composition of materials: are the materials used pure or hybrids? What consequences does this have for later recycling?
 - Size: what is the relative of components versus relative potential harm? (e.g. in mobile phones, some of the smallest quantities contain the biggest potential toxic harm)
 - Additives: what hidden coatings, protective coverings or chemical treatment are added?
 - Packaging: what impact does the packaging have on the environment?
 - Labels: are they present, and if so, what do they really tell us?
 - Manufacture: what are the processing methods and cost?
 - Energy: how much energy is consumed at each stage of the manufacture?
 - Distribution: how is the object transported, and how many times?
 - Escape: how do parts of the object or the whole object get back into the environment?
 - Social-cultural: how do all the above affect individual and community health and well-being?

¹ The Handbook of Sustainability: Skills for Changing the World by Arran Stibbe