

Student Farm Planning

The Class

4

How does a student farm planning class begin?

Similarly to other courses, with maybe a little more punch than your average class. The goal of first day of class was to acquaint students with the course content. The first thing we did was to make introductions of students and faculty. At that point we fully intended to do more in-depth introductions during the second week, so quick names and majors sufficed for the first week.

We then reviewed the syllabus, it was fairly straight forward but vague on grading and the course outline. Initially we told students their grade would be depend on the following criteria Class Attendance & Participation (50%) and Individual Assignments and Group Reports (50%). Participation ended up being graded in a number of ways including participating in class discussions, online discussions, master plan submissions, and facilitating discussions for specific topic areas.

Interesting points to note- when the class started, “the responsibility of the student farm belonged to the What’s Up in Sustainable Agriculture (WUSA) student group”. In actuality the for logistical reasons mostly associated to selling products on campus, it was in the farm’s best interest to become a Student Program of the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, and for the student group WUSA to provide the student initiative and involvement in the farm.

Its also interesting to note that the Monday meeting time which is mentioned in the second paragraph of the “Communicating with people outside the class” section was never utilized. Depending on the interest of people outside of the course it could have been utilized. In our case it just never seemed pertinent enough to grant a need for a meeting. The course outline provided a framework that was flexible and covered the areas we hoped to accomplish.

The syllabus may seem excessively long with the APA format information included, it could be optional. The previous semester I had been the teacher assistant for a class where a student had plagiarized a paper because they didn’t site their sources. It created a difficult situation I wanted to avoid in this class.

I can’t stress enough that throughout this entire course process the two advisors and myself made up the course content and activities as we went along. We believed that we were engaged in a process and that if we could get the students to do the same we’d accomplish the desired outcomes articulated by the students.

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Student Farm Planning Course
Spring 2005
AGRO 4093 / HORT 5090 Directed Studies (2 Credits)

Class Meets: Fridays, 11:45 – 1:15 PM in 408 Hayes Hall, the room may change later in the semester to a greenhouse classroom.

Instructors: Courtney Tchida, Instructor / Facilitator,
Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture
413 Hayes Hall 612-625-2738 tchi0003@umn.edu

Bud Markhart, Professor,
Dept. of Horticultural Science
228 Alderman Hall, 612-624-7705, amarkhar@umn.edu

Paul Porter, Associate Professor,
Dept. of Agronomy & Plant Genetics
305 Hayes Hall, 612-625-6719, pporter@umn.edu

Office hours vary, please contact instructor by email or phone to make an appointment.

Course Description:

Register for independent study credit spring semester and be a part of planning the new student run organic demonstration and research farm on campus (Name subject to change). The class will be using the resource, "Building a Sustainable Business" to create a master plan for our 1 acre plot of land on the St. Paul Campus.

The focus of this course will be planning the farm from both a business and science perspective, looking at the areas of Marketing, Operations, Human Resources, and Finances. We will utilize individual and group projects as we determine a master plan that will be put into effect during 2005 and into the future.

The course will cover everything from starting a business to marketing our products, to planning the 1 acre site to how to transition from conventional to organic certification. Interested students will have the opportunity to start implementing the plan as soon as weather allows and to harvest healthful food throughout the summer.

Course Objectives:

- to expose students to steps in creating a sustainable business plan
- to increase student understanding of organic and sustainable farming practices
- to increase students' exposure to resources available for organic and sustainable farming
- to create an implementable master plan for the student run organic farm on the St. Paul Campus.

Reading:

We will use, "Building a Sustainable Business: A Guide to developing a business plan for farms and rural businesses" as our text to be used as a reference throughout the course. This publication is available at the MISA office for \$7.00 (a discounted group rate, regularly priced \$14.00). It is also available online at the MISA website, www.misa.umn.edu click on publications.

Grading:

Grading is A-F or S-N and is based on (Subject to change & discussion)

- Class Attendance & Participation (50%)
- Individual Assignments and Group Reports (50%)

Grading Strategy:

Letter grades will be based on the following percentages of the total points (yet to be determined).

- A = 95% +
- A- = 90-94%
- B+ = 87-89%
- B = 84-86%
- B- = 80-83%
- C+ = 77-79%

Citing Sources & Submitting Information to the Master Plan:

Given that the over-arching goal of this class is to compile a master plan for our student farm that will be used as a reference in the future, it is imperative that we site the sources of all information used in compiling our master plan. Also this is the best way to avoid issues with scholastic dishonesty.

For the purposes of this class please use the APA Style Citation for all assignments that will be incorporated into our master plan. Please see the APA Crib Sheet at the end of the Syllabus for more information.

We will also determine a specific format for submitting information to the master plan, so that each individual is recognized in their contribution to our collective effort. It is likely that we will have assignments submitted electronically via email for ease of compiling our master plan.

Communicating with and including people outside the class in the student farm:

The responsibility to plan for the student farm is ours; however there are others who for whatever reason are unable to be involved with this class who may want to be involved with the farm. Technically the farm is the responsibility of the official student group WUSA (What's Up in Sustainable Agriculture), as a member of the class you automatically gain membership to the student organization.

Along with planning for the farm we also need to keep non-class members (students, faculty, staff and potential partner organizations) in the loop. Currently a time (Mondays 2:30 – 3:30pm) and place (408 Hayes Hall) have been set up as an interaction time between students in the class and the broader university community, we will need to determine how best to either use this time or find other ways to communicate with those interested outside of class.

What's Up in Sustainable Agriculture? (WUSA) Seminars:

WUSA is an official Registered student group at the University of Minnesota. Current Co-Chairs include: Jared Ashling, David Campbell and Kelly Paulson. WUSA officially meets as a seminar series on Wednesdays from 12 -1 pm in 306 Borlaug Hall. The seminars focus on a broad range of topics related to sustainable agriculture. Attendance is encouraged purely on a for your information purpose.

University of Minnesota Policy on Scholastic Misconduct:

Scholastic Misconduct is broadly defined as "any act that violates the rights of another student in academic work or that involves misrepresentation of your own work." Scholastic dishonesty includes, (but is not necessarily limited to): cheating on assignments or examinations; plagiarizing which means misrepresenting as your own work any part of work done by another; submitting the same paper or substantially similar papers, to meet the requirements of more than one course without approval and consent of all instructors concerned; depriving another student of necessary course materials; or interfering with another student's work.

Disabilities Statement:

It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to student who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact one of the instructors early in the quarter to discuss their individual needs for accommodations.

Class Outline (Subject to change):

Week #	Date:	Class Theme
1	1/21/05	Introduction to the Student Farm Planning Course
2	1/28/05	Introductions to Class Participants
3	2/4/05	Farm History & Current Situation
4	2/11/05	Mission, Vision & Goals
5	2/18/05	Organic Certification
6	2/25/05	Marketing & Products: Business Strategy
7	3/4/05	Landscape Design
8	3/11/05	Production, Management, Distribution, Packaging, Storage, Pricing, and Promotion
	3/18/05	SPRING BREAK
9	3/25/05	Production, Management, Distribution, Packaging, Storage, Pricing, and Promotion
10	4/1/05	Production, Management, Distribution, Packaging, Storage, Pricing, and Promotion
11	4/8/05	Resources & People
12	4/15/05	Resources & People
13	4/22/05	Resources & People
14	4/29/05	Implementation & Beyond

A AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION (APA) FORMAT (5th Edition)

This crib sheet is a guide to the APA style. It is not intended to replace the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th edition. Only selected citations were chosen for inclusion here. For other examples see

the printed Manual. Use this only as a reference.

Journal Article, One Author

Simon, A. (2000). Perceptual comparisons through the mind's eye. *Memory & Cognition*, 23, 635-647.

Journal Article, Two Authors

Becker, M. B., & Rozek, S. J. (1995). Welcome to the energy crisis. *Journal of Social Issues*, 32, 230-343.

Magazine Article, one author

Garner, H. J. (1997, July). Do babies have a universal song? *Psychology Today*, 102, 70-77.

Newspaper Article, No Author

Study finds free care used more. (1982, April 3). *Wall Street Journal*, pp. A1, A25.

Book, Two Authors

Strunk, W., & White, E. B. (1979). *The elements of style* (3rd ed.). New York: Macmillan.

Edited Book

Letheridge, S., & Cannon, C. R. (Eds.). (1980). *Bilingual education*. New York: Praeger.

ERIC Document

Peterson, K. (2002). *Welfare-to-work programs: Strategies for success* (Report No. EDO-JC-02-04). Washington D.C.:
Office of Educational Research and Improvement. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED467985)

Entry in an Encyclopedia

Imago. (2000). In *World Book Encyclopedia* (Vol. 10, p. 79). Chicago: World Book Encyclopedia.

Report from a Private Organization

Kimberly-Clark. (2002). *Kimberly-Clark (Annual Report)*. Dallas, TX: Author.

Dissertation

Olsen, G. W. (1985). *Campus child care within the public supported post-secondary educational institutions in the state of Wisconsin (dare care)* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1985). *Dissertations Abstracts International*, 47/03, 783.

Videotape

Mass, J. B. (Producer), & Gluck, D. H. (Director). (1979). *Deeper into hypnosis*. (Motion picture). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Electronic Formats

Internet Article Based on Print Source: The citation is done as if it were a paper article and then followed by a retrieval statement that identifies the date retrieved and source.

Sahelian, R. (1999, January). Achoo! *Better Nutrition*, 61, 24. Retrieved September 17, 2001, from Academic Index.

Web Page with Private Organization as Author

Midwest League. (2003). *Pitching, individual records*. Retrieved October 1, 2003, from <http://www.midwestleague.com/indivpitching.html>

Chapter or Section in an Internet Document

Thompson, G. (2003). *Youth coach handbook*. In *Joe soccer*. Retrieved September 17, 2001, from <http://www.joesoccer.com/menu.html>

Web page, Government Author

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. (2001). *Glacial habitat restoration areas*. Retrieved September 18, 2001, from <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/hunt/hra.htm>

Company Information from Aggregated Database

Ripon Pickle Company Inc. (company profile). (2003). Retrieved September 18, 2002, from Business and Company Resource Center.

Ingersoll-Rand Company Limited (company profile). (2004). In Hoovers. Retrieved April 29, 2004, from Lexis-Nexis.

NOTE: If you cannot determine the author(s), the source's sponsor, and the date the Web site was last updated, you should question the source's credibility.

Personal Communications

Personal communications may be things such as email messages, interviews, speeches, and telephone conversations. Because the information is not retrievable they should not appear in the reference list. They should look as follows:
Example: J. Burnitz (personal communications, September 20, 2000) indicated that or In a recent interview (J. Burnitz, personal communication, September 20, 2000) I learned that

Reference Citations in Text

To refer to an item in the list of references from the text, an author-date method should be used. That is, use the surname of the author (without suffixes) and the year of the publication in the text at appropriate points.
Example: Researchers have indicated that more is expected of students in higher education (Hudson, 2001) and secondary education (Taylor & Hornung, 2002).

One author

Issac (2001) indicated in his research.
In a recent study, research indicates (Isaac, 2001)

Two or more authors

When a work has two authors, always cite both names every time the reference occurs. For works with three, four, or five authors, cite all authors the first time the reference occurs. In subsequent citations, include only the last name of the first author followed by et al.

When a work has no authors

Cite in text the first few words of what appears first for the entry on the list (usually the title) and the year.

Specific parts of a source

(Yount & Molitor, 1982, p. 19)
(Cooper, 1983, chap. 4)

Works with no author

("New Student Center," 2002)

For more detailed information to illustrate the use of parenthetical citations, consult this University of Wisconsin page.
<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocAPACitations.html>

Some general rules for APA reference pages:

- Begin the reference list on a new page. The page begins with the word References (Reference if there is only one), centered in the top, middle of the page, using both upper and lower case. If the references take up more than one page, do not re-type the word References on sequential pages, simply continue your list.
- Use one space after all punctuation.
- The first line of the reference is flush left. Lines thereafter are indented as a group, a few spaces, to create a hanging indentation.
- Double space between citations. Single space in the citations.
- Use italics for titles of books, newspapers, magazines, and journals.
- References cited in text must appear in the reference list; conversely, each entry in the reference list must be cited in text.
- Arrange entries in alphabetical order
- Give in parentheses the year the work was published. For magazines and newspapers, give the year followed by the month and date, if any. If no date is available, write (n.d.)
- Give volume numbers for magazines, journals, and newsletters. Include the issue number for journals if and only if each issue begins on page 1.

Please forward any comments or suggestions regarding this crib sheet to Owen Williams.

Prepared by Owen Williams, University of Minnesota, Crookston

Last updated October 30, 2003

Each Week's Game Plan ~ Lesson Plans

The biggest challenge of this class was the huge amount that we not only wanted but needed to accomplish in 14 weeks. In January 2005, the student farm existed as an undeveloped acre of land that had been seeded in a winter rye cover crop. During the following fourteen weeks we needed to do everything from designing the layout, to figuring out how we would pay for supplies, to getting and starting seeds. In addition, the students and faculty involved wanted to see this project continue indefinitely into the future so building a strong foundation of mission, vision statements with goals and objectives was also important. We also felt that finding and utilizing partners to strengthen our position in the university and community was crucial to our farm's success.

For organizing all the tasks that needed to be complete, I utilized a lesson plan format based loosely on the format taught in Agricultural Education at the University of Minnesota. For the class it was adapted by adding the column "Lead by" which helps designate who is facilitating that part of the course. Lesson Plans for weeks 1 and 2 have been included in this section. Lesson plans for weeks 3 through 14 can be found in the appendix section.

Each lesson plan also includes the assignments both given and due that week, a list of the handouts given and the plan for the week. In good pedagogic form, I typically wrote up a rough schedule of topics for the day on the board for everyone to see. As you will see, each week five to fifteen minutes of the ninety minute class was dedicated to announcements which included things I wanted the participants to be aware of and things they wanted to share with the class. Generally announcements included relevant upcoming seminars, conferences and workshops, and deadlines for funding opportunities for internships or research projects.

This publication is divided into sections by the thematic tasks that we sought to accomplish. In many cases one task took several weeks and would often be started one week and come back to repeatedly until the class and faculty felt the task had been accomplished. Other tasks could have been attempted and some students were disappointed that we didn't spend more time on some things than others. When a student would approach me with concerns about where we were headed or how we were going to tackle a topic, I would often have them help me plan that section out or lead the discussion in class on that area. Originally I had planned not to start addressing the vision section until the fifth or sixth week, however a couple students who came forward after class to help plan that section thought it would help everyone to get on the same page if we started the visioning process as soon as possible. So we started that process the next week.

Another reason for disjointedness that should be expected was that we were often dependent on a student to come to class prepared to share where they were with an aspect of the plan, most of the time they were prepared but not always. Originally Mike McClellan, the executive assistant in charge of the research plots was schedule to come during week three, he ended up being unable to make it until week four which meant adjusting the agenda for week three at the last minute.

Lesson Plan: Week 1 Introduction to the Course

Week 1
Lesson Plan

Assignments Given:

- Introduction Page on 8 1/2 X 11" sheet (in class)
- Week 1 survey – (email back or turn in today)
- Have students look over Tasks 1 & 2 in BSBP

Handouts:

- The Course Syllabus
- Consensus Building
- Small Group Consensus Building

Time	Topic / Activity	Information	Lead by
5 minutes	Quick Introductions	Name & Major	Courtney
10 minutes	Syllabus	Instructors, Course Objectives, Textbook, Grading, Submitting info / Citing Sources, Communicating with the outside world, WUSA, Scholastic Misconduct, Disabilities Statement	Courtney
5 minutes	Student Farm Power Point Presentation		Courtney
2 minutes	Johnson Scholarship Plug	Applications due February 24th, Students can apply, as a team, each student needs a section of research	Courtney
3 minutes	MOSES Conference Info	February 25th & 26th Lacrosse, WI; Registration costs: 2 days \$160, 1 day \$85; Scholarship applications & Volunteer hours are due by January 21st. Rooms must be reserved by Jan 22nd.	Courtney
10 minutes	Consensus Building Model	See Handout	Courtney
45 minutes	Consensus Building Activity	Communicating with Larger Group & Submitting Information From groups (5 groups, 3 students each, 2 on submission format, 3 on communicating Brain storm ideas; Formulate plans, prepare presentations	Courtney
10 minutes	Wrap Up	Prepare introductions sheets	Paul
		Photos	Courtney
		Week 1 survey, hand in or email back	
Total Time: 90 Minutes			

Lesson Plan: Week 2 Introductions to Each Other

Assignments Given:

- None

Assignments Due:

- Week 1 survey

Handouts:

- Packet of Student Introduction Sheets

Week 2
Lesson Plan

Time	Topic / Activity	Information	Lead by
75 minutes	Introductions	Photocopy everyone's 8X11 sheet into a packet + Photo of each person (4 minutes / person)	Paul
10 minutes	Brainstorm Information for Farm History & Current Situation	Identify Groups	Courtney & Small Groups
5 minutes	Announcements	Student Announcements WUSA Seminar Sustag Listserv Info Growing Communities Workshop in Des Moines March 18th -19th	Courtney
Total Time: 90 Minutes			

Note: Lesson Plans for Weeks 3-14 can be found on page 126 of the appendix.

Building a Sustainable Business Plan Tasks

Task One: Identify Values- What's Important to You?

Task Two: Farm History and Current Situation- What Have You Got?

Task Three: Vision, Mission and Goals- Where Do You Want to Go?

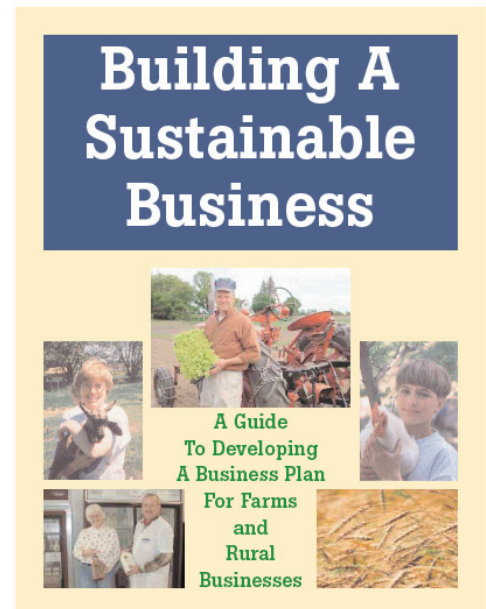
Task Four: Strategic Planning and Evaluation- What Routes Can You Take to Get Where You Want to Go?

Task Five: Present, Implement and Monitor Your Business Plan- Which Route Will You Take and How Will You Check Your Progress Along the Way?

In developing the student farm planning course we wanted to find a resource that would help guide us through the process of creating a sustainable farm. Initially we found many resources for either starting school farms or for creating business plans for farms. The guides for school farms often were designed for grade school age students and adult teachers. The traditional business plan guides didn't address the aspects of sustainability that we were interested in. *The Building a Sustainable Business Guide* takes a business approach while addressing the aspects of sustainability that we desired.

The business planning guide is laid out in such a way that it is meant to be used by individual farms to address the areas of marketing, operations, human resources, and finances. The guide also addressed a number of issues that we had not even considered like distribution of products and storage issues. It has been successfully used by groups of farmers going through it together in a round table fashion in the past and utilizes examples of four different farms going through the process throughout the book. It also includes many ready to use forms for laying out a sustainable business plan. One obstacle was that it was set up for use by a farm that was already in business and drew upon previous years' experience, in those cases we used a what if method to address those issues.

Our realistic goal for the class was to at least address tasks 1-4. We felt that this would at least give us a solid plan for the first season, with the idea that the course would happen again the following spring and that we could then go back and evaluate how we did and where we wanted or needed to go next.



At the beginning of the class we wanted to empower students to make decisions about the farm that would both meet their needs and desires and create a solid foundation for the farm. One of the key aspects in consensus building is that everyone gets an equal part in decision making. Our process, however did not account for people in the administration outside the class. The way in which we included those voices and opinions was to on occasion invite them into the class so that the participants could connect the names and faces. We then had the faculty advisors represent these people in our discussions. The advisors in effect had veto power of any ideas that might conflict with the ideas of the administrations, who without their support our existence was on perilous ground. For the most part, the ideas the class came up were in line with the administrations. One exception was the idea of growing food just for the interns to eat. The administration felt that the student farm needed to be more than just community garden plots of students to grow food for themselves. This input helped the class to focus on both research and marketing of products in the end.

Creating a Master Plan

The first day of class I came in with an empty 3" 3 ring binder and said essentially, "Here's our master plan- right now it's empty. Our job in the next 14 weeks is to fill it up." Filling it up was a slow journey that gained steam though out the semester as assignments came in. We started out with dividers for Logistics; Farm History; Current Situation; Mission, Goals, and Objectives; and such. The syllabus which was passed out on the first day of class contained sections on citing sources using the APA (American Psychological Association) format and submitting information to the master plan.

One of the first two tasks used during the consensus building exercises was figuring out the format for submitting documents into the master plan was. Students determined the format for the master plan, however they didn't all follow it to a T. It did become a common standard for all submissions.

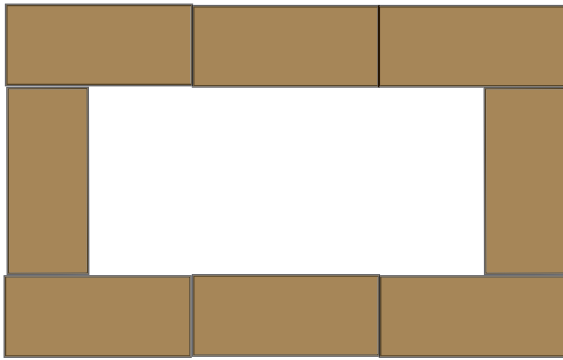
Utilizing Technology

As an official University of Minnesota course, we had access to create a Webct Vista website for the Student Farm Planning Class. For each week a module was created on the home page to contain the handouts and information on the activities for that week. Early on in the semester, discussion topics were started both by instructors and students to generate ideas and discussion threads on various topics. This project required a lot of brainstorming and discussion, the website allowed students to actively engage in the class outside of the actual class meeting time. Students also completed an assignment online and were able to check out submissions to the master plan both before and after they had been approved by the class.

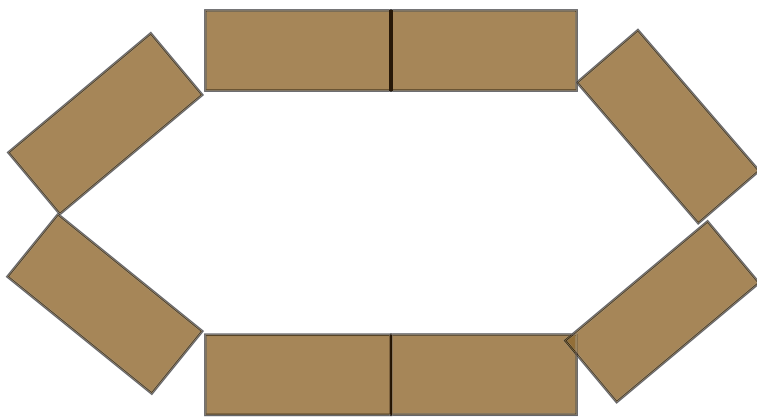
Examples of Discussion Threads Online:

- Brainstorm List of Potential Crops
- Current & Future Partners
- Vision - Mission - Goals
- Revised Guiding Principle Statements
- Comments on Goals and Objectives
- Research Ideas
- Organizational Structure
- Resources, Articles, References
- Planting in the Greenhouse

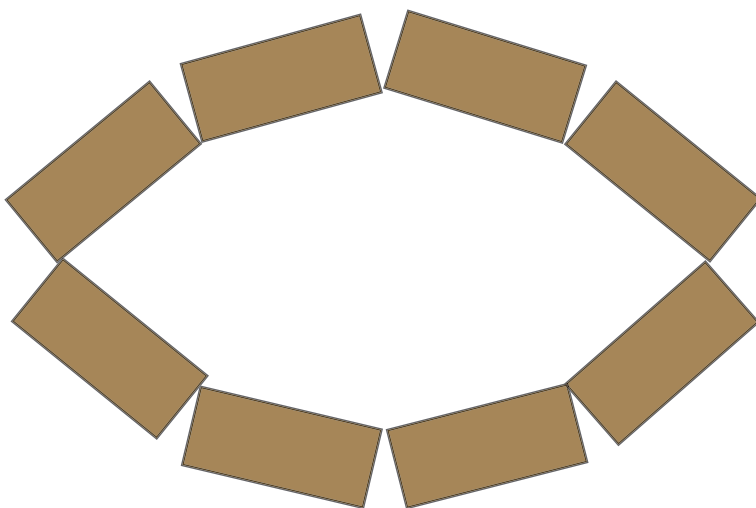
Classroom Layout



Typically educators are given a room and are left to make the best of it. Ideally our hope was to be in a Greenhouse Teaching Classroom, logistically that never worked out. Instead we ended up in a medium sized rectangular classroom that ended up working well for the 21 participants. The tables in the classroom were rectangular and comfortably accommodated about 2.5 participants each. Rather than having the tables lined up all facing one direction as in typical classes, initially we put the tables in a large rectangular shape in the middle of the room for our consensus building discussion purposes.



This layout worked okay initially most people could see each other, although seeing the person two or three people down from you was often difficult. It seemed early on that often students who couldn't see the person talking would engage in side conversations with their neighbors, which was both annoying and distracting to everyone. After a couple of weeks we switched the layout of desks to a more circular style, which helped a little, but same problem persisted. Eventually we tried a diamond shape layout of the desks which proved to maximum participant view-age, and kept side conversations down to a minimum.



It's also interesting to note that students were encouraged to sit in a different place each week, as to give them a new perspective and to keep their comfort zone continually shifting.