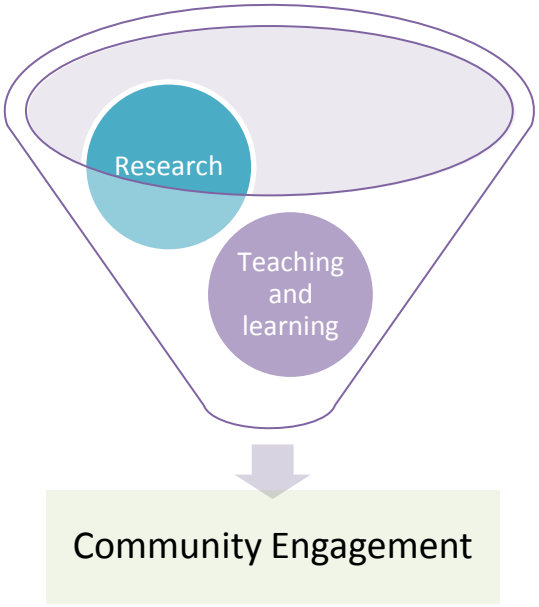


Engaging members of Civil Society in University Teaching and Learning

Examples from the Department of Conservation Ecology and Entomology, Stellenbosch University



Situating the **rationale**



Activities to date

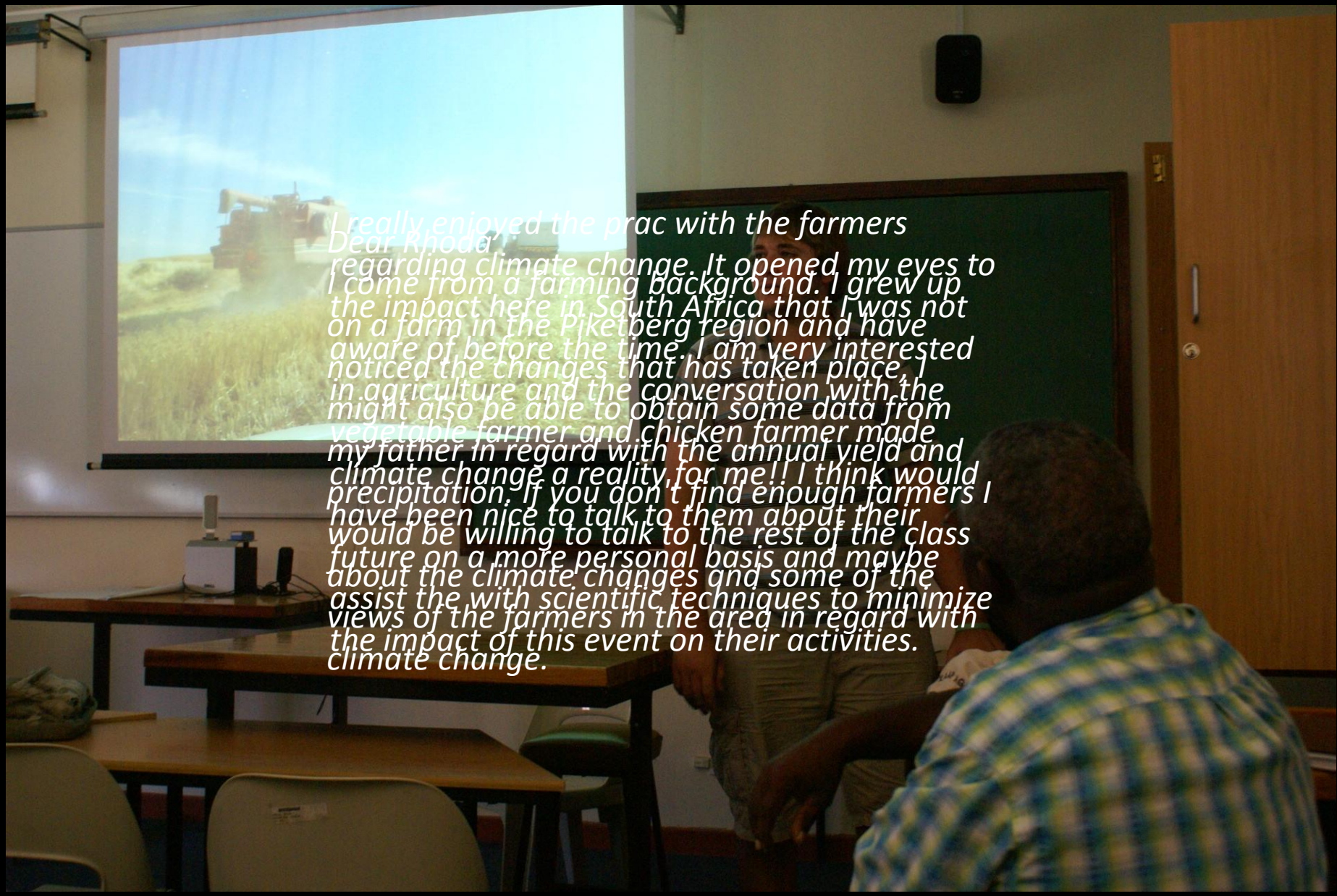
BWE424 – January 2010

- **Course:** Wildlife Management – Sustainable Harvesting of Terrestrial Species
- **Topic:** Harvesting of Fynbos wildflowers on the Agulhas Plain, Western Cape
- **No. of students**: 56
- **CS members: Harvesters** Ms Louise, Michelle, Isaac Appel and John, & **Farm Manager** Mr. Roger Bailey (Flower Valley Conservation Trust)

I learnt that it is mainly because of trust, experience and a love of the fynbos region that creates such a successful business and that the partnership between the 'owners', managers and the out-in-the-field workers is imperative. I also learnt that such a practice takes time to build and the core network system and clientele base are very important!

BWE424 – February 2010

- **Course:** Wildlife Management – Climate Change Adaptation
- **Topic:** Effects of Climate Change on management of natural resources amongst land-users in the Swartland, Western Cape
- **No. of students**: 56
- **CS members: Small-scale chicken farmer** Ms Houwa Cornelius (Dar-es-salaam Farm) & **small-scale mixed farmer** Mr. Kosie Syster (Leliefontein Farmers' Trust)


I really enjoyed the prac with the farmers regarding climate change. It opened my eyes to the impact here in South Africa that I was not aware of before the time. I am very interested in agriculture and the conversation with the vegetable farmer and chicken farmer made climate change a reality for me!! I think would have been nice to talk to them about their future on a more personal basis and maybe assist the with scientific techniques to minimize the impact of this event on their activities.
Dear Rhoda,
I come from a farming background. I grew up on a farm in the Piketberg region and have noticed the changes that has taken place, I might also be able to obtain some data from my father in regard with the annual yield and precipitation. If you don't find enough farmers I would be willing to talk to the rest of the class about the climate changes and some of the views of the farmers in the area in regard with climate change.

BWE212 – February 2010

- **Course:** Threats to Biodiversity – Sustainable development
- **Topic:** Sustainable agricultural practices – a case study with a local small-scale vegetable farmer
- **No. of students**: 46
- **CS members: Small-scale vegetable farmer** Mr. Eric Swartz (farms near Lynedoch). Original meeting facilitated by Mr. Gareth Haysom (**Programme Manager** – Agriculture and Livelihoods @ **Sustainability Institute**)

ThinkB4It'sGone

Stellenbosch Learners Think BIG for Biodiversity

Where are you at after Eric's talk today?

Posted by Rhoda on April 15, 2010 at 5:08pm

View Discussions

Today we met Eric Swarts, a small-scale farmer who farms along the Annandale Road on the outskirts of Stellenbosch. Eric talked to us today about his motivation for becoming (and staying) a small-scale farmer, his experiences as a sustainable agriculture practitioner, and his goals for the future.

- What are two things that stand out for your about Eric's visit today?
- When you heard that we would invite a local land-user to talk to you, what were your expectations?
- What surprised you most about what Eric had to say?
- How can we in the Department of Conservation Ecology and Entomology in the AgriScience Faculty at the University of Stellenbosch support farmers like Eric, if at all?

Please note that your input is due tomorrow afternoon at 15h00. Again, this input collectively counts 5% of your overall mark.

Thanks for your contributions after yesterday's lecture. There is lots to respond to in such a short time, and we certainly won't get to it all. But the idea is to use as much of what you offer for planning and delivering the next lecture. So thanks for your meaningful and insightful thoughts and suggestions.

We look forward to your responses on these next questions.

Regards,
Rhoda

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About

Rhoda created this Ning Network.

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Birthdays

There are no birthdays today


. I was impressed by Eric's talk, and his knowledge about sustainable agriculture, the biology of sa, and the conservation efforts. I didn't expect him to be able to talk about the microorganisms in the soil, and found the lecture and question session very interesting and informative.

Pros

- Pathogens are reduced in the soil
- Seeds of weeds are reduced
- Insect problems are reduced
- Odours are reduced
- Organic components and nutrients are stabilized
- Soil quality is improved
- Produces fertilizer

Cons

- High temperatures and good aeration is needed to control pathogens
- Additional bulking material may be needed
- Long processing time
- High maintenance
- Takes up space

Handy Compost Hints

Bad odours in compost indicate too much moisture. This **depletes the oxygen** content causing aerobic microorganisms to die. **Add dry ingredients** to rectify (eg. Straw, leaves, sawdust)

2

Carbon:Nitrogen Ratio should be 30:1. **Carbon** is found in **brown** components such as dry leaves, newspaper and straw. **Nitrogen** is found in **greens** such as grass cuttings and raw kitchen scraps

1, 2

Useful Additions:

- Adding small amounts of soil will introduce new microorganisms.
- Lime or ground limestone
- Manure
- Small amounts of wood ash
- Activators
- Urine

2, 6

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Sources
1.http://www.organicgardening.com/feature/0,7518,s1-5-21-112,00.html 2.http://www.journeytoforever.org/compost_make.html3.http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Compost4.http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8799.html5.http://www.herb.co.za/herb-gardening/compost.html6.http://www.mandowanga.co.za/articleprint.php?id=30
http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/engineer/facts/05-023.html
Images: 1.http://hotdogjam.files.wordpress.com/2008/11/compost_heap.jpg, 2. http://www.snikessanctuary.co.uk/images/bin-compost-large.jpg 3.http://frogandprincess.files.wordpress.com/2009/04/compost.jpg

Working towards sustainable agriculture:

composting with waste materials

Starting your own compost heap and the benefits thereof: an overview

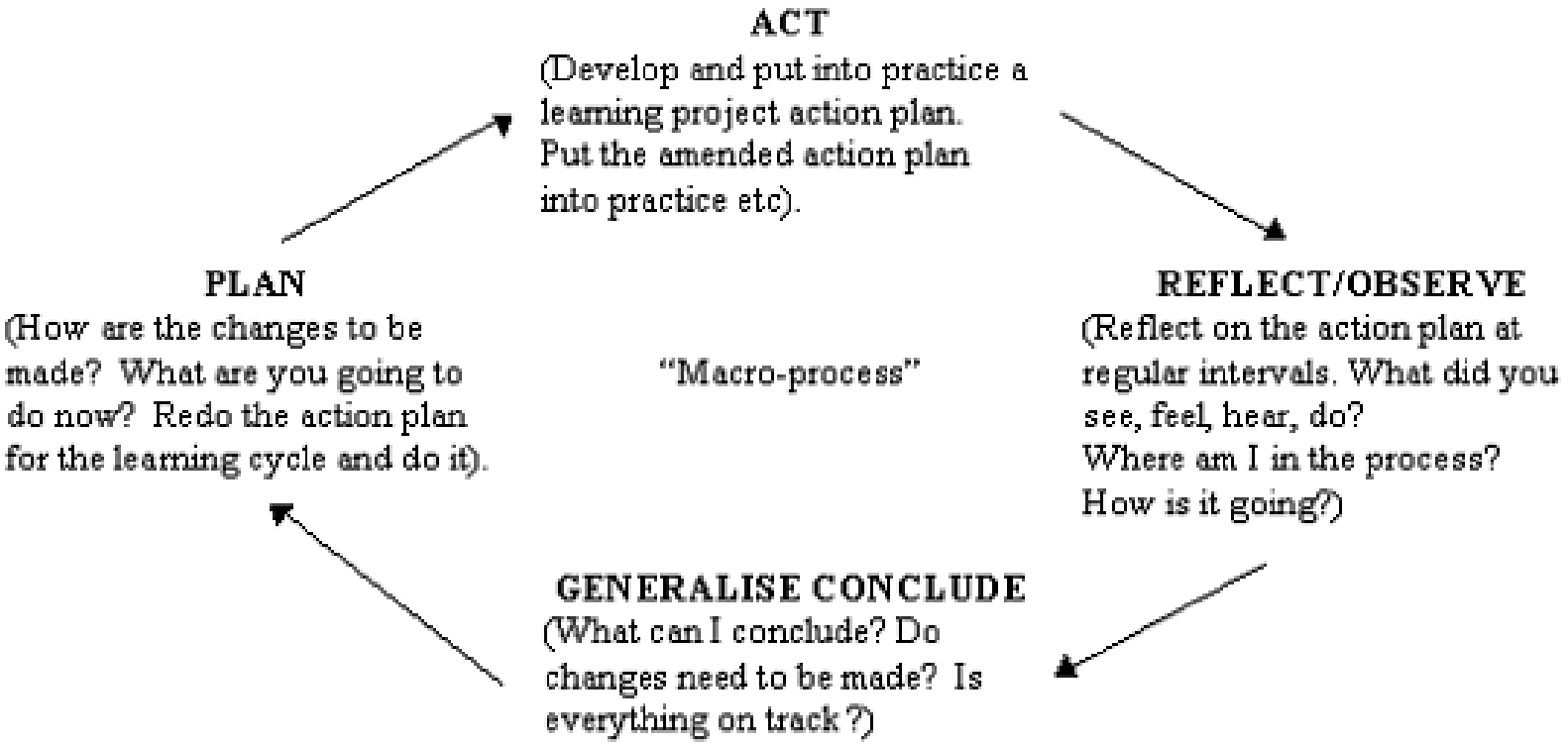
M. Duncan, J.Johnstone, K.Konings, A. Müller A. Wegener, L.Zondagh
- undergraduate students in the Department of Conservation Ecology & Entomology, University of Stellenbosch (2010)

BWE344 – July/August 2010

- **Course:** Introduction to Conservation Management
- **Topics:**
  - Philosophy, ethics and values in Conservation
  - Government influences on Conservation
  - Community influences on Conservation
- **No. of students**: 55
- **CS members:**
  - **Members of different faith communities** (Dr. Muhammed Ridtwaan Gallant – Muslim Judicial Council; Ms Tahirah Matthee – Baha'i rep., Swami Vidyananda – Ashrama Kutir
  - **Members of partners in the conservation sector** (Ms Gabriela Demergasso Pauw – Peace Parks Foundation; Mr. Martin Albertus – Cape Winelands District Municipality)
  - **Residents of local communities** (Dr. Leanne Seeliger, Ms Sidyayia, Mr.

Process

The Action Learning Cycle



Source: http://www.regional.org.au/au/apen/2005/2/2827_fellr.htm

Integrating the **Action Learning Cycle** with the **Timetable**

Point on the learning cycle	**Reflection/ planning**	**Interactive learning (Act)**	**Interactive learning (Act)**	**Experiential learning (Act)**	**Evaluation and reflection**
	⇩	⇩	⇩	⇩	⇩
Day of the week	**Friday**	**Monday**	**Wednesday**	**Thursday**	**Friday**
Teaching and learning event	Reflection and feedback on week 2; Introduction to topic: week 3	Lecture	Lecture	Practical	Reflection on week 3; introduction to topic: week 4

Reflection

- In the classroom
- With colleagues (Shayne, others)
- On the Ning.com sites

Evaluation

- Student feedback

- ...at Evaluation workshop in December 2010
  - Objectives:
    - Share with participants some of the feedback from our students regarding your inputs
    - Hear from participants how we fared on this novel venture
    - Share with participants our vision for our students, and
    - Ask about ideas on how we might achieve those goals
  - Added component for student capacity development with organisation of the workshop

Questions

- How can we effectively capture what we've learnt during the course?
- How can we use student feedback effectively?
- How can we direct these activities for publication and the SOTL Conference in May 2011?
- How can this feed into the "graduateness" of a B.Sc.(ConEcol) student?

Ripple **effects**?

Thank you