

## **TLI Grant Report—English 202—Defining Sustainability Video**

Submitted by Christian Weisser

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Defining Sustainability TLI Grant project was to create a multimedia format to introduce students to the concept of sustainability. Over the past two semesters, I have taught an English 202 course which requires students to write about and critically engage the ways in which the term “sustainability” is defined and enacted in a wide range of public, private, and governmental texts. Students begin the course by reading scholarly articles defining sustainability (see Dixon and Fallon; Holden; Killingsworth; Vos). However, these definitions are nebulous and often contradictory, and students had difficulty grasping the key concepts of sustainability.

The goal for this grant project, then, became the creation of a video that would explain the concept of sustainability for students in my current and future courses as well as for other audiences interested in the term. The video would seek a “middle ground” definition of sustainability, presenting its historical grounding, current uses, and common implementation.

### **Project Design**

At the initial meeting with Mary Ann Mengel, the project manager for the grant, we discussed various formats for creating videos, general guidelines for the project, and a tentative timeline to follow. We discussed an instructional template to follow as well as “best practices” in video creation. I began my research by analyzing the many videos about sustainability available through Youtube and Vimeo. I soon discovered a series of instructional videos by VSauce that would become my model. These videos consist of filmed narration on a black background, interspersed with video clips and animations. They take complex subjects and simplify them for public audiences—exactly what I had in mind for my video project.

At about this time, I was approached by Professional Writing major Erik Lewis, who had an interest in sustainability as well as some experience creating videos. Together we spent time planning our video, writing storyboards for each sequence. Our script was loosely based on the introduction to my newest textbook—a sustainability reader for introductory college-level writing courses. Erik and I planned the video sequencing, determining which segments would feature me as the narrator, and which would show video or animation. We decided upon a relatively even split, with a changing “scene” approximately every 20 seconds to maintain viewer interest.

Next, we shot the video sequences using an adapted version of the Media Commons filming room equipped with a green screen. Erik filmed me as I delivered the narration, and we began editing this video in Media Commons using Final Cut Pro software. Our raw footage was approximately 15 minutes long, and we edited the narration to 9 minutes that would appear in the final video. We next incorporated approximately 50 Creative Commons videos and images that we believed captured the essence of the narration and helped to explain the concept of sustainability. We selected a free-use song for the background, edited the various segments, and prepared the video for release. Mary Ann

Mengel helped us to further prepare the video at this stage by providing useful information about closed captioning and attributions. The final version of the video was published in December 2014 at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rmQby7adocM>

## **Implementation**

Creating the video was a far more time-intensive project than I had imagined. The project was completed before the Spring 2015 semester, and I incorporated it into the instruction in a section of English 202 consisting of 20 students. I had students read several essays and articles about sustainability before viewing the video definition of sustainability. Next, I had those students complete an online survey assessing their understanding of sustainability before and after viewing the video. The survey also asked some questions about the length, style, and format of the video.

The survey data is listed at the bottom of this document. The survey reveals some interesting statistics, confirming the value of multimedia formats in explaining complex definitions to undergraduate student-writers. For instance, Q1 and Q2 demonstrate growth in understanding of the concept after viewing the video—student self-evaluation rose from a mean of 5.39 to 8.22 after viewing. The overall effectiveness and the use of video (Q3 and Q4) both rated a mean score of 8.72. Most students (77.78%) evaluated the length of the video (8 minutes) as “about right”—a surprising statistic, since many YouTube videos are shorter, approximately 2-4 minute average. Q5, Q6, and Q7 provide additional useful descriptions of student evaluations of strengths and weaknesses of the video, though Q8 provides evidence that %100 of survey respondents would recommend the video to other students interested in definitions of sustainability.

## **Conclusion**

The creation of this video was at times frustrating and time-consuming, yet the final product was highly rewarding. Software and computer issues can create challenges in lengthy video production, and I came away from the project feeling as if I have much more to learn about video editing. I hope to continue to learn about this fascinating method for delivering instructional content. I will use this video in future courses—most notably, it will become one of the introductory assignments in my Summer 2015 section of English 202, which will be delivered online through Penn State World Campus. I benefitted from the help of Mary Ann Mengel as well as from student Erik Lewis, and I plan to create more instructional videos in the future.

## Works Cited

Dixon, John and Louise Fallon. "The Concept of Sustainability: Origins, Extensions, and Usefulness for Policy." *Society and Natural Resources* 2: 73-84. 1989.

Hajer, M. and Fischer, F. *The politics of environmental discourse: Ecological modernization and the policy process*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1999.

Holden, Meg. "The Rhetoric of Sustainability: Perversity, Futility, Jeopardy?" *Sustainability* 2: 645-659. 2010.

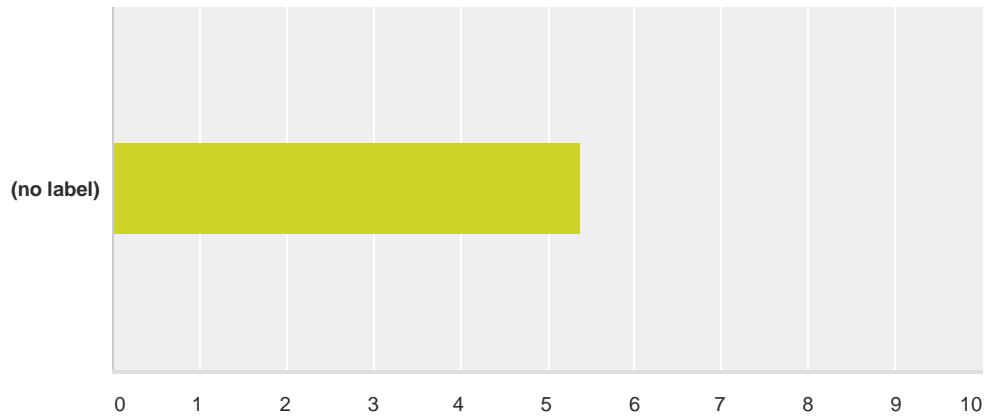
Killingsworth, Jimmie. "What's Wrong with Sustainability?: A Rhetorical Question" Paper delivered at Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. Cincinnati, Ohio. September 2011.

Vos, Robert. "Defining Sustainability: A Conceptual Orientation" *Journal of Chemical Technology and Biotechnology* 82: 334-339. 2007.

## Sustainability Survey Results

**Q1 How would you rate your level of understanding of sustainability BEFORE you viewed the video "What is Sustainability?" (10 is highest level of understanding)**

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



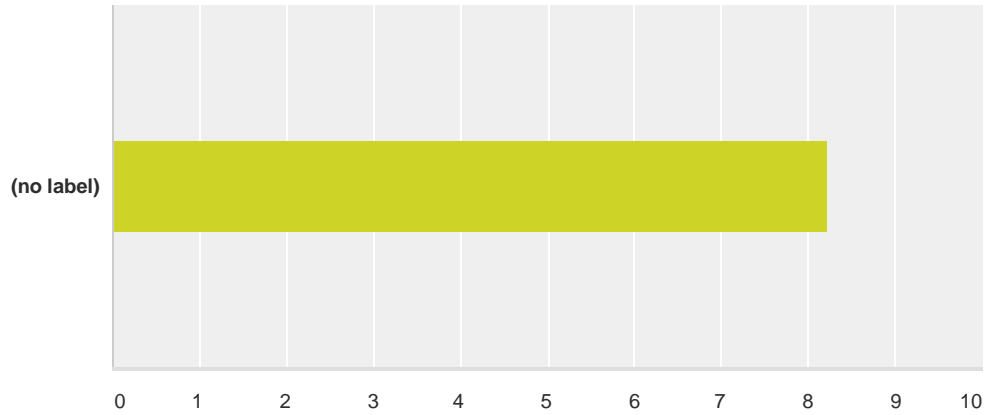
	Lowest (1)	(no label) (2)	(no label) (3)	(no label) (4)	(no label) (5)	(no label) (6)	(no label) (7)	(no label) (8)	(no label) (9)	Highest (10)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	5.56% 1	0.00% 0	11.11% 2	22.22% 4	27.78% 5	5.56% 1	0.00% 0	11.11% 2	16.67% 3	0.00% 0	18	5.39

### Basic Statistics

<b>Minimum</b> 1.00	<b>Maximum</b> 9.00	<b>Median</b> 5.00	<b>Mean</b> 5.39	<b>Standard Deviation</b> 2.26
------------------------	------------------------	-----------------------	---------------------	-----------------------------------

## Q2 How would you rate your current level of understanding of sustainability, AFTER viewing the video? (10 is the highest)

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



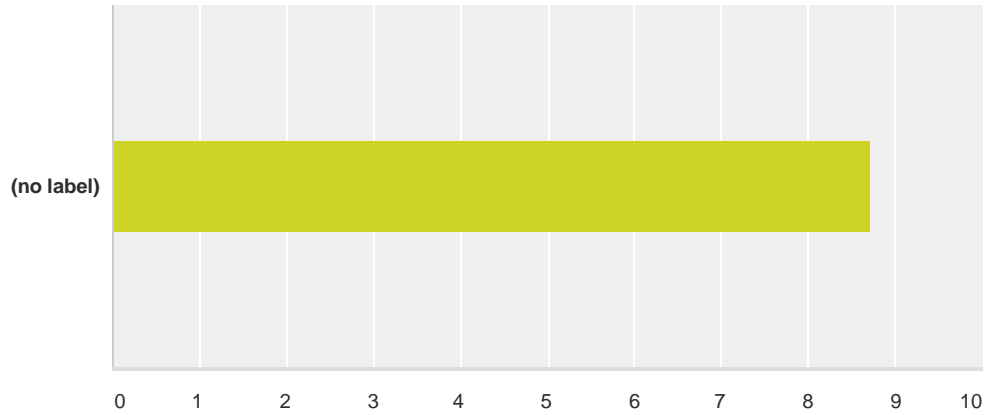
	Lowest (1)	(no label) (2)	(no label) (3)	(no label) (4)	(no label) (5)	(no label) (6)	(no label) (7)	(no label) (8)	(no label) (9)	Highest (10)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5.56% 1	5.56% 1	5.56% 1	38.89% 7	33.33% 6	11.11% 2	18	8.22

### Basic Statistics

<b>Minimum</b> 5.00	<b>Maximum</b> 10.00	<b>Median</b> 8.00	<b>Mean</b> 8.22	<b>Standard Deviation</b> 1.23
------------------------	-------------------------	-----------------------	---------------------	-----------------------------------

### Q3 How would you evaluate the overall effectiveness of this video in providing a definition of sustainability?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0

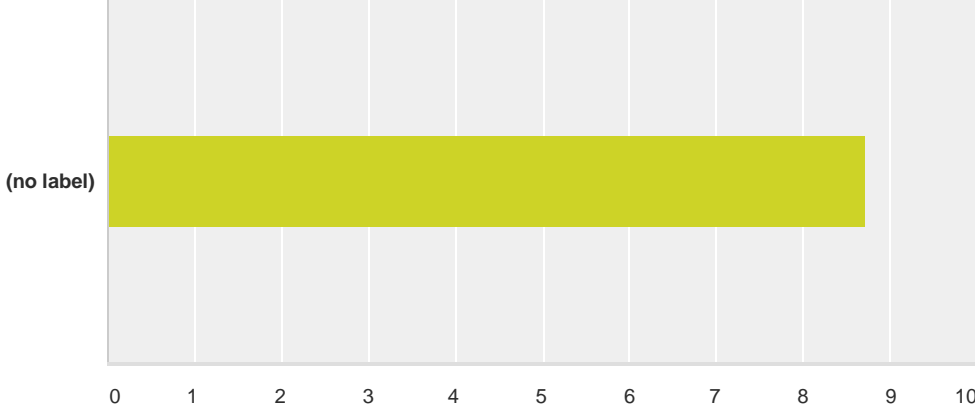


	Lowest (1)	(no label) (2)	(no label) (3)	(no label) (4)	(no label) (5)	(no label) (6)	(no label) (7)	(no label) (8)	(no label) (9)	Highest (10)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5.56% 1	5.56% 1	5.56% 1	16.67% 3	27.78% 5	38.89% 7	18	8.72

Basic Statistics				
<b>Minimum</b> 5.00	<b>Maximum</b> 10.00	<b>Median</b> 9.00	<b>Mean</b> 8.72	<b>Standard Deviation</b> 1.45

### Q4 How would you rate the use of images and videos in conveying information about sustainability? (10 is the highest)

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0

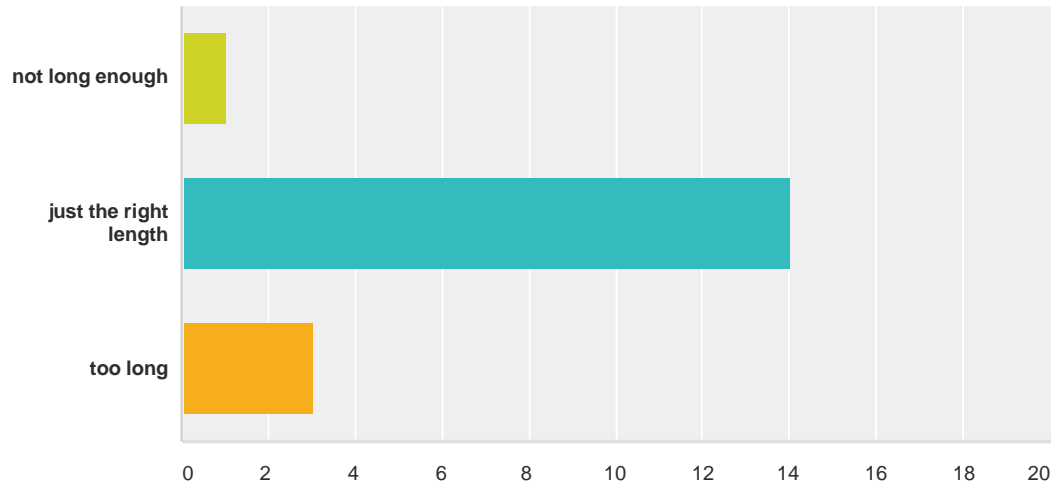


	Lowest (1)	(no label) (2)	(no label) (3)	(no label) (4)	(no label) (5)	(no label) (6)	(no label) (7)	(no label) (8)	(no label) (9)	Highest (10)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5.56% 1	0.00% 0	5.56% 1	27.78% 5	27.78% 5	33.33% 6	18	8.72

Basic Statistics				
<b>Minimum</b> 5.00	<b>Maximum</b> 10.00	<b>Median</b> 9.00	<b>Mean</b> 8.72	<b>Standard Deviation</b> 1.28

## Q5 How do you rate the length of the video?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
not long enough (1)	5.56% 1
just the right length (2)	77.78% 14
too long (3)	16.67% 3
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>

Basic Statistics				
<b>Minimum</b> 1.00	<b>Maximum</b> 3.00	<b>Median</b> 2.00	<b>Mean</b> 2.11	<b>Standard Deviation</b> 0.46



## Q6 What did you find most interesting or useful about the video?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 1

#	Responses	Date
1	the visuals where helpful and made it even more interesting.	1/25/2015 7:28 PM
2	I feel that the three pillars gives an easy, understandable definition of sustainability.	1/25/2015 5:01 PM
3	100,000 Soda cans recycled each minutes	1/24/2015 4:58 PM
4	How they lay out Sustainability so that someone that has never heard of it before could understand.	1/23/2015 9:25 PM
5	It a good definition of the term sustainability and how it effects the common person.	1/23/2015 3:29 PM
6	I thought the recycling part of the video was most useful because it touched everyone's basic understanding of sustainability, recycling, and made the concept bigger.	1/23/2015 1:56 PM
7	The section where the video showed emphasis on what makes up sustainability.	1/23/2015 10:44 AM
8	The images used in the video were inviting and helped get the point across.	1/22/2015 10:22 PM
9	It just us the different prisms of sustainability.	1/22/2015 7:38 PM
10	The use of vivid imagery and emphasis on the real aspects and functionalities of what sustainability really is.	1/22/2015 7:06 PM
11	I found the charts, pictures, and videos helpful to see as you talked about them.	1/22/2015 4:19 PM
12	It gave a lot of details	1/22/2015 3:18 PM
13	The visual elements.	1/21/2015 11:52 PM
14	The imagery and great reference points use to support the argument.	1/21/2015 9:50 PM
15	Real life examples to connect concepts.	1/21/2015 3:48 PM
16	Transmitting the message of sustainability to everyday average Joe. It is very well organized and well done!	1/21/2015 3:46 PM
17	instructor narration	1/20/2015 5:11 PM

## Q7 Did you find anything confusing or irrelevant about the video?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	not really it was very easy to follow.	1/25/2015 7:28 PM
2	Nope!	1/25/2015 5:01 PM
3	Video pieced Sustainability together well	1/24/2015 4:58 PM
4	No	1/23/2015 9:25 PM
5	I found everything in the video easy to understand.	1/23/2015 3:29 PM
6	The video seemed pretty straight forward in my opinion. Nothing was confusing and everything seemed relevant.	1/23/2015 1:56 PM
7	No	1/23/2015 10:44 AM
8	Music was distracting. too loud.	1/22/2015 10:38 PM
9	I felt that the video was pretty spot on. I don't feel that it had unnecessary or confusing material.	1/22/2015 10:22 PM
10	only when i am highly intoxicated	1/22/2015 7:38 PM
11	No.	1/22/2015 7:06 PM
12	I did not find anything too confusing about the video, though I would suggest perhaps using a microphone for clearer audio quality.	1/22/2015 4:19 PM
13	It had the same tone throughout the video which made it hard to follow at times.	1/22/2015 3:18 PM
14	Not really, no.	1/21/2015 11:52 PM
15	Not at all	1/21/2015 9:50 PM
16	Without pauses between concepts it sometimes was hard to keep up with a new idea.	1/21/2015 3:48 PM
17	No, everything was well done, just refrain from reading from a script, make eye contact the whole time.	1/21/2015 3:46 PM
18	no, not at all	1/20/2015 5:11 PM

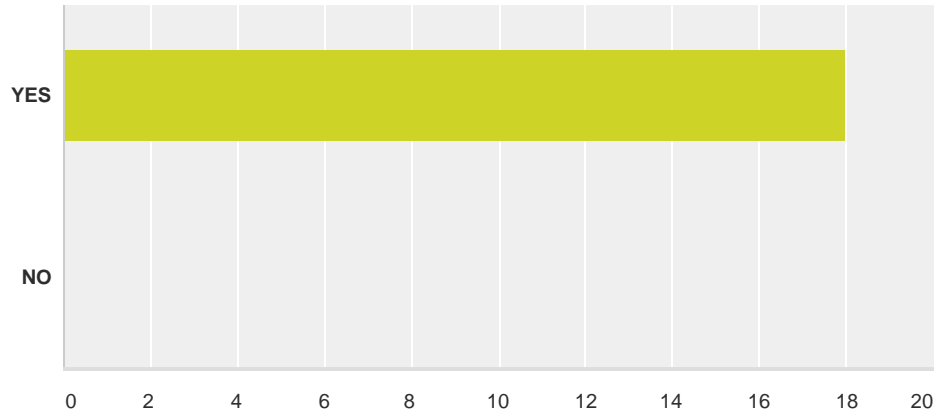
## Q8 What did you learn about sustainability by watching this video?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 1

#	Responses	Date
1	the three pillars and the need for them for us to continue our ways of life.	1/25/2015 7:28 PM
2	How important sustainability truly is and now it is going to effect us in the future.	1/25/2015 5:01 PM
3	It depends on 3 interlocking factors or pillars, economic, social, and environmental	1/24/2015 4:58 PM
4	Sustainability is mostly about Preserving our resources instead of exhausting them right away. And that there are 3 tiers of sustainability Economic, Social and Environmental.	1/23/2015 9:25 PM
5	I learned pretty everything I know from the video I had the wrong view on sustainability and this video corrected that.	1/23/2015 3:29 PM
6	I learned sustainability is more than being environmentally conscious, its more about creating an effective way of living than just trying to save the environment	1/23/2015 1:56 PM
7	I learned how important it really is to take care of our environment at all times	1/23/2015 10:44 AM
8	The 3 Pillars Idea	1/22/2015 10:38 PM
9	I learned that it's not so much about conserving the environment as much as it as at making sure that if we're going to use the environment, do so in a way that it won't be destroyed.	1/22/2015 10:22 PM
10	The three parts of sustainability.	1/22/2015 7:38 PM
11	How it impacts us as humans from a small scale to a large scale, and how it's relevant in our everyday life.	1/22/2015 7:06 PM
12	In this video, I learned that sustainability is dependent on three factors working together: social, economic, and environmental.	1/22/2015 4:19 PM
13	Sustainability can be more than just environmental!	1/22/2015 3:18 PM
14	The three pillars were really pressed into my memory after watching this video.	1/21/2015 11:52 PM
15	The connection/importance of sustainability beyond environmentalism to our every day life, social, and political conversation	1/21/2015 3:48 PM
16	The environment is not the only thing that requires sustainability, the culture aspect of sustainability is the core value, coming from your families.	1/21/2015 3:46 PM
17	the history and breadth of the subject	1/20/2015 5:11 PM

## Q9 Would you recommend this video to other students who are interested in the topic of sustainability?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



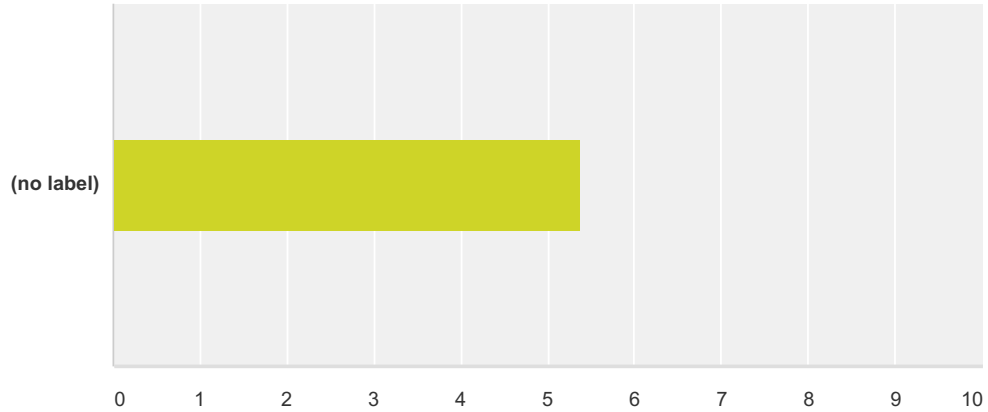
Answer Choices	Responses
YES (1)	100.00% 18
NO (2)	0.00% 0
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>

Basic Statistics				
<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00

# Sustainability Video Questionnaire

**Q1 How would you rate your level of understanding of sustainability BEFORE you viewed the video "What is Sustainability?" (10 is highest level of understanding)**

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



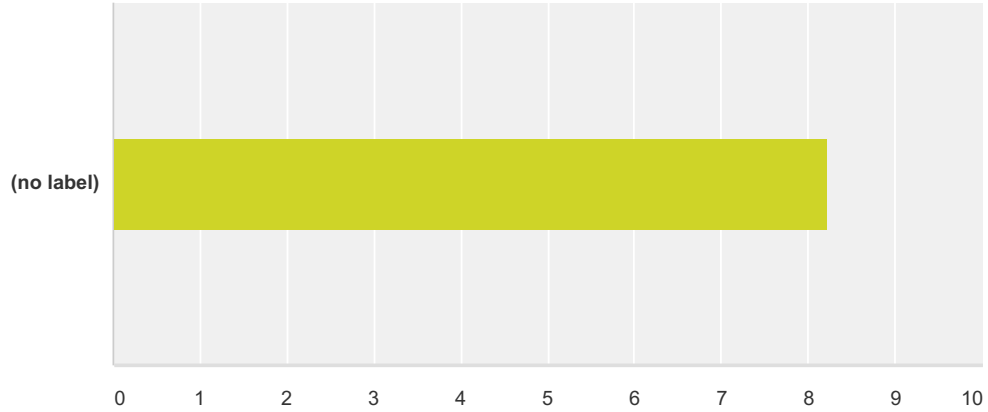
	Lowest (1)	(no label) (2)	(no label) (3)	(no label) (4)	(no label) (5)	(no label) (6)	(no label) (7)	(no label) (8)	(no label) (9)	Highest (10)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	5.56% 1	0.00% 0	11.11% 2	22.22% 4	27.78% 5	5.56% 1	0.00% 0	11.11% 2	16.67% 3	0.00% 0	18	5.39

Basic Statistics				
<b>Minimum</b> 1.00	<b>Maximum</b> 9.00	<b>Median</b> 5.00	<b>Mean</b> 5.39	<b>Standard Deviation</b> 2.26

# Sustainability Video Questionnaire

## Q2 How would you rate your current level of understanding of sustainability, AFTER viewing the video? (10 is the highest)

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



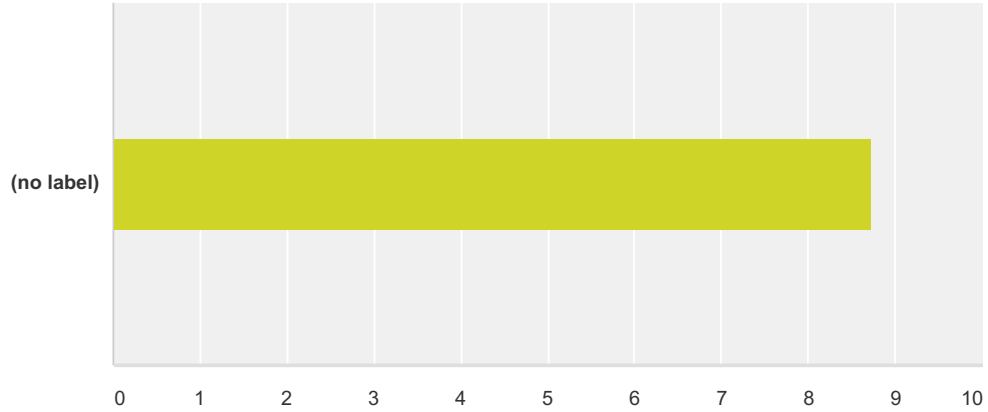
	Lowest (1)	(no label) (2)	(no label) (3)	(no label) (4)	(no label) (5)	(no label) (6)	(no label) (7)	(no label) (8)	(no label) (9)	Highest (10)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5.56% 1	5.56% 1	5.56% 1	38.89% 7	33.33% 6	11.11% 2	18	8.22

Basic Statistics				
<b>Minimum</b> 5.00	<b>Maximum</b> 10.00	<b>Median</b> 8.00	<b>Mean</b> 8.22	<b>Standard Deviation</b> 1.23

# Sustainability Video Questionnaire

## Q3 How would you evaluate the overall effectiveness of this video in providing a definition of sustainability?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



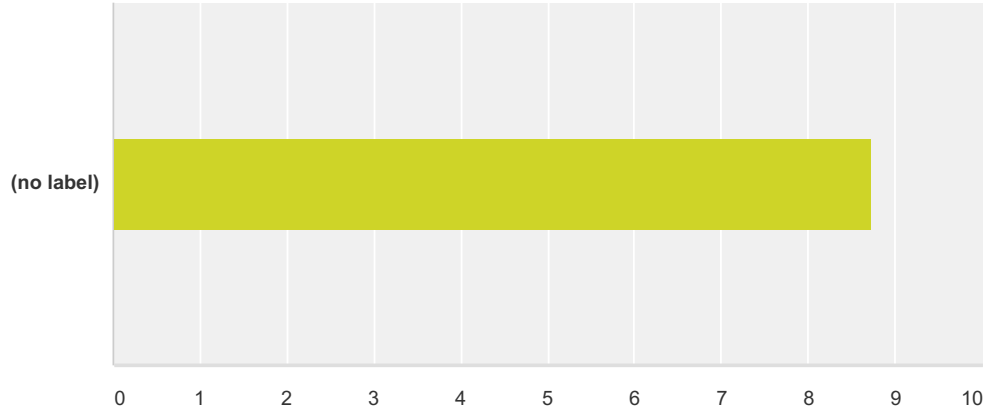
	Lowest (1)	(no label) (2)	(no label) (3)	(no label) (4)	(no label) (5)	(no label) (6)	(no label) (7)	(no label) (8)	(no label) (9)	Highest (10)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5.56% 1	5.56% 1	5.56% 1	16.67% 3	27.78% 5	38.89% 7	18	8.72

Basic Statistics				
<b>Minimum</b> 5.00	<b>Maximum</b> 10.00	<b>Median</b> 9.00	<b>Mean</b> 8.72	<b>Standard Deviation</b> 1.45

# Sustainability Video Questionnaire

## Q4 How would you rate the use of images and videos in conveying information about sustainability? (10 is the highest)

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



	Lowest (1)	(no label) (2)	(no label) (3)	(no label) (4)	(no label) (5)	(no label) (6)	(no label) (7)	(no label) (8)	(no label) (9)	Highest (10)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5.56% 1	0.00% 0	5.56% 1	27.78% 5	27.78% 5	33.33% 6	18	8.72

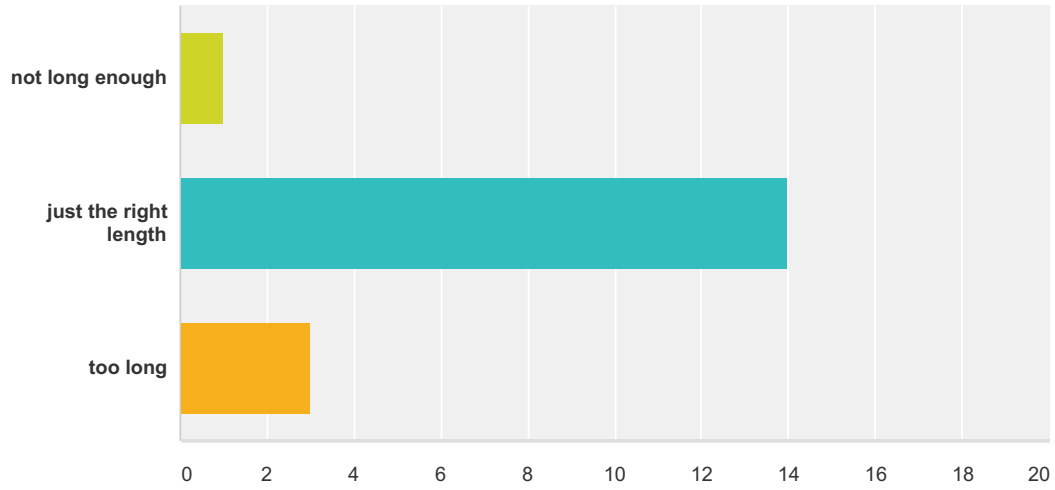
Basic Statistics				
<b>Minimum</b> 5.00	<b>Maximum</b> 10.00	<b>Median</b> 9.00	<b>Mean</b> 8.72	<b>Standard Deviation</b> 1.28



# Sustainability Video Questionnaire

## Q5 How do you rate the length of the video?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
not long enough (1)	5.56% 1
just the right length (2)	77.78% 14
too long (3)	16.67% 3
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>

Basic Statistics				
<b>Minimum</b> 1.00	<b>Maximum</b> 3.00	<b>Median</b> 2.00	<b>Mean</b> 2.11	<b>Standard Deviation</b> 0.46

## Sustainability Video Questionnaire

### Q6 What did you find most interesting or useful about the video?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 1

#	Responses	Date
1	the visuals where helpful and made it even more interesting.	1/25/2015 7:28 PM
2	I feel that the three pillars gives an easy, understandable definition of sustainability.	1/25/2015 5:01 PM
3	100,000 Soda cans recycled each minutes	1/24/2015 4:58 PM
4	How they lay out Sustainability so that someone that has never heard of it before could understand.	1/23/2015 9:25 PM
5	It a good definition of the term sustainability and how it effects the common person.	1/23/2015 3:29 PM
6	I thought the recycling part of the video was most useful because it touched everyone's basic understanding of sustainability, recycling, and made the concept bigger.	1/23/2015 1:56 PM
7	The section where the video showed emphasis on what makes up sustainability.	1/23/2015 10:44 AM
8	The images used in the video were inviting and helped get the point across.	1/22/2015 10:22 PM
9	It just us the different prisms of sustainability.	1/22/2015 7:38 PM
10	The use of vivid imagery and emphasis on the real aspects and functionalities of what sustainability really is.	1/22/2015 7:06 PM
11	I found the charts, pictures, and videos helpful to see as you talked about them.	1/22/2015 4:19 PM
12	It gave a lot of details	1/22/2015 3:18 PM
13	The visual elements.	1/21/2015 11:52 PM
14	The imagery and great reference points use to support the argument.	1/21/2015 9:50 PM
15	Real life examples to connect concepts.	1/21/2015 3:48 PM
16	Transmitting the message of sustainability to everyday average Joe. It is very well organized and well done!	1/21/2015 3:46 PM
17	instructor narration	1/20/2015 5:11 PM

## Sustainability Video Questionnaire

### Q7 Did you find anything confusing or irrelevant about the video?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	not really it was very easy to follow.	1/25/2015 7:28 PM
2	Nope!	1/25/2015 5:01 PM
3	Video pieced Sustainability together well	1/24/2015 4:58 PM
4	No	1/23/2015 9:25 PM
5	I found everything in the video easy to understand.	1/23/2015 3:29 PM
6	The video seemed pretty straight forward in my opinion. Nothing was confusing and everything seemed relevant.	1/23/2015 1:56 PM
7	No	1/23/2015 10:44 AM
8	Music was distracting. too loud.	1/22/2015 10:38 PM
9	I felt that the video was pretty spot on. I don't feel that it had unnecessary or confusing material.	1/22/2015 10:22 PM
10	only when i am highly intoxicated	1/22/2015 7:38 PM
11	No.	1/22/2015 7:06 PM
12	I did not find anything too confusing about the video, though I would suggest perhaps using a microphone for clearer audio quality.	1/22/2015 4:19 PM
13	It had the same tone throughout the video which made it hard to follow at times.	1/22/2015 3:18 PM
14	Not really, no.	1/21/2015 11:52 PM
15	Not at all	1/21/2015 9:50 PM
16	Without pauses between concepts it sometimes was hard to keep up with a new idea.	1/21/2015 3:48 PM
17	No, everything was well done, just refrain from reading from a script, make eye contact the whole time.	1/21/2015 3:46 PM
18	no, not at all	1/20/2015 5:11 PM

## Sustainability Video Questionnaire

### Q8 What did you learn about sustainability by watching this video?

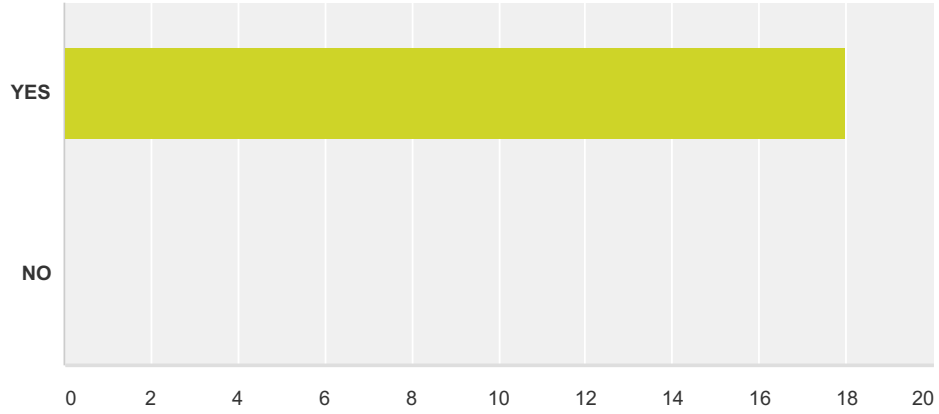
Answered: 17 Skipped: 1

#	Responses	Date
1	the three pillars and the need for them for us to continue our ways of life.	1/25/2015 7:28 PM
2	How important sustainability truly is and now it is going to effect us in the future.	1/25/2015 5:01 PM
3	It depends on 3 interlocking factors or pillars, economic, social, and environmental	1/24/2015 4:58 PM
4	Sustainability is mostly about Preserving our resources instead of exhausting them right away. And that there are 3 tiers of sustainability Economic, Social and Environmental.	1/23/2015 9:25 PM
5	I learned pretty everything I know from the video I had the wrong view on sustainability and this video corrected that.	1/23/2015 3:29 PM
6	I learned sustainability is more than being environmentally conscious, its more about creating an effective way of living than just trying to save the environment	1/23/2015 1:56 PM
7	I learned how important it really is to take care of our environment at all times	1/23/2015 10:44 AM
8	The 3 Pillars Idea	1/22/2015 10:38 PM
9	I learned that it's not so much about conserving the environment as much as it as at making sure that if we're going to use the environment, do so in a way that it won't be destroyed.	1/22/2015 10:22 PM
10	The three parts of sustainability.	1/22/2015 7:38 PM
11	How it impacts us as humans from a small scale to a large scale, and how it's relevant in our everyday life.	1/22/2015 7:06 PM
12	In this video, I learned that sustainability is dependent on three factors working together: social, economic, and environmental.	1/22/2015 4:19 PM
13	Sustainability can be more than just environmental!	1/22/2015 3:18 PM
14	The three pillars were really pressed into my memory after watching this video.	1/21/2015 11:52 PM
15	The connection/importance of sustainability beyond environmentalism to our every day life, social, and political conversation	1/21/2015 3:48 PM
16	The environment is not the only thing that requires sustainability, the culture aspect of sustainability is the core value, coming from your families.	1/21/2015 3:46 PM
17	the history and breadth of the subject	1/20/2015 5:11 PM

# Sustainability Video Questionnaire

## Q9 Would you recommend this video to other students who are interested in the topic of sustainability?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
YES (1)	100.00% 18
NO (2)	0.00% 0
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>

Basic Statistics				
<b>Minimum</b> 1.00	<b>Maximum</b> 1.00	<b>Median</b> 1.00	<b>Mean</b> 1.00	<b>Standard Deviation</b> 0.00