

OL 303 Assignment One Homework

Online Learning: OL 303 Vegetable Gardens & Community Gardens for Family Nutrition & Food Security
Center for Sustainable Development <https://csd-i.org/vegetable-gardens-community-gardens-food/>

This week's resources:

Assignment One Discussion

Magee Example Project Assignment One

Download Class Docs 303

Introduction to the Basic Concepts of Food Security

FAO a Healthy Diet

Healthy Harvest: A training manual

USDA MyPlate

OL 303 Specific Links

Assignment 1. Introduction to food security, nutrition and home gardens

Part one.

The first thing to do is to go to Download Class Documents and read the short Introduction to the Basic Concepts of Food Security, and another short document called FAO a Healthy Diet. These two documents are meant to give you a simple introduction to these rather complex subjects. We will be exploring these in more depth as the course progresses.

While you're in Download Class Documents, take a look at Healthy Harvest, a beautiful training manual out of Zimbabwe; It does a magnificent job of looking at nutrition, home gardening, and healthy meals.

You can also follow the link download class documents to the USDA MyPlate.

Part two.

You will be researching whether home gardening can contribute to improving food security and family nutrition. There are many proponents but there are also some people that are less convinced. We are looking for scientific, peer-reviewed documents.

Look for potential information in these places:

Google Scholar

OL 303 Specific Links – 'Scientific Documents'

Please Note: Webpage URLs change frequently. If you find a webpage in these resources by clicking on the link, copy/paste the name into your and you will be directed to the correct URL.

In Google Scholar you can ask questions just as if you are asking them of another person.

For example I typed in the phrase "family gardens and small animal production for increasing food security and nutrition in developing nations" Put your phrase or question in quotation marks.

<https://scholar.google.com/>

With this approach I can get excellent results. If you happen to hit a gold mine of results, save those key words. They may come in handy in the future, and the way you phrased the question may be a template for future searches on different subjects.

I find using keywords like 'international development' and 'developing nations', gets me out of mainstream news and into real development information. You can also type in things like 'abstracts' and 'executive summaries' to point you towards scientific documents. Play around.

We are looking for peer-reviewed, scientific documents. If you find one with the magic symbol PDF next to it, this means that there is a document to download.

We are not looking for informational documents found on websites that have not gone through evaluation by a team of scientists. These are called 'Grey Literature' and are not acceptable for gathering evidence.

This is what a peer-reviewed scientific document looks like online; note the list of authors' names, the abstract and the reference to a university:

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2127738/pdf/9374884.pdf/?tool=pmcentrez>

If you work at a university and have access to university peer-reviewed search engines, your life will be much simpler. They are geared to finding the kinds of scientific documents are looking for.

When you find a document, hopefully it will be a "synthetic study", or a "literature review", which has analyzed a large number of primary research documents. These will give you the most useful results for your project. In the executive summary and in the conclusion they will tell you if the activity has **worked** to solve the challenge that you've identified, and under what circumstances.

Find three scientific documents on home gardens and write one short, summary paragraph describing what you found. Many times these documents will tell you the circumstances under which something did or did not work; that can be important news.

If during your searches you see any practical information on home gardening like a field guide or manual, bookmark it for next week's assignment. This is how I found the book from Zimbabwe - Healthy Harvest. I was looking for scientific documents and found this training manual quite accidentally.

Part three.

Make an appointment for a workshop with the community that you hope to work with for week three. I would recommend that you get a relatively small focus group of maybe a dozen people who have at least a small plot of land where they could put a vegetable garden. At this workshop we will also be conducting a simple baseline survey. I would recommend that you make your appointment for the workshop for between four and six hours.

The homework to turn in will be:

1. A list of links of three scientific papers about home gardening - and the names of the papers.
2. One short paragraph summarizing the findings.
3. Notification that you were able to make an appointment with your community.
4. Notification that you read the short articles on food security and nutrition. You can even write a short paragraph about how you felt after reading the articles - but this is not required.

Go to Magee's Example Project Assignment one to see what this could look like.

See you next week.