

**LESSON PLAN: Focus on Env. Sustainability in a Speech Class (SPC 1026)**

**Rationale:** Using environmental sustainability as a focus, students will learn to value their ability to change the way they live their lives, and make a difference, by considering methods to reduce their ecological footprint. This strategy can enable students to connect their thoughts, their expression (their voices), and their behavior to change their life practices, and then, persuade others.

My concern is that often students may speak about topics in which they themselves are not able to identify; they have not gone through—with sufficient self-awareness--the personal steps of exploring their attitude, exploring their resistances and tensions regarding a conflict, and therefore they find themselves unable to identify, or show empathy (other-orientation) for those who may not have the information or the motivation to change—i.e. others who express their unwillingness to change. By going through the personal steps of attitudinal and behavioral change, with a focus on communication skills (both intrapersonal & interpersonal), students will have a better understanding of audience analysis, compliance-gaining, selective exposure, opposing responses, and motivational sequences that can be useful for developing effective persuasion speeches.

**Lesson Plan:** 1) Survey environmental sustainability topics that can lead to a lighter ecological footprint—check out various websites, including Earth Ethics Institute. 2) Ask students to make a list of areas that they could explore during a 3-week Persuasion Speech assignment. Possible topics could include—food purchasing, food consuming, transportation, water use, home energy use, clothes purchasing, recycling (home, work, or/and at school), and so on. 3) As part of their bi-monthly journal, they consider the relationship between change and communication, with a special focus on changing their attitude and behavior in relationship to one of the topics on which they choose to focus their experiment. After they gather their data, they then make a report in their journal, analyzing their results, and drawing conclusions. 4) They then take their personal & internet research on their Env. Sustainability topic, and develop a Preparation Outline as they build a persuasion speech in which they try to convince others to make a similar change in their lifestyle. 5) Then, they give their Persuasion Speech—incorporating audience analysis, compliance-gaining, selective exposure, opposing responses, and a motivational sequence to persuade the audience to make a similar change. 6) They deal with feedback to their speech, after they've delivered it—answering questions, clarifying details, and further motivating their audience to change—i.e. to reduce their ecological footprint.

**Assessment:** I am interested in whether their personal change experiments, and “hands-on” explorations in Environmental Sustainability, will combine to make for more effective persuasion speeches. I also am looking for ways to connect the students' communication journals with their speeches, and I am interested in whether the steps they go through in doing their research will make their speeches 1) more credible, more

charismatic, more confident (ethos); 2) more logical, more organized, more thoughtful (logos); and 3) more audience aware, with stronger emotional appeals (pathos). Plus, their speeches will be evaluated by the professor and the class based on the following criteria: content, delivery, & overall effect. Finally, I look forward to the students having more opportunities to share their knowledge and the methods they've used to reduce their ecological footprint, and thereby further enhance our College's General Education Learning Outcomes (i.e., the one that deals with students gaining more understanding of natural systems).