Sharing Sustainability Stories through Student Filmmaking

Empowering and Supporting Students to Use Media to Turn Ideas Into Action
for CHESC 2016 @ CSU Fullerton

Presentation by:
Talitha McAdams
Steven Castro
Jonathan Fong
half the session attendees watched a video about Berkeley’s Student Organic Garden Association: https://vimeo.com/ucgfi/soga

while the other half read a case study, attached at the end of this document]
Your Impressions and Takeaways

**Case Study**
- Great idea, engaging students
  - student food insecurity
- Kombucha, raised bed skills are important
- What is kombucha gardening?
- Sad that part of their garden space was taken away, great that they were empowered to take it back

**Video**
- Inclusion of students, e.g. student who never planted anything before. A representative narrative
- Learning by doing
- Learning is a taking exercise, combining that with giving too is great
- Sharing is great
- Sounds like it makes all the difference
Photos of UCOP project behind the scenes
“If you do what you’ve always done, you’ll get what you’ve always gotten.”

-Tony Robbins
Request for Proposal
UC Global Food Initiative Video Project

The Video Project Summary
The video project invites students from all 10 UC campuses to produce three, 3-5 minute videos about experiential learning activities that focus on sustainable agriculture, agroecology, food systems, food justice, and other related on-campus agriculture and food related activities. Eligible educational activities include a wide range of curricular and co-curricular activities.
Reframing the Approach to Student Filmmaking

**Engagement < Influence**
- our films should provoke belief or behavior change
- the power of media is to shape the relationship between the subject and the audience

**Employment < Empowerment**
- agency leads to ownership
- egalitarian power dynamics elevate the work and the collaboration

**Product < Process**
- take advantage of learning opportunities inherent in the experience
- create infrastructure and relationships between students, stakeholders, and the community so you can evolve with emerging media platforms
PLACEHOLDER:
“Compost Alliance” video
https://vimeo.com/ucgfi/compostalliance
Breakdown: “Compost Alliance”

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<tr>
<th>Engagement &lt; Influence</th>
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<tr>
<td>• our film catalyzed a food waste symposium on-campus</td>
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<th>Employment &lt; Empowerment</th>
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<td>• to document and share the heritage of student-led sustainability activism on campus</td>
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<td>• to inspire student-led change by showing that students <em>could</em> and <em>did</em> create institutional change</td>
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<th>Product &lt; Process</th>
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<td>• we realized the importance of composting and changed our own behavior</td>
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Photos of UCOP project behind-the-scenes.
PLACEHOLDER:
“Berkeley Student Food Collective” video
https://vimeo.com/ucgfi/bsfc
Breakdown: “Berkeley Student Food Collective”

**Engagement < Influence**
- our film’s goal is to increase awareness and participation in the BSFC, across all demographics

**Employment < Empowerment**
- we made conscious decisions about how to portray the BSFC to encourage others to get involved

**Product < Process**
- we and the BSFC members explored who has access to the BSFC’s space, products, and community
Photos of UCOP project behind the scenes
Implementation Considerations

- **Program Design**
  - How are you paying? grant, work-study, contract

- **Program Administration**
  - Neglect is not agency. Empowerment requires support and feedback, both positive and negative.

- **Program Benefits**
  - “Distribution”
  - Interdisciplinary learning and collaboration
Resources

- Reach out the film / video / media programs and student groups at your campus
- Seek for funding and support from:
  - Your campus’ Green Fund / Green Initiative Fund
  - Grants from local sustainability non-profits
- Once you have content, spread them strategically and widely:
  - Film festivals, local and environmental
  - Through student groups, departments’ social media channels
  - Periodically upon every new semester / school year, new funding cycles
- References:
  - Framework terms from or inspired by Jeremy Liu. Senior Fellow for Arts, Culture and Equitable Development, Policy Link
  - SOGA Case Study from “Learning from the Ground Up: Experiential Learning in Food and Agriculture Systems Education at the University of California” report from University of California, Global Food Initiative; by Kate Kaplan, Damian Parr, Jennifer Sowerwine, Lori Ann Thrupp and Mark Van Horn.
PLACEHOLDER:
“Student Organic Garden Association” video

https://vimeo.com/ucgfi/soga
Breakdown: “SOGA”

Engagement < Influence

- this was admittedly a weaker aspect of this film

Employment < Empowerment

- we tried a different approach and style based on UCOP feedback which helped us hone our ‘voice’ and workflow as a team

Product < Process

- “I think that anytime anyone is provoked to think beyond their usual daily habits and why they gravitated toward things, its interesting. When you guys asked me all these questions it really made me grateful for all of the opportunities I have at this school” ~interviewee
Thank you

Talitha McAdams: talitha.mcadams@berkeley.edu

Steve Castro: scastro@berkeley.edu

Jonathan Fong: jonathan@jfongtography.com

All videos from the UCOP’s Global Food Initiative’s video project:

https://vimeo.com/ucgfi

(These slides alone are not a complete re-cap of our presentation nor a standalone resource on making videos. Don’t hesitate to reach out to let us know your questions, comments, or feedback).
General Background
The Student Organic Garden was started in 1971 on UC Berkeley land as a student and community space, adjacent to the Oxford Tract Experiment station that is part of the College of Natural Resources. In 1991, the University sold part of the land to the local utility district. In response to the reduction in the garden’s physical space, students founded the Student Organic Gardening Association (SOGA) to create a formal group of garden stewards. Since then, SOGA has acted as the leadership body of the garden.

How Experiential Learning is Supported
Students and community members alike are encouraged to engage in the garden by attending Open Hours, starting projects, and being allies to SOGA. Garden volunteers gain hands-on learning experience in horticultural skills, grant writing, community organizing, and a plethora of other activities. SOGA hosts three courses each year through the Democratic Education at Cal (DECal) program: (1) Introduction to Organic Gardening and Food Justice; (2) the Berkeley Urban Gardening Internship; and (3) Garden Leadership and Management. These courses provide over 200 students yearly with hands-on instruction in the garden and local community farms and gardens. Students receive course credit for these classes, which are student-facilitated and supported by faculty sponsors.

Impacts On and Off Campus
SOGA has partnered with multiple groups on campus to host workshops and events to further the conversation of urban sustainability, food justice, and related themes. Food grown in the garden is free for students or community members who are involved in the garden and is often donated to the UC Berkeley Food Pantry. Workshops are open to the public and provide community members and students with hands-on skills in various projects such as kombucha making, building raised beds, propagating, and family-oriented gardening.

Support from the University
The University of California and the College of Natural Resources allow students access to the land where the garden has continued to flourish for the last 44 years. Additionally, SOGA receives funding from grants through The Green Initiative Fund, the Student Environmental Resource Center, and the Chancellor’s Advisory Committee on Sustainability.

Challenges to Success
Since SOGA is primarily run by students, there is a large turnover in leadership at the end of each school year. Although grants have been helpful for some basic functions, SOGA's grant funding is obtained on a year-to-year basis and has not been consistent or sustained over time. The group has only recently been able to pay interns over summer, which will hopefully help to secure recurring grants. These interns are able to pass down institutional knowledge between SOGA generations. However, during regular semesters, it is difficult for students to fully commit their time to the garden. There is currently a core team of about 4 or 5 part-time managers, but much more help and sustained funding are needed to make the garden thrive. The SOGA garden size is less than one-third acre and therefore has very limited space for growing large amounts of food and for extensive training to accommodate growing demand and interest among students.