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2. **AIFT© training dates and location:**

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College of the North Atlantic – Qatar

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3. **Brief description**

Upon returning from training in Qatar the beginning of a new semester was upon me and on the flight I set to organizing the syllabus for my new honors course “Blueprint for a Sustainable Life” which was to focus on solutions for sustainable living and environmental change. I already teach an Environmental Issues course that deals with the problems facing the environment from both a scientific context and sociological perspective. This previous course given the rapid 15 week semester does not lend itself completely to a solutions based course of study. Therefore I was very excited to delve into creating the context for my new course. Below is the course description:

This course will first create a working model for sustainability then use our model to develop a map for how to live a sustainable life. Part home economics for sustainable living coupled with analysis of the green washed market, energy systems, and resource management. At the end of the course we will be able to identify our global sustainability priorities and know how to take action. This is not an environmental issues class where we talk about the problems facing the earth- this course is going to search for manageable solutions!

This description was written before I left for AI training and as I flew home I pondered if I could use the AI process to flip the classroom- essentially giving the student the active power and allowing them to set the stage for both the working definition of sustainability as well as determining what problems and solutions we will tackle. This course ran as a colloquium as part of the Northern Essex Community College Honors Program and all students enrolled were part of the program and electing to take this course. The students all maintain a 3.5 grade point average but more importantly for this course and subsequent AI experience they had all been involved in upper level courses where a traditional classroom model may not always apply. The class had only 13 students enrolled all of whom participated in the AI process. The student demographic was diverse with only the common thread of course enrollment tying them together. Students ranged in age from 17 to 59 and each was an active

participant in the process and brought an amazingly dynamic view point in part due to the diversity of chosen majors- from Philosophy to Engineering.

4. Definition

As described above I chose to use a course I was teaching as a platform to explore the AI process. Being a faculty member with complete academic freedom in the classroom I did not *have to* academically develop a Core Group but rather I had to personally identify that this process would meet my course objectives. That being said, as a newcomer to AI (other than having participated in the college's strategic planning AI summit and my recent training) I did want to receive feedback on my thought process. My first step was to turn to the two I had recently trained with Dr. Noemi Custodia- Lora and Dr. Stephen Russell on the flight home. We spent the bulk of our early morning layover discussing the affirmative topic. Then after returning home and giving thought to the process I also elicited help from several other NECC faculty members who have amazing classroom facilitation skills- Professor Barbara Stachniewicz and Professor Trish Schade. The time on the flight and emails to follow with Custodia- Lora and Russell truly helped shape the inquiry guide however the positive topic was largely determined by the course objectives and many hours of reflection. Perhaps it was the lack of sleep or our differences in teaching styles but try as we might turning a global sustainability problem into an affirmative topic was not an easy task. Leave it to me to try to tackle such a large issue for my first AI summit!

Then I stopped and thought about it. This problem I was having is in fact the problem the world faces regarding sustainability. There is no one definition, no one place to start, and absolutely no single solution. This was the framework I had proposed the course under and why I had felt the spark of creativity when thinking of using AI to delve into sustainability. BUT the fact remained if I was overwhelmed by the breadth of work to be done and I have dedicated my professional career to such work how could I ask a group of students to engage in finding solutions? It was here that I received considerable help from Stachniewicz and Schade in developing the language of the topic. While discussing the original topic sustainability they pointed out that I constantly used the following language; mindful, choice, global and personal balance, and change. This was the jumping off point! I view sustainability as an opportunity to live a rich life that is in balance with our planet's needs and that a rich life for each person is a different picture with vastly different paths. Students understand choice, from the moment

they step foot onto campus they are actively designing their lives, and to be able to show them that all their choices can create a balanced world is my fundamental goal as a professor and my overall AI summit goal (aptly renamed the Sustainability Summit for the course). Discussion through email and over a single afternoon before the semester began with the Core Group helped me flesh out the positive topic and interview guide. Did I mention all of this work was done between Jan 16th leaving Doha, Qatar and January 22, 2014 when the new semester began? Given the brief timeline, in large part due to my excitement of using AI in the classroom I was very thankful and happy for the help. Had I had more time I would have over the course of a semester selected past students from my Environmental Issues course to serve as a Core Group and truly used a more generative process during the Definition stage. I am however proud and thrilled with the final affirmative topic: *Mindful Living- Practicing beautiful balanced living!*

With the topic in hand I was itching for the first day of the semester to begin!! With my modified interview guide in hand and more first day of class prep than I had ever done in my life we began....

Below is a sample of the interview guide created by myself with help from the Core Group:

Blue Print for a Sustainable Life!

Sustainability Summit 2014.

Interview Guide- Mindful Living!

Thank you for opening yourself up to this Sustainability Summit. The intent of this course is to create solutions and together try to form a plan on how to live sustainably. The first step in this process is to work on a common definition of what sustainable living means to us as global citizens. We are going to use a generative process to create these definitions by looking at the best versions of our lives. Periods when we are ***practicing beautiful balanced living!***

These interviews are an important part of our generative process. This is where you will uncover the life giving forces- the positive core- of mindful living. Using the questions below Person A interviews Person B for 30 minutes, taking brief notes, and asking follow-up questions as appropriate. Please note the approximate time you have for each question and try to get through all of the questions. Remember these questions can be answered about any phase, area, and part of your life our goal is to share our best selves and translate that into our best version of a sustainable future.

Question 1: (8minutes) Tell me a story about the best time in your life when you feel like you were practicing mindful living- a time when you felt connected, life was both challenging and exciting but felt balanced; where you and others seemed to be highly engaged.

- Tell me the story
- How did it happen
- Who was involved?
- What were the circumstances, conditions, or setting, that supported your feeling connected to your world around you?
- What did you do to support this mindfulness?
- What did others do to support this mindfulness?
- What do you think made it an exceptionally positive experience

Question 2: (8 minutes) Now tell me a story about the best experience you have ever had where you were creating transformational change in your and other's life.

- What did you do? How did you go about facilitating the changes?
- What efforts did you make to ensure that the changes would be sustained, that it would last?
- What impact did this change have on a person, group, or organization?

- Who or what supported and sustained you in the transformational process?

Question 3: Let's talk for a minute about some things you value deeply; specifically the things you value about your mindful choices.

Without being humble or concerned about political correctness- what do you value most about yourself as a person, as a global citizen, and as a change agent?

When you are feeling best about creating change; what do you value most about this process?

What do you value most about the world when you are engaged in balanced living?

Question 4: What three wishes do you have for people and the planet that will ensure that you will experience a lifetime of mindful living?

Summary Sheet

1. What was the most positive **quotable quote** that came out of your interview?

2. What was the **most compelling story** that came out of your interview? What details and examples did the interviewee share? How were the interviewee and/or others changed by the story?

3. What was the most **"live-giving" moment** of the interview for you as a listener?

4. Did a particularly **creative and or innovative example of mindful living** emerge during the interview? If so describe what you learned about it.

5. What **three themes** stood out most for you during the interview?

5. Discovery

The inquiry started on the first day of the spring semester in 2014. January 22nd marked the day that all students returned to campus and the moment my honors students tromped through the door of our traditional classroom expecting to be handed a traditional syllabus but instead our Sustainability Summit began. I did not follow standard first day of school protocol which, as you many remember, is roll call followed by review of expectations and work to be done with possibly just enough time for a mini lecture on the initial subject and of course ending with their first homework assignment! Instead I welcomed them and waited as a few stragglers found a seat in the truly uncomfortable desk/seat combos and then shared my story of why I loved creating this solutions based class but the struggles I had when trying to look at how to determine what topics and solutions to dig into. All of this before role call or syllabi!

I explained that if I was the one making the decisions about what sustainable living means then I would not be respecting their lives and essentially asking them to conform to “my way” and it is my belief that if we want to find solutions we need to create sustainability through manageable choices that fit within each person’s life. BUT not just any life! We all can have amazing lives that are different for each one of us but they do tend to come with one perfect thread- we are passionate, comfortable, and feel a sense of balance. My question for them was this; can we use our vision for practicing a beautiful balanced life to find our vision of a sustainable future? The room was silent! Then a few of the students nodded and gave me that slight sign that any teacher knows we have buy in...the lean in. Three students still sat there with arms crossed in the classic “I need to be convinced position”, interestingly two of them were men and one the oldest in the class. I moved on, yes ignoring the first signs of anger in a classroom, and simply explained that this semester I wanted them to have the power in the classroom. Over the next two class periods we would go through a “Sustainability Summit” where we identified our vision of a preferred future and together used the common themes identified to set the syllabus and issues/solutions to be addressed. Over the course of the semester everyone would be given a chance to develop a personal blueprint for their own sustainable life that matched their goals and the shared vision we created as global citizens. As luck would have it those last few lines of my introduction to the course soliloquy did the trick and slowly arms unfolded and we began. Still not knowing names (although admittedly about half the class had been in courses with me in the past) and with the students in the dark I asked them to pair up with someone they did not know. We were missing one student, Jared, my vocal philosophy major, and therefore had six pairs of students doing face to face interviews. I posted the interview guide to our Blackboard student portal

and by the next class session Jared had digitally chimed in with his own interview questions and without asking the majority of the class has read them before returning to class. While not the same as the feeling that resonated from the face to face interviews it was such a positive way to begin a semester.

The interviews began (please see guide above for details). I read the intro paragraph aloud and set them to the ½ hour interviews. It should be noted this class met on Mondays 1-2pm and Wednesdays from 1-3pm. The first class session was a Wednesday and the two hour period was just perfect for interviews and report out. Below are a few pictures of the student interviews (please note the horrifying desks!).



It would remiss of me to say the interviews went perfectly. I, of course, had envisioned students leaning in and truly connecting with one another in a way I had never seen before in class. I think this was simply my eagerness to start the semester in a new and positive way. What did happen was an hour of constant chatter with a few moments of hesitation. For example I should have clarified that this is a positive story telling experience. Several times students started in a negative but as they told their stories of mindful living and change they became positive. I simply had to remind them that these questions were not about their whole lives but those moments we will always remember because we were truly engaged. This of course led to questions about what did I mean by engagement and was it okay that their answer was not about them saving the environment. And inevitably there were a few in the class, Bruce at the far right sporting his Boston Bruins pride and Vanessa with her arms crossed in the left hand picture for example, who were so used to a traditional classroom experience that this start to a semester was slightly jarring and they questioned the need to know about classmates when shouldn't I be lecturing. I asked them to give the process and me a chance and to really listen to their partner and they were willing. However their transformation really was visible when they began to share their stories. Overall any issues during the interview I believe were

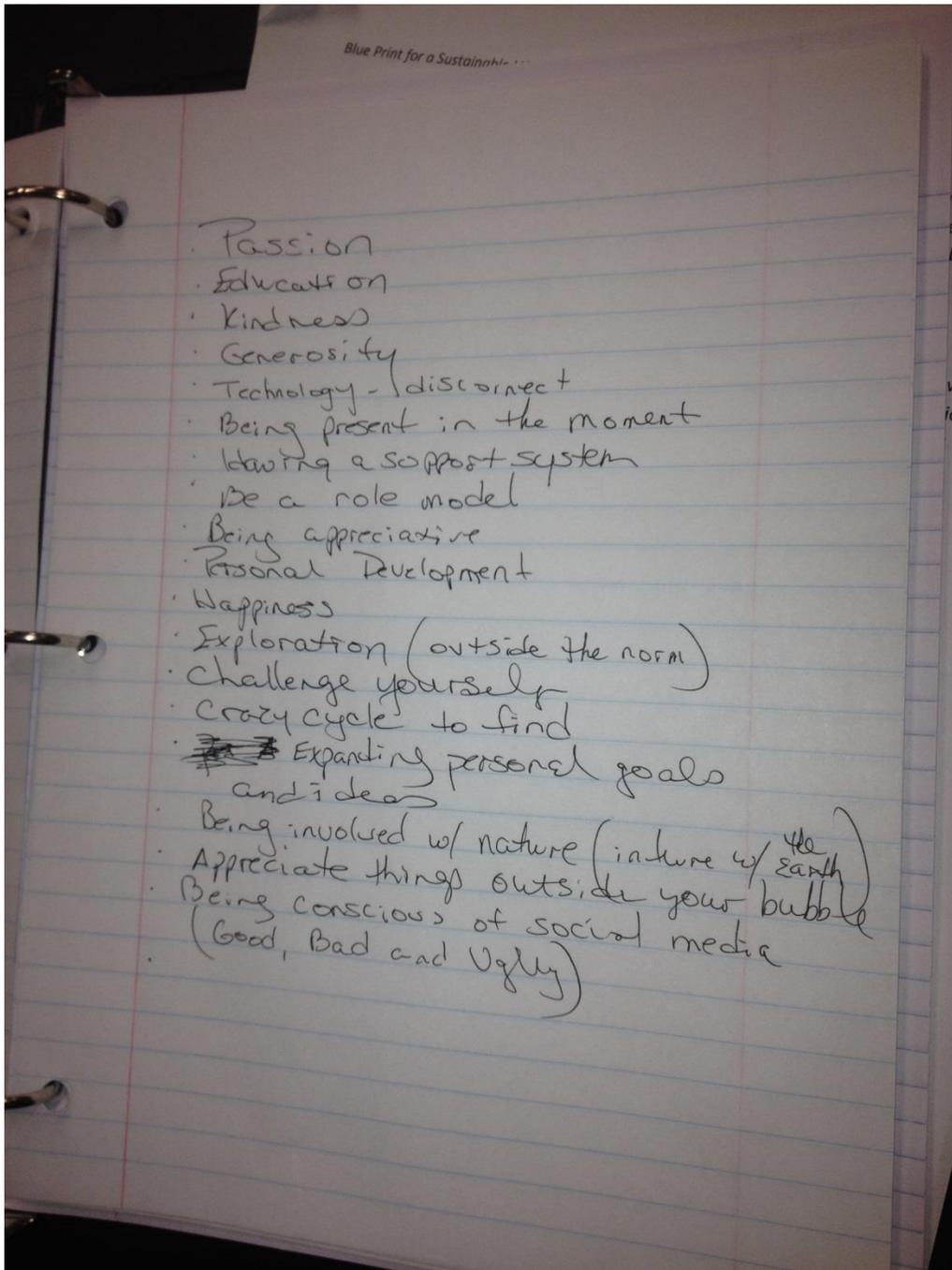
completely a function of transition to exploratory learning and student fear that they are not giving the correct answer. Once I quickly addressed the concept that any answer is the right answer, in fact they are not answers but stories, and that yes indeed the time they spent with their girlfriends doing at home makeovers (Mariah wearing the fashionable scarf in the left hand picture) was a transformational moment if they felt truly connected to it.

Story sharing began directly after the interviews but unfortunately due to timing it was not completed by all and we had to wait until the following Monday to finish up. This is the first and only time I can honestly say I wish I had a Friday afternoon class! We did use a traditional pair and share model and students found it easiest to introduce the students and use the Summary sheet as a guide during report outs. Having had several of the students in both classes and study abroad programs before I knew who I could count on to get the ball rolling- and it was Tarah (left hand picture with the Dunkin Donuts coffee – it turns out that a very large part of her sustainable life plan included her “dunks”) shared Mariah’s story of a silly afternoon with her friends and sister playing dress up in her closet and mentioned that it may not seem like much but the way she lit up during the story talking about her love of fashion but mostly her love of an afternoon with no rules, fashion of life, made Tarah think about how much she needed an afternoon just like that. They then both giggled in only a way college girls can! There were many similar stories and wonderfully so each student’s voice came out and we could clearly see (or at least I who understood why I wanted to use the AI process in a class) how yes there were themes but also 13 individuals with very different paths, passions, and experiences. Nairobi (pictured below on the right) talked with Vanessa (left- those arms still crossed 😊) really opened up when asked about being a change agent. She explored the concept of changing life circumstances through decisions to, as she put it, “leave poverty behind”. Her quotable quote noted by Vanessa will stay with me forever; “It is not about mindfulness when you are poor. It is about tough choices. It is only once I started to change that I can look on it with any thought to mindfulness. But you know what....it was balanced because I didn’t have a choice”.



The stories took just about 1 hour to report out and personally began to affirm that this process was the right choice. The students may not yet have seen the connections to sustainability but listening in on the interviews and sitting back and modeling our listening (“no notes just listen” - something that is tough for a bunch of honors students to get their heads around) I was seeing the themes emerge even before they reported out on the three themes from their interview partner. I did not record interviews or report out periods. I wanted to create a culture of comfort and open conversation and felt that this would change that tone so my notes consist of frantic post class journal entries. As an educator I can say I knew these students better, not just who they were but also the picture of the life they wanted to build better than I know any given student after a full semester.

After the “forced listening” as Bruce put it, having twice knocked the pencil jokily from his hand during report out, I asked the class to start brainstorming/shouting out the high energy themes. Shout they did! So much so that I did turn to Bruce and ask him to capture them on paper as I scrambled to write them on the white board. Sadly I do not have a picture of the board but it was a gorgeous mess! Below are some of the themes captured by Bruce.



Since this was a class and I wanted to create an open culture I did not create groups prior to the interview process and did the reporting to the class as a whole. Following that experience we then broke into two small groups of 7 and 6 to discover the positive core of stories. It certainly took a few minutes to get students over the no voting concept but once they engaged it was a joy to watch. The final positive core themes generated were:

Group 1 : Compassion, Enlightened (knowledge & education), Connectivity and Culture.

Group 2): Awareness, Knowledge, and Proactivity

Students then used an energy gram to identify the highest energy themes. And each group set to identifying their ONE theme. Well that had been our intent BUT they could not settle on just one! Oh those students- they just want it all. As the pictures below show after some amazing conversation they identified combinations that represented the positive core of mindful living to them.



Group 1 determined that the term *Enlightened Connection* gave the most life and supported Mindful living while Group 2 resonated with Awareness and Connectivity so much so that they determined that those two together represented Appreciation to them and finally moved forward with *Appreciative Connections*. It is interesting to me that the term appreciation came through. As noted earlier I called the experience the Sustainability Summit and had consciously not used the term Appreciative Inquiry.

6. Dream

Students were given 30 minutes to create a visual representing their positive core that their group believed was at the heart of mindful living. Given the time and being mindful of resources- we opted for collages. Please note I had not yet introduced the word sustainability but the visual images generated had a very organic and natural connection.

Group 1: Enlightened Connection



Group 2: Appreciative Connections



Sharing the visuals revealed that the environmental theme was not just a function of the course title but that all students felt the connection part of their theme was an organic and natural process and was most often found when in nature, pushing boundaries, and with people. Interestingly Kermit was not chosen for his “it is not easy being green” motto but because as one student put it “Dude he always sees the good in Miss Piggy and that can be tough!”

7. Design

Transition from the visual to a Provocative Proposition was difficult for the students. I had anticipated as much, knowing I was now pushing well past a traditional classroom experience. I had pulled from the AI manual and shared the PowerPoint slides. This helped immensely and students created amazing visions of a preferred future (the perfect sentiment for a sustainability goal!). It should be noted that I did take a few moments to explore the connection of sustainability in relation to mindfulness and gave a mini lesson on resources and the three P's (people, profit, and planet) of sustainability research with our focus on mindfulness and people. This did direct the vision statements slightly but given it is a course with specific outcomes I did have to remind them of our long term course goals.

Group 1: We will connect to the world by achieving enlightenment through practicing a conscientious lifestyle while fostering united relationships to sire our sustainable future

Group 2: Our global community challenges itself to gather together and be actively engaged in the interconnected web of the world around us; while acting as a tree in the woods, we will allow our roots to grow strong while digging deeply into problems to find solutions that will create positive change and increase connection.

From beginning in discovery to design took nearly 4 class periods, a total of 5 hours. At this point I had 13 students completely engaged in creating their best life while simultaneously actively seeking out a sustainable life. This is no small feat!!! In previous environmental themed courses students often commented that they want to live sustainably but they also want to prosper and do not see a connection between the two. In this class I had to actively interrupt their conversation, after each group shared their provocative proposition, about how they were going to do it. They knew they could practice a beautifully balanced life and through that process create a sustainable world. I truly did not need to introduce the idea of Strategic Intentions. They were off and running! The class was brainstorming strategic intentions left and right and together we collected a list of near 50 actions that they wanted to do THAT VERY SECOND!!! I love that moment in a class when everyone is 100% invested in the materials and its relation to their lives. I had intentionally timed the class so that

students could leave on this high for the week. I asked them as homework to take a picture of our whiteboard and come in that Monday with these ideas lumped into themes, specifically areas of change and under each area two innovative ways they could make that happen.

The next class students reported out and together we generated a list of 9 areas for innovation, positive change, and success (called exactly that!). When collectively addressed the students agreed the culture would change to their vision of a preferred future.

1. Education-integrate whole systems thinking and connections across disciplines
2. Energy- reduce use, new alternatives, maximize affordability (more \$ for other things)
3. Transportation- create a comprehensive plan and create personal goals and plan
4. Technology- optimize use and promote disconnection (connection to people not phone)
5. Product Choice- create a need culture, increase lifetime of products, minimize
6. Connection to Nature- increase our time outside
7. Personal Lifestyle- think about who we want to be, create plan
8. Local Community- increase sense of community, increase local engagement
9. Civic Engagement- promotes local economy and voters. Love where you live.
- 10. Bonus theme- look for connections these are all linked and combined are amazing.*

This list of nine (plus their bonus) also became the working syllabus for the class. Essentially the remainder of the semester became a design and density exercise. The students addressed collectively and personally each theme and created their personal Blueprint for a sustainable life. There were no absolute commitments, requests, or offers made immediately. Rather I introduced the concept of these and created a space on our class webpage where students could share information, successes, new choices/changes to life, and ask other students for help. Rapidly this became the place we all went to first when logging into the system. It was not graded but always buzzing with activity.

For each strategic area I, as faculty, found resources to cover the science and theory and then we spent twelve weeks of the semester systematically going through each one. Since this course is a personal course where students are being asked to reflect on their present and future choices each student choose one (some two) themes that resonated with them the most and they were responsible for working with me to lead the discussions and work around that theme. This work included organizing the reading discussion, finding success stories to share with the class and promote the positive nature

of our work, and to start and then facilitate with my help the development of a change list, and subsequent task list to create the changes.

This course requires a research paper which I integrated into the design process. The paper gave students an opportunity to research other sustainability models, address successes and brainstorm how to integrate them into the United States or to delve deeper into one of the themes addressed above. Two other major assignments co-designed by myself and the students completed out the semester long design process. The first was what I called the “Home Ec Project”. Here students picked one of the themes and actively created a product or action that would create a more sustainable future and address their goal of living beautiful balanced lives. For example Mariah, the fashionista mentioned earlier, choose the product choice theme and connected it to her passion for all things style by researching and making her own make-up from local and non-toxic ingredients. In addition to creating the products and impacting their own lives each student wrote a Project Plan detailing exactly how to do the project for the public. A sample of the assignment sheet is attached at the end of this summary report. The projects were displayed at the college’s annual awards ceremony. Student gave copies of the project plans to the public. Tarah the student inspired by Mariah’s interview story gave herself the makeover she had been wanting by creating 5 new outfits from existing materials in her closet. Her project plan detailed how to reuse, sew, and strategically buy. Below are quick descriptions of the other student projects:

Vanessa and Sarah: created \$20 hydroponic machines from simple materials at a home store for use in growing local food. Vanessa and Sarah’s child suffers from severe allergies to pesticides and cannot eat many foods.

Ian: Delved into the world of chicken farming and is now raising his six ladies. (Added bonus- he often drops off eggs for faculty at the college!) He has shared his simple coop model with five friends and they too now have hens.

Bruce: Recreated his grandfather’s canning recipes and dispersed them to all his neighbors. Connecting with both his lifestyle and local community themes. (Added bonus- his relish is to die for!)

Jared: Developed a plan to convert his bike to a small engine run scooter run on bio-diesel. In the end he converted a vehicle which he has now named Vin.

Scott: Built a convection heating unit to fit into bedroom windows. His parents have allowed him to build four more and they are in all the bedrooms in the home. His grandmother asked for one for Christmas.

Nairobi: Created a series of children's coloring books and activities to address "want vs need" for elementary age children. She took her sister and ten friends on a "shopping trip" and believes that these issues will help address the local and therefore global poverty issue.

Rebecca: trained to be a beekeeper and built and set up 4 hives on her property. She is now using the newly pollinated wildflower space as a local sharing garden.

Pam: Simultaneously created a family heirloom garden while writing a plan for minimizing technology use for her family and neighborhood. Weekly potlucks occurred over the summer months which I was invited to and enjoyed immensely.

Kyle: A budding engineer researched and executed a process to remove metal from electronics for recycling. (Please note- his project was not shared with the public since many do not have the chemistry background needed)

Paige- created a nontoxic windshield washer fluid for her family's fleet of cars and climate specific instructions for optimum use.

Finally the end of semester reflection paper completed the semester long design process. Students were asked to turn in a simple Blueprint for their sustainable life. The paper started with a reflection of the discovery process and their Statement of a Preferred Future. Second it addressed each theme once again asking them to explain the personal connection, to demonstrate a place in the text or with a student that the success in this area resonated with them, and finally to create a list of five areas for innovation and positive change that they could do or would like to do. The third and final part of the blueprint brought back the AI process by asking for commitments with a THIS I WILL DO list. Each student committed to upwards of 20 actions that will promote their vision of a sustainable future.

It was a risk to extend the AI process out over the entire semester and not one I was originally going to take. My plan had simply been to use the generative process to create the provocative proposition/vision of a preferred future and get the conversation going on a personal and positive note. However, we were all remiss to let go and the transition into the class building a syllabus and assignments all using AI framework was organic and something I would repeat in a heartbeat.

8. **Destiny/Delivery**

This part of the AI process is difficult to measure given that the course is only 15 weeks long and I would generally not have regular contact with the students following the end of term. However, as noted above, the course had built in checkpoints for delivery through the assignments. The Home Ec project specifically put the vision of a preferred future into action and the final Blueprint synthesis work created an action plan students can follow. One of the primary goals of this class was to always focus on the positive changes, large or small, that are driving our sustainable future rather than constantly harping back to the environmental problem. This was tough for me personally as faculty because I yearn for every student to understand the science behind the issue. It took constant reflection and students being given the freedom to “buzz me”, this where a student would simply call out “ok stop- you are going into Negative Nellie mode”. The students liked being able to consciously choose to stop the negative in that class and direct their learning. I of course as the compulsive faculty member would post links to the science on our course webpage and can happily report that students did access them after class. Giving them the freedom to look at the issues on their own time with no pressure from a professor was a risk but one that paid off in spades- they essentially were creating their own Design-Destiny- Delivery loop by actively researching, processing, and then putting new sustainable plans into action without my professorial prodding. This is of course every faculty member’s dream!!!

I was concerned that the end of the semester would mark the end of a journey with AI and sustainability linked in the classroom BUT my students solved that problem for me. One of the themes and initial action areas discussed throughout the semester was the role of technology for connection. Students spent a great deal of time reflecting on if social media was creating a global society or giving us the ability to opt out of our cultural connection and therefore hindering all 9 areas for innovation, positive change, and success. Jared suggested putting it to the test! He created a private facebook page, called Marcy’s Minions (I can’t pretend the name does not both crack me up and scare me to death!), where each student joined. We are all attempting to use social media as a tool to share resources and ideas. I am proud to report that 9 months after the end of the semester 11 of the 13 and myself are still engaged in the discussions. I am particularly happy that every once in a while a student will suggest that perhaps they all need to do a little “facebook check” and each will monitor their use and often report back in about projects and events they are doing. Tarah still is sewing the clothes, Ian still regularly delivers eggs, Vanessa and Sarah have increased to making 50% of their daughter’s food, and Bruce is stealing veggies from Pam’s garden to preserve! As the AI facilitator and professor I am watching with awe and also adding my ideas and positive feedback as well as continuing a relationship with the folks and now friends. The greatest thing I can do is recognize them as co-

conspirators in our sustainability plan rather than students and work to increase the sense of local community (#7 of our innovation plans) which in turn really does make us happy and want to connect. Perhaps even that “enlightened connection” the students sought at the beginning of the semester. Group Two’s vision of a preferred future referenced the tree with roots that stabilize us all- I think this was my role as AI facilitator but now we are all growing.

9. What did you wish for in the inquiry?

My plan to use AI in the classroom was in large part because that is where my time is spent and I was noting a doomsday mentality when it came to environmental science which I wanted to change. Change not only in the students but within myself. I had hoped that being able to reframe the work and look for other successes would give us the tools to find possible solutions rather than get stuck in a paralysis by analysis. While there were bumps and not every day in the classroom can be positive, I did still reserve the right as faculty to negatively reflect on reading not getting done and late assignments, the overall semester was one where we carried out our mission.

10. What did you learn from the inquiry about yourself and your facilitation?

I confirmed something I knew- I am not a fabulous stand back and watch facilitator for the long term. During the Discovery and Dream phases (those first two weeks) I was on high alert to be simply a facilitator that allowed the process to flow and gave the students opportunity to develop their own plans. However once the semester wore on and we were in the loop of Dream- Design- Destiny I could not help myself and I jumped in more than perhaps I ought to have. I knew going in that I am a doer and when I get excited I jump into things, aka interrupt, so I was open with the students about it and told them to call me out and displace my voice with theirs. This worked the deeper into the semester we got and the more confident the students became with their voices. It did help that I assigned students to lead reading discussions and action list planning with me for each innovation action item they developed. Perhaps if I had done an AI summit where I was not as intimately connected to the material this may not have happened...but somehow I doubt it.

11. What was your "personal best" experience related to facilitating the Inquiry?

There are two, almost three, that jump to mind. First was a silent moment for me in the early Dream phase being able to sit back and listen to the students as they took their visual collages to provocative proposition. Students are not often asked to do this and as a result I was fearful they would freeze and ask me what I expected but I believe their vigor during the wordsmithing session was a function of a

successful discovery period. This is new way to start a semester but it was flipped teaching at its best. Second was the student poster session held at the annual awards convocation at the college- my students stood with such pride over their Home Ec projects that could not help but beam. And finally the student's discovery phase repeatedly came back to the term CONNECTION being a key factor in a sustainable life, I believe that my experience facilitating this course was part of the reason they were engaged enough to remain connected long after the course ended.

12. What surprised you during the inquiry?

At the beginning of the semester I was surprised how quickly the students became engaged. Generally it takes a few weeks for those crossed arms to unfold and for me to see the comfort level in class elevate to a place that each student feels they have a strong voice. For most it was within the interview and for my very traditional students by the time they were crafting their provocative proposition/vision of a preferred future they were not only engaged but those arms here unfolded and hands were moving rapidly to get a point across.

13. What might you wish for next time?

This would be a good time to point out that this was a fall semester course that as noted met two times per week for a limited time. I craved more time! I was excited that the course was scheduled to run a second time in the evening for a 4 hour block in the spring semester. This was my chance to do the Sustainability Summit again and fine tune my skills and really consciously focus on a semester long AI experience rather than falling into it. Sadly that class did not enroll and was cancelled. I pushed off preparing the report hoping for a more "traditional" AI experience to use as project. So I wish two things; first that I has personally journaled more during the course following the summit phase to reflect on my AI experience not just the student's AI experience and second that in the future I can facilitate a group I am not as intimately connected with. I would like to experience AI from all perspectives.

14. Please attach any materials you've used including PowerPoints, agendas, etc. to help us "experience" your facilitation.

Sample assignments are below and all other materials a woven into the report.

15. Do we have your permission to share your story with others? Sharing the story and materials is so powerful to those of us in the field. If you do not have permission from your "client" to share,

perhaps you might consider preparing a second version that does not include the client name, individual people?

YES. All students signed photo releases and I intentionally did not use last names or share student work to protect privacy.

16. Do we have your permission to share your session materials with others?

YES

Sample assignments:

Research Paper Topic Statement:

The time honored tradition of doing a research paper is not just for the English class! We are going to endeavor to use this traditional research paper as a tool for change. To that end I want you to use your paper as a mechanism to gather as much information as possible and then to start asking yourself the “right types of questions” to quote the recent TED talk we watched in class.

Step one: Reflect on a topic and write a simple response paragraph stating what your topic is, why you made this choice, and HOW you think this new information can be used in your future decisions surrounding your sustainability plan (aka blueprint).

You may choose from one of two topic themes:

Topic 1: Pick a country or region and analyze their benchmarks of sustainability. The benchmarks of sustainability are in fact the same as the themes you came up with as a class, they are listed below. The only general difference is that personal lifestyle is generally divided between community and consumerism. For each benchmark/class theme look at: What as a culture are they doing right? Differently than our American culture? How can we use these successes in the United States?

Topic 2: Pick one of the ten major themes/problems the class generated as areas we would like to see change in order to meet our collective preferred statements of the future. The themes are listed below. You will delve into asking the BIG WHY question and the BIG HOW questions. Why is this truly a problem? Why hasn't it been fixed? Why isn't it easy? And how is it related to other themes? How could you solve the problem? How could a solution help you live your preferred vision of the future?

Themes (generated from Sustainability Summit):

- Education
- Local Community
- Energy
- Personal Lifestyle
- Connection to Nature
- Product choice/Consumerism
- Transportation
- Technology
- Civic Engagement

“Home Ec” Project:

This project idea is purely selfish and was born before the class began and we had even begun creating our statements of a preferred future. So it was a joy to watch that process and see it align so well. I truly believe the art of making a home is going by the wayside. I grew up in a family that by all definitions was “weird”. As kids we did not have cable television and more nights than not after dinner my brother and I (after doing the dishes of course) would go down into the basement with my father and work on making things. For Matt it was carved wooden swords and me I was into designing machines (I once turned a blender I rescued from the dump into a pitching machine!). If we were not down cellar, as we called it, then sure enough we were upstairs cooking with mom, sewing, or knitting. It never occurred to me that it was odd that on snow days we did not watch movies but read out loud while making salt water taffy from scratch. I never got why my friends wanted to be at our house on weekends; because I never knew that the rest of the world was busy and stressed and that they didn't have “food projects” and homemade quilts on the beds. That they were always busy and because of that the microwave made the meals.

This idea of home is something that is becoming an integral part of sustainability. Not the house but the concept of home and connectedness. I could go on forever about my childhood, it truly was magical and I count my blessings every day. It was not until I really started looking at the idea of sustainable living and the concept of "enoughness" that I realized the home economics lessons I learned as a kid drive my sustainability goals. I want to have a minimal impact on the planet but I also want to have a rich connected life. When I cook from scratch and can or save my food bounty seasonally I feel connected to those I share it with. In fact I want to share it and make an effort to connect with friends! These actions give me joy as well lessen my overall impact. This is why on the last snow day when I should have been working and put a DVD in for the little one instead we did this:



Today I want to create that feeling I had growing up. Essentially I want my daughter to think that her parents are the weird ones!

Goal: The goal of this project is to reconnect with the sense of home. I do however recognize that this does not mean the same thing for everyone. Some may not be an aspiring Martha Stewart- Bob Villa hybrid like I am (disclaimer: I actually dislike Ms. Martha but I like her local food and homemade projects core philosophy). For you a home economics project simply needs to be an activity or project that inspires you, are environmentally neutral or positive, and preferably something that you want to share to increase the sense of community we all are missing.

Timeline and Tangibles:

Project Idea- turned in! (5pts)

Project Connection form: This is a reflective essay to dig deeper into why you are working toward sustainability and who/what inspires you to do so. This cannot be more than three pages. I gave you a short example above when I waxed on about Bob and Jude (mom and dad). (5pts) Due Date: 3/12/14

Project plan: You are going to create a "How To" project sheet. This will include a timeline, materials, and steps for creating the project. This needs to be a neat package and of printable/publishable quality. Other than that there are no limitations- make it fit your needs! (15pts) Due Date: 4/16/2014

Project Presentation: Class session at end of semester and at Honor's Poster presentation. This must include a graphical presentation (poster or technology driven), a simplified project plan sheet for distribution and a five minute discussion about project. (10pts) Due Date: 4/30/14 and 5/13/14 at 8pm.

Project reflection paper: Review the connection forms, your statement of a preferred future, and the process as a whole and write a two page reflective essay on the process and of course WHY your home economics project will create a more sustainable world. (10pts) Due Date: 5/5/2014

Blueprint for your life- a final distillation of your sustainable world view!

What is a Blueprint? In "real life" it is effectively a set of instructions that guide you through the design and building phases of construction. In "our sustainable life" we are looking at this blueprint as the same thing. We are creating a tool to navigate future

choices by following our own personal guide for a building a sustainable life. It is simple but effective- a series of lists and action items that relate to our areas of sustainable living. When in doubt check your blueprint!

The Process: We started the semester off with an appreciative inquiry summit where together we created a Statement of a preferred future. This is your vision. Every blueprint starts with a vision of what you want the finished product to look like. You created a word image and this is so important because *our words create worlds*.

From these two statements of preferred (and dare I say fairly kick-ass) futures you like a builder looked at all the areas you want to consider when building this future. In a proper blueprint there is an energy layout, plumbing, landscaping schematic, etc. and in your case you identified themes for consideration.

Now here is where you have been doing the work all along without realizing it. Each week as you read and discuss in class you are delving into other folk's views and perspectives of an ideal representation of those themes. BUT this is your blueprint and you need to build your life so it is time for you to create the final representation of all of those themes. Similar to building a home you are looking at other's ideas but the final rendition has to suit your lifestyle and needs.

YOUR Blueprint: The pages that follow are going to ask you to go through and create a series of lists and answer some basic questions and in the end you will have a rough blueprint of how to live YOUR sustainable life. This is the important part- it is your life so each choice needs to reflect who you are and who you want to be.

STEP 1: Copy your Statement of a Preferred Future into the box below:

STEP 2: Write one thoughtful paragraph regarding why this statement resonates with you:

-

STEPS 3-13: One each of the following pages on Theme is addressed and there are several questions or lists to generate regarding each one. At the bottom of each page you are asked to reference the text and conversations from the semester. In this space you must identify references and ideas from the text or people in the course who generated ideas that you appreciated and would incorporate into your blueprint/future.

EDUCATION:

What does education mean to you?

How would you directly incorporate the study of conscious consumerism and environmental awareness into a k-12 curriculum?

Create a list of 5 non-negotiable factors/ideas/ or concepts that must be met in Education to meet your vision of a preferred future. Make sure to briefly explain why you choose these factors.

Where in the text did you connect to the theme of Education and why? What was said in class and by who that resonated regarding Education and a sustainable life?

ENERGY:

What type of energy sources do you currently use? How do these align with your preferred vision?

The shift to renewable energy is possible but it might be a slow migration? How do you feel about the pace?

Create a list of 5 non-negotiable factors/ideas/ or concepts that must be considered for Energy use to meet your vision of a preferred future. Make sure to briefly explain why you choose these factors. (Hint: we did this in class!)

Where in the text did you connect to the theme of Energy and why? What was said in class and by who that resonated regarding Energy and a sustainable life?

TRANSPORTATION:

What are the transportation systems currently in practice in your hometown? How do these align you're your preferred vision?

What do you think of this statement: transportation is currently an afterthought compared to the rest of our wants and as a result we are driving more?

Create a list of 5 non-negotiable factors/ideas/ or concepts that could be incorporated into a new model for transportation to meet your vision of a preferred future. Make sure to briefly explain why you choose these factors. (Remember this is your life and your transport- this does not need to be the system to solve the world's problems but it needs to align with your choices- i.e. our community choice)

Where in the text did you connect to the theme of Transportation and why? What was said in class and by who that resonated regarding Transportation and a sustainable life?

TECHNOLOGY:

What type of technology do you currently use? How do these align with your preferred vision?

There has been so much debate on if technology is good or bad for community engagement- I want your thoughts on this matter: Create a list of 5 non-negotiable factors/ideas/ or concepts that must be considered for integration of technology into your vision of a preferred future. Make sure to briefly explain why you choose these factors.

Where in the text did you connect to the theme of technology and why? What was said in class and by who that resonated regarding Technology and a sustainable life?

PRODUCT CHOICE:

Before this class what did you use as the basis for making a choice about a product? How did these align with your preferred vision?

How does the idea of the triple bottom line (people, profit, and planet) work for you regarding product choice?

Create a list of 5 non-negotiable factors/ideas/ or concepts that must be considered for you to choose a product. Does the type of material you are buying make you access situations differently? Make sure to briefly explain why you choose these factors. (Hint: remember the day where you all had to pick products)

Where in the text did you connect to the theme of Product Choice and why? What was said in class and by who that resonated regarding Product choice and a sustainable life?

Connection to Nature:

Do you currently have a connection to nature? How do these align with your preferred vision?

This class came up with the idea of a connection to nature being something we NEED to have more of to live sustainably; I do not disagree; however is it possible to live a sustainable life without a connection to nature but simply through conscious choices?

Create a list of 5 ways we could simply create community and lives that demonstrate a Connection to Nature how do these help to meet your vision of a preferred future. Make sure to briefly explain why you choose these factors.

Where in the text did you connect to the theme of connection to nature and why? What was said in class and by who that resonated regarding connection to nature and a sustainable life?

PERSONAL LIFESTYLE:

What the heck do we mean by this term? I think of it as our day to day routines, how we use our time, and yes the things we think define us. So what do you see as your current lifestyle? Is it aligned with your vision of a preferred future?

We all have visions of how we would like to shift our lifestyle. How would you shift yours?

Create a list of 5 non-negotiable pieces of lifestyle and how will you align them with your vision of a preferred future. How could you make each part of lifestyle more sustainable? Make sure to briefly explain why you choose these factors.

Where in the text did you connect to the theme of personal lifestyle and why? What was said in class and by who that resonated regarding lifestyle and a sustainable life?

LOCAL COMMUNITY:

What type of community do you currently live in? How does it align with your preferred vision?

The term Local Community is fairly vague. What does it truly mean to you?

Create a list of 5 non-negotiable factors/ideas/ or concepts that must be incorporated for your local community to meet your vision of a preferred future. Make sure to briefly explain why you choose these factors. (Wow- this one is the hardest and yet simplest one for me!)

Where in the text did you connect to the theme of local community and why? What was said in class and by who that resonated regarding community and a sustainable life?

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:

What exactly do you define as civic engagement?

Civic Engagement can take on many spheres- local, regional, or global. How would you engage on all three levels?

Create a list of 5 non-negotiable factors/ideas/ or concepts that we could incorporate into community and infuse in lifestyle and choice to have civic engagement meet your vision of a preferred future. Make sure to briefly explain why you choose these factors. (Mother of pearl this one is a beast!)

Where in the text did you connect to the theme of civic engagement and why? What was said in class and by who that resonated regarding civic engagement and a sustainable life?

STEP 14:

Write a series of THIS I WILL DO STATEMENTS that could be used as personal check list for defining your sustainable life. Remember this is your life and so you make the changes where they fit into your goals and dreams.

For example:

THIS I WILL DO....I will commit to investing in my local economy for at a minimum 50% of my food.

THIS I WILL DO... _____

THIS I WILL DO... _____

STEP 15: Create this life!

My hope is that this semester has made you think about slowing down and reflecting on who we want to be as citizens locally and globally and helped you think about reframing some choices to meet your personal needs while serving the earth in a kinder way.