



Cognitive Competences

Critical Thinking: Greenwashing vs. Real Green

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Project number: 2022-1-DE02-KA220-YOU 000085086

Distinguishing Greenwashing from Genuine Sustainability

Duration: 60 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Computers or tablets with internet access
- Printed or digital copies of various company sustainability reports and marketing materials
- Whiteboard or flip chart
- Markers
- Notepads and pens

Goals:

- To develop critical thinking skills in evaluating the authenticity of sustainability claims.
- To identify key indicators of greenwashing.
- To differentiate between genuine sustainable practices and misleading marketing.

Why Do This Exercise: Greenwashing is a significant issue in the sustainability sector. Developing the ability to critically assess sustainability claims is crucial for young professionals in green careers to make informed decisions and promote genuine green practices.

Instructions Step by Step:

- 1. Introduction (10 minutes):**
 - Briefly explain the concept of greenwashing and its impact on sustainability efforts.
 - Discuss why it's important to critically evaluate sustainability claims and the potential consequences of greenwashing.
- 2. Group Formation and Task Assignment (5 minutes):**
 - Divide students into small groups of 3-4 members.
 - Provide each group with a mix of company sustainability reports and marketing materials, some of which are genuine and some that may exhibit greenwashing.
- 3. Analysis and Discussion (20 minutes):**
 - In their groups, students will analyze the provided materials, using critical thinking to identify key indicators of greenwashing (e.g., vague claims, lack of third-party certification, focus on minor eco-friendly aspects while ignoring major impacts).
 - Students will document their findings and prepare to present their analysis.
- 4. Presentation (15 minutes):**
 - Each group presents their findings to the class, highlighting examples of greenwashing and genuine sustainability.
 - Encourage classmates to ask questions and provide feedback.
- 5. Debrief and Reflection (10 minutes):**
 - Discuss as a class the common indicators of greenwashing identified by the groups.
 - Reflect on how these critical thinking skills can be applied in their future green careers to promote genuine sustainability.



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