

To: Dr. Scott Ashmann

From: S. Kimball

Re: Sustainability Project in EDUC 422- Reading in the Content Area

Date: March 8, 2015

Education 422, Reading in the Content Area (EDUC 422), is a reading course for content majors with an education minor. It is required by the Department of Public Instruction for teacher certification at the middle/high school level.

The course is designed to show content majors how to incorporate literacy into their courses. For example, how to help high school chemistry, or social studies, or math, etc. students read and understand their text better, using various literacy strategies. For this sustainability project, Aldo Leopold's, *A Sand County Almanac*, was used. Students had not read it nor were they familiar with Aldo Leopold.

A PowerPoint, *Information/Expository Text Comprehension Strategies*, was presented to students. Text Structure is an important aspect of being a strategic reader (Kletzien, 1991). Understanding and utilizing text structure can help comprehend expository text (Richegels, McGee, Lomax & Sheard, 1987; Rollerrf, 1990). The five Informational/Expository text structures are Description, Sequence, Compare-Contrast, Cause and Effect, and Problem and Solution. Each uses unique vocabulary and various graphic organizers lend themselves to each of the areas.

All students were assigned to read Part 1 (months) and the first reading in Part 2 (Wisconsin) in *A Sand County Almanac*. The class was divided into five groups, one for each of the text structures. Each group needed to provide a graphic organizer for their text structure, provide evidence from the text supporting the structure, and finally, providing a sustainability practice that could be done in "real life". This

information was to be on a chart and then presented to the class. I've included photographs of the charts (one was on the computer – "to save paper" was the group's reason!)

The project was very interesting and well received by the students. In EDUC 422, we are always examining various texts from the various content areas and using them to introduce or verify a reading strategy that could be used in the classroom to better help students understand the material presented.

So in this case, using *A Sand County Almanac* to introduce Text Structure, was an easy way to introduce both a literacy topic and then take it a step further and look at sustainability measures that can be practiced. It also showed the students in EDUC 422 that they could do this in their specific content area, too. It was a good project, students enjoyed it, easy to do, and I will use it again.