FROM: Student

TO: Marcia Woodard, Professor

DATE: July 22, 2010

SUBJECT: Feasibility Report on Potential Research Topics for Formal Report

**Purpose of the Report**

The purpose of this report is to compare/contrast three potential topics for the formal report. After analyzing the feasibility of the three topics, I will recommend the best suited topic for my formal report.

**Formal Report Topics**

The three topics under consideration for the formal report are as follows:

* Offshore Drilling
* Organic Food
* Plastic Shopping Bags

**Reasons for Evaluation**

The reasons for evaluating these three research topics are as follows:

* To decide on a research topic that interests me.
* To confirm that the research topic has enough secondary and scholarly sources.
* To decide on a research topic that can be argued from a “for or against” point-of-view.
* To decide on a research topic that is technical.

**Criteria for Report**

The criteria for the research topics are as follows:

* ***Interest*** – The research topic needs to possess the highest level of interest.
* ***Sources*** – The research topic must have at least eight secondary sources; three of which must be scholarly sources.
* ***Pros/Cons*** – The pros of the research topic must outweigh the cons for an effective argument.
* ***Technical*** – The core subject matter of the research topic must be science and technology based.

**Focus of Research Topics**

The focus of the three research topics are as follows:

* ***Offshore Drilling*** – The offshore drilling topic would focus on the benefits versus the risks of drilling in lakes, inland seas, and ocean sea floors.

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* ***Organic Food*** – The organic food topic would focus on the benefits of eating organic, pesticide-free produce and grains versus the risks of eating non-organic, mass produced produce and grains. This topic would also focus on justifying the high cost of organic food.
* ***Plastics Shopping Bags*** – The plastic shopping bag topic would focus on the benefits of using recyclable plastic bags versus the risks of using non-recyclable, reusable plastic bags.

The following table lists the potential position of each research topic:

Table 1: Research Topic Position

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Research Topic** | **For** | **Against** |
| Offshore Oil Drilling |  | X |
| Organic Food | X |  |
| Plastic Shopping Bags | X |  |

**Research Topic Evaluation**

The evaluation of research topics are as follows:

* ***Offshore Oil Drilling*** –This research topic has a high interest level. The secondary sources for this topic are easily located and the scholarly sources are as well. The pros are that it is a current issue and highly controversial. The con is arguing an alternative to finding other natural resources. The technical aspect of the report is high.
* ***Organic Food*** – This topic has a medium to high interest level. Both the secondary sources and the scholarly sources are not difficult to research. The pros are that many consumers have made the switch to a fully organic lifestyle and the topic is controversial. The con is justifying the high price. The technical aspect of the topic is high.
* ***Plastic shopping Bags*** – This topic has a high interest level. The secondary sources are easy to locate and the scholarly sources may be difficult to find. The pros are that many stores offer both options to their customers, so a comparison can easily be made. The con is proving landfills are be affected by this option in a negative way. The technical aspect is high.

**Criteria Comparison**

The following table compares the topics I researched on a scale of 1-10, 10 representing the highest score.

Table 2: Criteria Comparison

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Offshore Drilling** | **Organic Food** | **Plastic Shopping Bags** |
| Interest | 8 | 9 | 7 |
| Sources | 9 | 10 | 8 |
| Pros/Cons | 8 | 9 | 7 |
| Technical | 8 | 8 | 10 |
| Total | **33** | **36** | **32** |

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**Conclusion**

According to the criteria comparison, organic food has the highest total rating of the three proposed research topics. Organic food has the highest rating for interest, pros/cons, and sources. Offshore drilling has the second highest total rating, but does not have the highest rating in any categories. Plastic shopping bags has the worst total rating, but has the highest rating for the technical category.

**Recommendation**

Given the combination of interest, sources, and pros/cons; organic food is the best research topic for the formal report. The chosen research topic will provide me with the technical and controversial subject matter needed for the formal report.

**Percentage of passive sentences: 2%**

**Flesch Kincaid = 10**