

Voice in Writing

What is Appropriate in My Discipline? How do I know?

Discussion Questions

- Passive vs. active voice?
- What is at stake, rhetorically, in this voice?
- Using others' research – whose voice is privileged: source or writer?
- How do we integrate that research?

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“The Only Thing That Isn’t Sustainable . . . Is the Farmer”: Social Sustainability and the Politics of Class among Pacific Northwest Farmers Engaged in Sustainable Farming

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ABSTRACT Using interviews and participant observation at Pacific Northwest sustainable farming operations, this article analyzes the complex ways that class privileges and labor practices impact the social sustainability of sustainable agriculture. While the farmers in this study were highly aware of and reflexive about the class politics of sustainable agriculture, they also participated in a classed system that restricts access to sustainable farming as an occupation even as it exploits the labor of the farmer in order to regulate prices. In particular, the farmers in the study benefited from educational privileges and often-lucrative off-farm income, they expressed a desire to make their goods more accessible and affordable even as they marketed their foods to their upper-middle-class consumers, and they used their own idealism as justification to exploit their own difficult labor on the farm. Using a qualitative, ethnographic approach, this research explores the negotiations between farmers’ social ideals and the actual practice of sustainable agriculture in a capitalist system.

Abstract

Introduction

The broad social goals of sustainable agriculture are frequently touted in theoretical discussions of the sustainable food movement; according to Sumner (2005), for example, sustainable agriculture means “promot[ing] the civil commons, not the profit margins of an elite group,” and “include[s] the dedicated support of small farms that provide meaningful employment” (309). But despite this emphasis on the “civil commons” and “social sustainability,” research on sustainable agriculture that emphasizes the economic, social, and environmental impacts of alternative food systems is often drowned out by research from the natural sciences and sometimes even social sciences that tends to see sustainability as concerning only measurable environmental outcomes (Goodland 1995; Kates et al. 2001; Wackernagel et al. 2002).

Sections like Introduction, Methodologies, Results, etc.

Citations

However, we fail to examine the larger social implications tied to the sustainability movement in general and sustainable agriculture in particular, then the “sustainability” of the project is questionable. As a project, social sustainability asks: Is sustainable agriculture a system that provides meaningful and equitable employment for farmers, laborers, and their families; is it a system that can provide food to a wide demographic of

**Bring representative article/
homework assignment that reflects
these strengths, and discuss as class.**

Audience



To whom am I writing? What are their expectations?

Non-Expert Layperson

Expert

- *What can I reasonably expect this person to know?*
- *What gaps might I have to fill in?*
- *Is there anything I'm assuming about my reader?*
- *Should I follow a different format to appeal to my reader?*
- *Am I practicing advanced, scholarly research?*
- *Am I missing any sources that an expert would expect to see?*
- *To what extent should I mirror the structure, voice, and norms of the research articles I'm reading?*

Students tend to write more clearly when they have a specific reader or a “real world” audience in mind. Who is the reader that you expect your students to address? Discuss together when you go over your assignment.