INTRODUCTION AT THE CITY OF TACOMA ENVIROHOUSE

John T. Turner
Dr. Sian Davies-Vollum, Advisor
University of Washington, Environmental Studies Program,

Vollum

The work at the EnviroHouse (EH, Figure 1) is the internship of my senior IAS capstone project for the completion of a BA in Environmental Studies. This internship is laying the groundwork for a proposed ongoing partnership between the UWT and the City of Tacoma EH. This service learning capstone is serving as a template.

The City of Tacoma EH (Figure 1) is a permanent model home showcasing green building, natural landscape ideas, and techniques that champion the benefits of a sustainable home. Products in the EH are environmentally friendly (Figures 3,4,5,6) promoting cost savings, energy savings, and reduction in natural resource use.

PURPOSE

Assist the EH staff to enhance educational opportunities through lesson development and product research that supports EH workshops (Figure 2).

OBJECTIVES

• To assist in the development and delivery of programs and/or activities at the EH, accomplished by working with the staff.
• To research products (e.g., Figure 4) used at the EH, accomplished by assessing needs with supervisor and conducting online research.
• To consider educational opportunities at K-12 levels available at EH with the possibility of addressing needs of year and reporting to supervisor, accomplished by studying the OSPI website for curriculum (EALR, GLE) standards.
• To outline overall internship experience gained at EH, accomplished by writing a reflective essay.
• To establish a foundational rapport with EH staff for future UWT – EH internship/capstone partnerships, accomplished through meeting deadlines, meeting with staff on a regular basis, and competing oneself with professional deportment.
• To compile list of Tacoma HS green clubs and their advisors, accomplished by calling schools directly and putting information in Excel spreadsheet.
• To compile and outline basic information about EH, accomplished by forming word document.

METHODS

• Met with staff and defined objectives based on immediate needs of EH and projected outcomes.
• Attended regular meetings discussing goals and objectives.
• Researched vermiculture bin manufacturing websites for matrix on product greenness
  o Read manufacturing pamphlet for product specifications
  o Called product assembly/distribution center for clarification on green materials used in manufacturing.
• Researched online magazines and organic websites for additional background information vermiculture bin manufacturers.
• Compiled product research information in word document as applied to vermiculture bins and composting to support workshop information.
• Researched government educational website for curriculum standards (EALR, GLE) for application to EH lesson/workshop information.
• Called Tacoma HS compiling information on green clubs and advisors names for outreach.
• Met with EnviroChallenger educators, Jacqueline Fuller and John Inch, discussing educational standards and curriculum outcomes for EH guide book and EH outreach questionnaire.
• Compiled Tacoma HS green club information in Excel spreadsheet.
• Worked with fellow intern Aric Philamalae outlining and compiling basic information about the EH which will become a tour guide book of the EH. This work is still in progress.

RESULTS

I created:
• A matrix for greenness of vermiculture bins (Figure 4).
• A four lesson program for grades 12 – 16, Removing Invasives: A Restoration Project.
• With Aric Philamalae, an outline and basic format of the EH tour guide book in a WORD doc.
• An Excel spreadsheet of Tacoma HS green clubs and advisors.
• Facilitated discussion of future capstone projects and work with UWT interns.

REFLECTIONS

1) The initial challenge was in redefining the project outcomes to match the real needs of the EH staff educational goals. We met this challenge through regular focus meetings.
2) The four lesson program I developed on invasive species was information that is beyond the workshops conducted at EH. The information is available for possible future workshop development and/or lesson handout information.
3) The scope of the tour guide book was much larger than we had anticipated. This caused us to reassess our project outline and target goals. The completion of the tour-guide book is beyond the time of my capstone internship, but the work we are doing is groundwork for future interns.
4) The work is ongoing and I will be finishing shortly after graduation.

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REFERENCE LIST