ENGAGING STUDENTS IN SUSTAINABLE ACTION PROJECTS
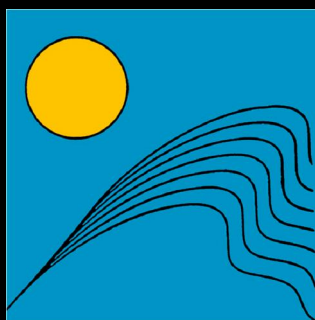
WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT GUIDE

L'éducation au service de la Terre

Learning for a Sustainable Future

LST   LSF

By: Teri Burgess

If you are thinking a year ahead, sow a seed,
If you are thinking ten years ahead, plant a tree.
If you are thinking one hundred years ahead, educate the people.

Kuan Tzu Chinese Poet, c. 500 B.C.

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> Your reason and your passion are the rudder and the sails of your seafaring soul. If either your sails or your rudder be broken, you can but toss and drift, or else be held at a standstill in midsea. For reason, ruling alone, is a force confining and passion, unattended, is a flame that burns to its own destruction.
>
> -Kahlil Gilbran

The *Learning for a Sustainable* Future Story

LSF's mission is to promote, through education, the knowledge, skills, perspectives and practices essential to a sustainable future.

Who We Are

Founded in 1991 by a diverse group of youth, educators, business leaders, government and community members, *Learning for a Sustainable Future (LSF*) is a non-profit Canadian organization that was created to implement sustainable development education (SDE) into Canada's education system.

Our Goal Is Simple!

LSF's goal is to work together with educators, students, parents, government, community and business to integrate the concepts and principles of sustainable development into education policy, school curricula, teacher education and lifelong learning across Canada!

The Secret to our Success

LSF believes that building comprehensive programs starts with building a solid base. LSF's core program strengths are linked in an Integrated Framework that includes five areas:

1. Advancing education for sustainable development through strategic education policies and curricula enhancements;

2. Supporting education for sustainable development for youth and educators;

3. Fostering sustainable communities that link formal, informal and non-formal education to informed actions;

4. Initiating innovative education, public awareness and training programs through strategic partnerships;

5. Supporting Canada as a leader in the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

For more information on LSF programs, please contact us at:
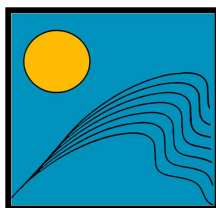
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Acknowledgements

This guide and workshop build upon the exceptional work of many people including: Bill Hammond, Susan Staniforth, and MJ Barrett.

1.0 A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE…

- Recognizes that growth occurs within some limits

- Values cultural diversity

- Respects other life forms

- Works toward some shared values amongst the members of the community

- Makes decisions and plans in a manner that includes the perspectives from the social, health, economic and environmental sectors of the community

- Makes best use of local efforts and resources

- Uses renewable sources of energy

- Fosters activities which use materials in continuous cycles

- Does not compromise the sustainability of other communities (human or non-human)

- Does not compromise the sustainability of future generations

- Has a stable, dependable and diversified economic base

- Provides a range of opportunities for rewarding work

- Satisfies the basic needs of every one of its members including the opportunity to fill her or his potential[1]
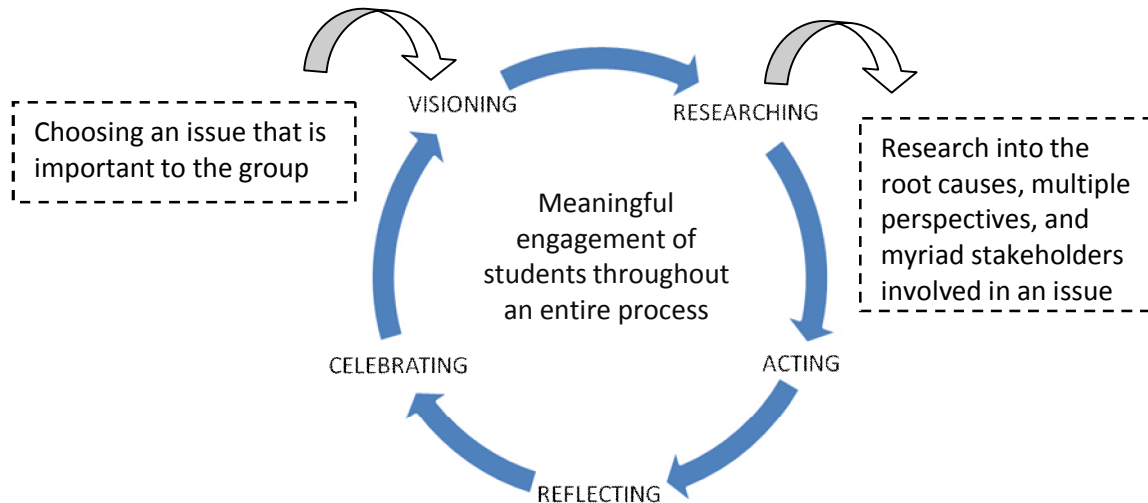
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[1] Adapted from:
Nigel Richardson, (1994) *Making our communities sustainable. The central issue is will*, Ontario Round Table on Environment and Economy in Readings on Sustainability, LSF, (2000) pp. 21 and 22.

2.0 WHAT IS AN ACTION PROJECT?

Activities and A*ction Projects* are experiential

Consider an *activity / action project* continuum. The action project end of the continuum is distinguished by:

Choosing an issue that is important to the group

VISIONING

RESEARCHING

Meaningful engagement of students throughout an entire process

Research into the root causes, multiple perspectives, and myriad stakeholders involved in an issue

CELEBRATING

ACTING

REFLECTING

3.0 REASONS TO DO ACTION PROJECTS

- Action projects are experiential; they cater to different learning styles.
- Action projects offer *authentic, relevant, meaningful* opportunities for learning and for taking responsibility. This is motivating for students.
- Action projects illuminate the trans-disciplinary and deeply interconnected nature of real problems.
- Action projects that involve being outdoors provide students with opportunities to fall in love with Earth—which then becomes its own motivator to act.
- Using the environment as an integrating context for learning has been linked to improved test scores on standardized tests in the United States.
- Action projects create a natural relationship between the people in the school and the wider community.
- Action projects model for students and for the wider community what active citizenship looks, sounds and feels like; this increases the likelihood that participants will engage in future action projects.
- The outcomes of action projects can have substantial, positive, consequences for all of us..
- Action projects cultivate skills, knowledge, attitudes necessary for active citizenship.
- Action projects can help students to learn how to think from a systems perspective and how to appreciate complexity.

4.0 THE ACTION PROJECT PROCESS

12 Steps for Taking Meaningful Action!

The steps below are meant as a guide. Your action project journey will probably involve moving back and forth through some of these steps and some that are unique to your group's experience. Many of the steps have an accompanying suggested activity; see Section II of this guide.

STEP 1
Decide on Goals, Parameters and Assessment Plan

STEP 2
Choose an Issue and Generate Ideas for Action

STEP 3
Research, Analysis and Decision Making

STEP 4
Build Motivation

STEP 5
Choose an Action and Make a Plan

STEP 6
Defining and Measuring Success

STEP 7
Identify Barriers and Supports

STEP 8
Teach/Learn Skills

STEP 9
Do it!

STEP 10
Celebrate
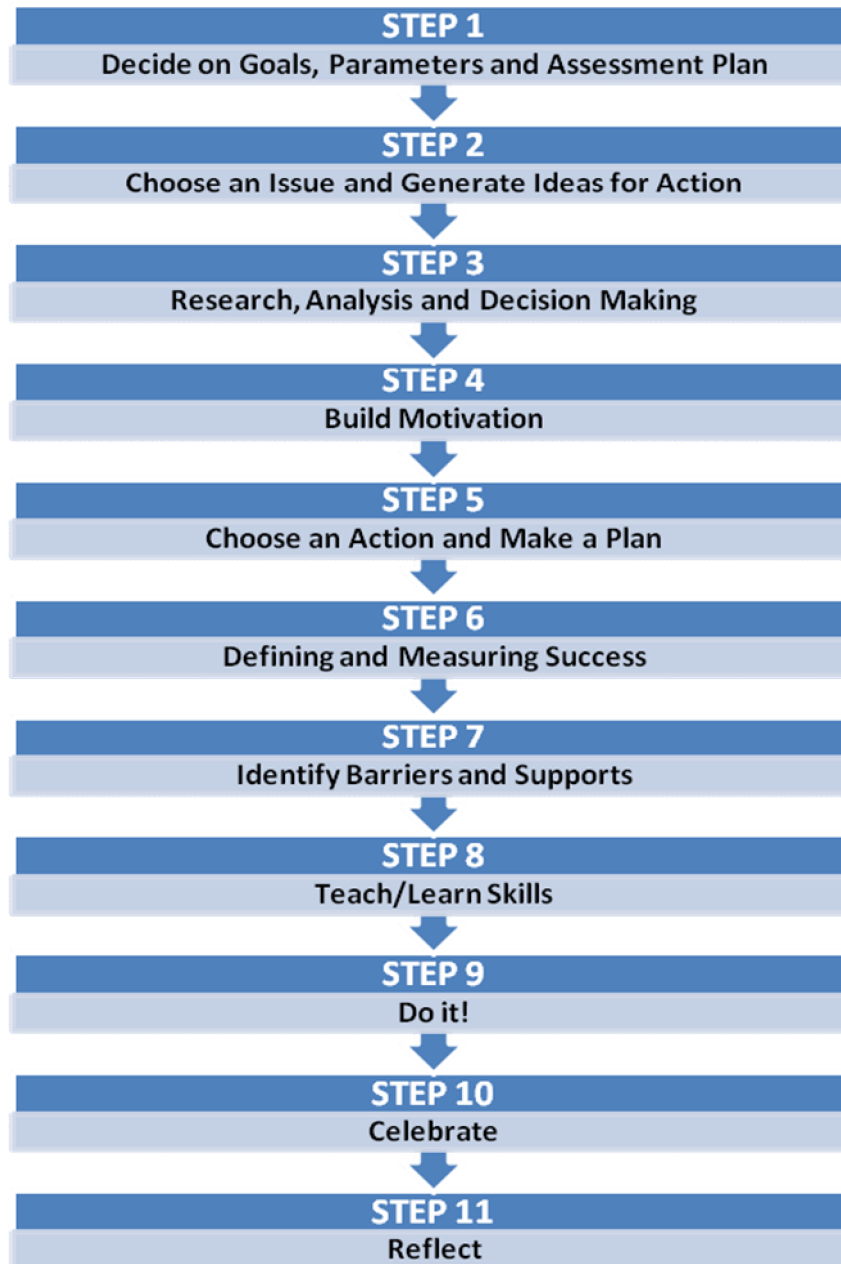
STEP 11
Reflect

STEP 1: Decide on Goals, Parameters and Assessment Plan[2]

- As a mentor, decide on your own goals—why are you facilitating an action project?

- Decide on your priorities. For example, is it ***most*** important to you that you…:
    - Address a particular content area of the curriculum
    - Help your students to build skills
    - Help your students to experience success
    - Etc …

- Will the group be your class or an extra-curricular club?

- Decide on your own parameters/boundaries:
    - Consider doing the "What would you Condone?" (Activity B1, p18) by yourself or with your staff.
    - Reflect on the implicit messages in your choices (see Cheryl Lousley's *Depoliticizing the Environment Club article in the resources section, p67).*
    - Read the *Addressing Controversial Issues* article by Pat Clarke cited in the resources section of this guide, *p67*.

- Your group should contain members that represent administration, teachers, students, support staff, head caretaker, parents, school council and community members whenever possible. ***With the group***, check: is there anyone who is not part of your group who should be specifically invited to participate to improve the efficacy of your group? (eg. someone with a particular role in your school or community or people from a particular grade.)

- Prepare to facilitate a discussion with the group about. How you want your team to work:
    - What decision-making model will you use? (eg. majority-wins, consensus decision-making, etc. See Activity in Section C on page 20 of this guide)
    - When and how often will you meet?
    - How will discussions be handled to encourage constructive dialogue? (See the Deliberative Dialogue and Debate information on page 24.)

Reflect on your role in the group:

- See the ladder of student involvement found on page 13.

- Facilitating effective action projects requires that the teacher moves away from a conventional 'sage on the stage' role toward a 'guide on the side' role. This is no small task! Students and teachers are used to teachers holding most of the power in the classroom. A facilitator role helps to distribute the power more evenly among the teacher and the students. Consider the following questions:

- Do you feel ready to move toward more of a 'guide on the side' role?

- How will it feel for you to move away from the 'sage on the stage' role to the 'guide on the side'/facilitator role?

- What are you already doing that supports a 'guide on the side' relationship?

- What will need to change in order for you to successfully be a 'guide on the side'?

[2] This is the only step in the process that the group facilitator should do independently. All of the other steps are intended to be done by the whole group.

- What skills will you need to work on in order to be an effective 'guide on the side'?

- How will this change in dynamic feel for the students?

- How will students' past experiences (at home, with other teachers, etc.) influence their perception of/feelings about this type of relationship?

- What skills will the students need to develop in order to effectively capitalize on the new power-sharing dynamic?

   Create an Assessment Plan (class group)

- List the knowledge and skills that you would like to assess

   See the assessment tools provided on pages 39 and 42 and 60 and 64.

- Create your assessment plan

- Check in: does my assessment plan align with my priorities for this project?

STEP 2: Choose an Issue and Generate Ideas for Action

1. Where necessary, expose students to a number of different issues facing our communities (if your students are already aware of many different sustainability-related issues, you may wish to skip directly to part b). You could do this using:

   i. An activity similar to the one on page 29 in which students examine a number of different water-related issues

   ii. Attending a conference that presents a number of different issues. Contact Elaine@lsf-lst.ca to see if LSF is hosting a conference in your area.

2. To decide on an ***issue*** that is important to the group, you may choose to do one or more of the following activities:

   - Value line activity (Activity D1 on page 25)

   - *Visioning a Change* activity (Activity D2 on page 27)

   - Environmental and social justice audit at school (email Teri Burgess for an example of an audit)

   - Choose an ***issue***. (You might consider using consensus decision-making. See Activity C on page 20 in this guide for help.)

3. Help students to differentiate between symptoms and root causes. To do this, you might start by breaking down an example that the students can relate well to (for example, getting poor grades in school). The "*Defining the Problem*" activity sheet (E2) on page 34 can be used to help students to do this.

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PROBLEM	POSSIBLE SYMPTOMS	POSSIBLE ROOT CAUSES
Students come to school without healthy food.	▪ Students may have extreme highs and lows and may have trouble concentrating as a result of excess sugar and caffeine. ▪ There may be lots of food packaging litter in the school yard. ▪ Etc.	▪ A lack of knowledge about healthy food choices. ▪ A lack of time at home to experiment with and make healthy food options. ▪ Etc.

4. As a group, explore types of projects that can be tackled through action projects. (Activity D1 on page 28 and Activity B on page 18 in this guide)

   a) Brainstorm **action** ideas. What could your group do about this issue? See organizer in action planning template on page 42 (item #4 in template).

   b) As a group, brainstorm and decide upon the criteria you will use to choose an **action**. For help, see criteria in the chart below.

ACTION Selection Criteria

✓ Are relevant resources and information available to us?
✓ Can we finish an important piece of this project within our time limits?
✓ Are alternative actions available? What are they?
✓ Is the action that the group has chosen the most effective one available?
  ➢ Does it address a root cause of the problem rather than just a symptom?
  ➢ Does the action 'walk the talk' so that it will be perceived as credible?
✓ Are there ecological consequences of this action? If so, what are they?
✓ Are there legal consequences of this action? If so, what are they?
✓ Will there be social consequences of this action? If so, what are they?
✓ Are valuable relationships formed as a result of the project?

✓ Will there be economic consequences of this action? If so, what are they?
✓ Do the personal values of members of the group support this action?
✓ Does this action address short or long-term causes?
✓ Does the group understand the procedures necessary to take this action?
✓ Does the group have the skills needed to complete this action?
✓ Does this group have the courage to take this action?
✓ What educational benefits will be obtained?
✓ Will people feel empowered as a result of working on this project?

STEP 3: Research, Analysis and Decision Making

▪ See *Activities Section G* on page 36 for help with the research process.

▪ What has already been done on this issue? What can you learn from those experiences?

▪ Is there anyone else in your community who is already working on this, or that has knowledge that could help you? Don't feel you need to reinvent the wheel!

STEP 4: Build Motivation

Having students choose their own issue inherently improves students' motivation; however, everyone needs a little extra motivation some times, so please consider the suggestions below.

Spend time allowing students to describe the reasons to **care** about this issue. This will be the foundation of motivation you will draw on throughout the project—take time to build it well and to revisit it often. See **Activity F1: So What?** on page 35 for an effective way to help your students to see the multiple, interconnected consequences of an issue. You may also wish to:

- Visit the important humans and other animals and/or places that you are working to protect
- Create a group mural
- Take and display photos of the important humans and other animals and/or places that you are working to protect
- Get students outdoors —whenever possible, not just when necessary
- Tune students in to what is going on outdoors (in the resources list at the back of this guide, see: *Up North* and *Backyard Almanac*)

STEP 5: Choose an Action and Make a Plan

- Choose an action (see the chart that guides students through the action selection process in step 6 of the Planning template on page 42). You may wish to use the consensus model of decision making to pick the action project. The activity on page 20 will help you to teach your students how to build consensus.

- Once you have chosen the action project, decide if you need to do more research related to the specific action. For example, students may have chosen the issue of transportation-related air pollution. They may have generated several action ideas. If they choose an action idea that involves advocating for the school bus company to switch to hybrid engine buses, the students may find that they need to do some specific research about the pros and cons of hybrid engines.

- As a group, make a very detailed plan including timelines and clearly stating who is doing what. See Activity H1 on page 42 for an action planning template.

- Post the plan somewhere where everyone in the group has access to it. Check in with the plan frequently and revise as necessary.

- Create milestones that can be celebrated along the way and will help you to track your progress.

STEP 6: Defining and Measuring Success

For example, for an anti-idling campaign, does "success" mean that 100% of the visitors to the school never idle their cars? Is this realistic? Constructive? Does success mean that most of the students involved in the project become comfortable and effective when educating people they do not know very well? As a group, choose definitions of success that are appropriate and motivating. Formally assess your 'success' against the criteria the students developed in the action plan (see item #16* in the action planning template **Activity H1 on page 42**) at least once **before** the end of the project as well as at the end of the project.

STEP 7: Identify Barriers and Supports

Look at the barriers and the supports that may affect your success and reflect on productive ways to deal with them. (See Force Field Analysis Activity Section H2 on page 51)

STEP 8: Teach/Learn Skills

Decide on the skills and knowledge people in the group need to complete the project and teach them **explicitly** (e.g. Interview skills, letter writing, etc.). Remember that one of the goals of the project is for students to feel equipped and motivated to do another project...For help, see *Activity Section I* on page 52 below and the book *Take Action* by Mark and Craig Kielburger.

STEP 9: Do it!

I.   As a group, check in with your action plan (from step #5) frequently and revise as necessary. Formally assess your 'success' against the criteria the students developed in the action plan at least once **before** the end of the project as well as at the end of the project.

II. Have students take turns making entries into a group journal or log book tracking what you're doing and how they are feeling about it. The information and the reflections will be helpful to you for your next project and can be shared with another group who wants to do a similar project when they hear about yours.

III. Have students reflect on your action project *throughout the process.* How are you doing? Are there any changes that could be made to make your project better? (*Activity Section J. p60*)

STEP 10: Celebrate

Celebrate milestones along the way and at the end of the project. Check in with your goals for the project (steps 1 and 6) to celebrate different types of accomplishments like a challenging but effective discussion, new skills, or the new-found support of someone who was previously a barrier.

STEP 11: Reflect

Facilitate a formal reflection activity at the end of the project. See *Activity Section J , 60.*

CONGRATULATIONS! Rinse and Repeat.

5.0 MEANINGFUL STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Roger Hart's "Ladder of Participation" has following rungs[3]:

Project is student–initiated. Students share decision–making with adults.

↑

Project is student–initiated and directed.

↑

Project is adult–initiated. Students share decision–making with adults.

↑

Young people are consulted and informed.

↑

Young people are well informed and have a meaningful, but assigned role.

↑

Tokenism — student participation appears meaningful, but is not.

↑

Decoration

↑

Manipulation

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[3] From: Hart, Roger (1997). *Children's Participation: The Theory and Practice of Involving Young Citizens in Community Development and Environmental Care.*

6.0 TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL ACTION PROJECTS[4]

Take Only Positive Positions

Instead of saying what you're against, think of what you are FOR.

Listen to All Peoples' Views

Attempt to see all sides of the issue. Focus on the good in others, the good in yourself and the good you are doing. Maintain an open mind and listen actively to what others have to say.

Avoid Stereotyping

It is easy to lump individuals into a category or group like "All developers care about is making money." Stereotyping is misleading, often blocking solutions rather than building bridges among people or groups. Recognize that each person holds his or her own identity within a group.

Accept Responsibility

Never blame anyone or anything else for your lack of success. Accept responsibility and move on— look to what you could have done better. When you encounter a block, back off, reconsider your options and directions, then, try another route.

Be Persistent

Hang in there! Environmental problems are complex and usually take years to develop, so long–term commitment is important. Look at the big picture and don't let small obstacles get you down. Think long term — but break your plan into smaller projects and monitor progress on these as you go.

Act

Micro–movements are better than no movements!

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[4] This list is adapted from the work of Susan Staniforth, Bill Hammond, and a group of Florida Lee County High School Students to come up with this list of tips for successful action projects.

7.0 REFLECTING ON THE WORKSHOP

The following questions are meant to guide personal reflection on the workshop. Please take   some time to complete them.

1)   Some important things that I will take away from this experience are…

2)   I would like to learn more about …

3)   In the short term I would like to… …

4)   In the longer term I would like to…

5)   And another thing …

SECTION II: ACTIVITIES
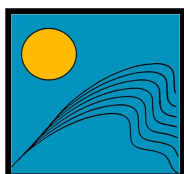
These activities correspond to different steps in the 12 step process discussed on page 7 above. For any given section, the activities may stand alone or may be complemented by other activities in that section.

Education is everything that is left after you have forgotten everything you have learned.

Compiled by Teri Burgess and MJ Barrett

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ACTIVITY A: WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

Please write the answers to these questions on a scrap piece of paper.

1. Where does your drinking water come from?

2. Where does the water from the storm drain nearest your house go first?

3. What is the name of the closest creek, river, lake, etc. to your house?

4. What direction does the current run?

5. What is the source of the water?

6. Where does the water drain into?

7. Where does the water from your toilet go?

8. Name 5 species of plants (other than trees) that are native to your area.

9. Name 5 reptiles that are native to your area.

10. What is the name of the people that lived in your area before Europeans arrived?

11. What is the name in English? What is the name in the First Nations language?

12. What is the name of your community in the First Nations language?

13. How was the electricity in your house generated?

14. Are there homeless people in your community?

15. If yes, are there services for them? If no, why not?

16. Another question people should ask themselves about their community is:

ACTIVITY B: "WHAT WOULD YOU CONDONE?" CHOOSING PARAMETERS[5]

What is Going on?

By examining different types of actions students can take, teachers and students can reflect on what they personally consider appropriate and inappropriate.

Materials

- Chart paper
- Markers
- A copy of the chart on the following page
- A copy of the article *Depoliticizing the Environment Club* by Cheryl Lousley

Time Required

30-60 minutes

Procedure

1. On chart paper, create a Venn diagram using two large, overlapping circles. In one large circle, write "Would not Condone" and in the other, write "would condone". The overlapping section in the center of the diagram is for the actions you would condone if they were changed ("WCIC") in a significant way (specify the change required).

2. Read each student action listed below. Discuss the student action and decide if you would condone the student action described taking place in/from your school.

3. Write the number of the activity in the corresponding area of the Venn Diagram.

4. After you have placed all of the action numbers in the appropriate places on the diagram, look at the overall pattern on your diagram. Discuss the results (for example: What types of action are supported? Are they effective in making change? What types of action are not supported? Is there a pair of activities in which the action is quite similar but the topic is different, resulting in one action being condoned and the other not?).

5. Read the article *Depoliticizing the Environment Club* by Cheryl Lousley. How do the results of this activity fit into her analysis of the implicit lessons we teach students with the choices we make?

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[5] Adapted from an activity by David Selby from the article *Kaleidoscopic Mindset.*

	Student Action
1	Students follow a local election in all its stages, interviewing voters in their community and attending local election meetings to raise awareness about the impact low-paying jobs have on working families.
2	Students host a press conference to alert the community about a by-law that is about to be passed that would make it easier to convert farmland to commercial property.
3	After learning that a new, heavily-polluting industry is hoping to come to their community, students create a campaign to urge fellow students to write letters to government to prevent the company from setting up shop in their community.
4	Frustrated that the car traffic outside of the school is polluting the air, students create a campaign to educate motorists about the negative effects of idling their cars.
5	Students choose a heavily-packaged toy and write to the company to tell the company executives that they will not buy the toy until the packaging is minimized. The students actively encourage other people to boycott the toys through a letter to the editor and posters at school.
6	Students organize a fundraiser to raise money for an organization that promotes fairly-traded products.
7	Students engage in a letter-writing campaign to local newspaper and radio stations to ask them not to advertise a new film which the students deem to be too violent.
8	Students create and mount a play that illustrates how the low wages paid to workers in a South American country indirectly accelerate the destruction of the rainforest. A branch of the multinational company in question employs many of the students' parents.
9	Students host a press conference to raise awareness about the work they are doing to combat racism in their community.
10	Students create a brochure and distribute it in the community to alert local residents about the impact household chemicals can have on the local creek.
11	After learning that a local company sells goods created in sweatshops in poor countries, students mount a sit-down protest at the school gates to stop an exhibitor from the company from participating in the school career fair.
12	Students create a survey to find out what teachers would need to have in an "outdoor classroom" in order to use the "outdoor classroom" well. Students then lobby the school board and the parent council to provide funds to build the outdoor classroom. Students even suggest that money should be taken out of other budgets like the library and the phys.ed. budget to ensure that the "outdoor classroom" is built.
13	After learning about the health risks associated with pesticides, students write an open letter to the school board and have it published in a local paper, asking that pesticides no longer be used on their schoolyard.

ACTIVITY C: COOPERATIVE LEARNING SKILLS

Activity C1: Consensus Decision-Making

What's Going On?

Students learn and practice the process for consensus decision-making. Working in groups, students discuss a scenario and come up with a solution/response that everyone can agree upon.

Materials/Preparation:

- An overhead or poster stating what consensus decision making is (see Box 1)
- Groups of 5-6 students

Time Required:

60 minutes

Procedure:

1. Post and review the *what and why* of consensus decision making with the students (Appendix A, p21).
2. Post and review the tips for building consensus (Appendix B, p21).
3. Choose 4 students to come to the front of the group. The 4 students and you (a group of 5) will model the consensus building process for the students. Tell the students that in the model, the group will be trying to make a decision about … (choose one scenario from the examples below [Appendix C, p22] or make one of your own.)
4. As a group, briefly model steps one, two and three in the *Consensus Building Process Steps* below (Appendix D, p22).
5. Tell the students that the issue that they will be discussing in their own groups is: (choose one scenario from the examples below or make one of your own).Assign the groups (5-6 students). Ask the groups to go ahead with steps one to three only.
6. Circulate among the groups. Get a sense of what their questions are. How much time (if any) will you give them to find the answers to the questions?
7. Adjourn to find answers to the questions.
8. Have your group of 5 (including you) briefly model steps 5-8 for the students.
9. Remind your students of the tips for consensus building.
10. Write reflections.
11. Group share.

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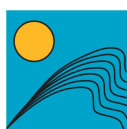
Consensus Appendix A: Why Use Consensus Decision Making?

A decision made by consensus means:
- The discussion continues until all members reach a plan that they can agree upon.
- The decision is not necessarily everyone's first choice, but everyone can live with it.

Why Use Consensus Decision-Making?

By using consensus decision-making, the opinions of each person in the group are given equal value, which allows each individual to voice her or his opinion and have a sense of ownership over the final outcome. This is in contrast to majority decision-making (e.g. why not just vote?) because if the majority always wins, then the minority always loses! With the consensus model, group members work towards a decision or outcome that *everyone* can support. This is important because the more people that support a decision, for example on what kind of action project to do, the more likely they will participate in the project. This will likely contribute to the strength and success of the project as a whole.

Consensus Appendix B: Tips for Achieving Consensus

- *Openness* – checking our own beliefs regularly and changing them if new ideas make us feel different
- *Creativity* – coming up with new ideas
- *Patience* –consensus building seems very inefficient in the short-run. In the long-run it helps to improve everyone's participation.
- *Respect* – recognizing that everyone has rights, whether they agree with us or not
- *No winners (or losers):* Let go of the idea that someone will be right and win and someone will be wrong and lose. The idea is to see if the group can be creative and patient enough to create a solution that everyone supports (even if not everyone loves it!)
- *No steamrolling.* Do not nag people to support your idea. Give good reasons to support it. If there is no movement, it is equally everyone's obligation to find new suggestions/compromises.
- *Changing your mind:* Don't change your mind just to make the group happy. Treat the decision as important and instead work hard to find a good solution that everyone can live with.
- *It is okay to disagree!* Differences of opinion are expected.
- *Call a time out:* Know when you need to take a break. Suggest a break if people seem frustrated.
- *Separate ideas from personalities*. Don't agree or disagree based on whether or not you like someone. Agree or disagree based on whether or not the ideas is good/sound.
- *Listen to find Agreement*. Challenge yourself to listen to find what is right with what someone said, not what is wrong.
- *Be open to being wrong*.
- *Be conscious of how much airtime you are taking up*. Don't hog the floor! Ask other people for their opinion and listen.
- *Participate*. Even if it feels difficult, you must make your voice heard.

Consensus Appendix C: Sample Questions to be Decided Upon by Consensus

Solve one of the following scenarios using consensus decision-making.

A. Your teacher decided that she or he will take you on a two-day field trip to a place in Ontario. Your group gets to decide where to go.

B. Your class receives a gift bag. In the bag are: 2 badminton racquets and 2 birdies, 2 basketballs, a volleyball, 2 pairs of binoculars and a skateboard. Your group must decide what to do with them.

C. A fairy god mother comes to your neighbourhood. She tells you that she will grant your group one wish about something you could change about your neighbourhood. She will grant you the wish only if you can make a decision by consensus.

Consensus Appendix D: Steps to Consensus-Building

1. The question or issue at hand is read aloud.

2. Clarifying questions: Create a four-column chart on big paper. The four columns should read as follows:

Questions	Who Might Know?	Who is Responsible for Finding Out?	Answers

The group brainstorms all of the questions they would like to know the answer to before they make this decision. The group does not suggest answers at this time.

3. The group reviews the questions. Group members offer answers where appropriate. Unanswered questions are assigned to group members to seek the answers to. Date/Time (if applicable) is set for group to reconvene to move on to Step 4 once questions are answered

4. Group Discussion. Information learned is shared with the group. Suggestions are given. Group works toward a response to the question/scenario that everyone is comfortable with.

5. Group Pulse: Go around the circle. Have everyone state where she/he stands on the issue.

6. Summarizing the Pulse: Ask one person in the group to summarize where the group stands on the issue. For example, on the issue of _____ "many people seem to feel that _____. However, one person feels that _____ another person feels that _____.

7. Is there agreement? If yes, congratulations. If no, the group goes back to discussion mode. Is there a compromise that can be reached? Is there a new alternative that hasn't yet been suggested that everyone might support?

8. Repeat steps 5 to 8 as necessary.

Consensus Appendix E: The Role of the Teacher

As a mentor, you have additional skills, knowledge and experience to bring to the group. We suggest that you:

- Carefully choose which decisions you can allow the students to decide by consensus

- Indicate that you will not be part of the consensus decision-making process so that you can maintain veto power if absolutely necessary and still allow the students to have an authentic consensus-building experience

- Provide very clear parameters before the consensus deliberation begins so that the students can be successful in making a decision that the group is comfortable with and that you are comfortable with. Although it may seem counterintuitive, it is better to err on the side of giving too many parameters than too few. If the group comes up with a decision that does not adhere to a parameter that you thought was implicit but that the group members were not aware of, they will not trust that they have the authority to make decisions.

Activity C2. "Deliberative Dialogue" and "Debate"[6]

Deliberative Dialogue	Debate
✓ Collaborative ✓ Common ground ✓ Listening to find meaning ✓ Listening to find agreement ✓ Openness to being wrong ✓ Weighing alternatives ✓ Assumes that others have pieces of the answer and that all can find it together ✓ Involves concern for the other person	✓ Oppositional ✓ Points of divergence ✓ Listening to find flaws ✓ Listening to find points to argue ✓ Determination to be right ✓ Winning ✓ Assumes there is a right answer and someone has it ✓ Involves countering others

For more information about communication skills for responsible citizenship, check out www.resources4rethinking.ca/toolbox and look for the communication skills and cooperative learning tools.

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[6] From: *Moderator's Guide for Public Deliberations,* Canadian Council for International Co–operation. See "Voluntary Sector Section" at www.ccic.ca. (613) 241–7007 X300

ACTIVITY D: CHOOSING AN ISSUE

Activity D1: Value Line Activity

Materials:

- Pieces of paper in 3 different colours (each piece should be approximately 1/8 the size of a piece of letter-size paper). Enough pieces so that each student can use approximately 6 pieces of each colour (=18 pieces per student)
- Open space
- Scrap paper
- Masking tape
- Markers
- 8 shoeboxes, plastic bins, or buckets etc.
- Chairs or pylons that can go outside

Preparing for the Activity:

1. Read the entire procedure below; it will help to make sense of these instructions.

2. Distribute pieces of coloured paper so that every student has access to many pieces of the coloured paper.

3. Put a bin near groups of students so that as they write their ideas they can put the slips of paper into a bin.

4. On the board or on an easel (if outside), write the code for what colour matches what venue. For example: pink=home, blue=school, white=community.

5. Outside, create a space where there is an imaginary line upon which your whole group could stand. This line is a scale. Put a sign on one side of the line that says "don't care" and a sign on the other side of the line that says "really really care".

6. You may wish to create 8 signs that say: "destruction of habitat", "wasting electricity", "driving too much", "other", in anticipation of what issues the students will choose as important to them. You can have scrap paper ready and create them while your students are writing what bugs them in steps 2-4 in the procedure.

Procedure:

Part I

1. Today, students are going to speak for the students themselves and on behalf of non-human animals that cant speak for themselves. Give students examples of things that bug you that you think would also bug other animals. For example, idling cars bugs me because of the noise and air pollution they create. For example, urban sprawl drives me crazy—lots of animals homes and great places to play are being cut down to create more places to shop.

2. Tell students that when you say "go" you would like them to use the pink pieces of paper to write down things that bug them *that happen at home*. These things should be things that also probably bug the animals in their community. For example, my brother doesn't recycle toilet paper rolls, my parents use pesticides on the lawn, my house is too warm at night so we are probably wasting natural gas, etc. Students should write one idea per piece of paper and try to fill as many pieces of paper as possible. Students should put their pieces of paper in a central bin.

3. Repeat step two, this time having students use blue paper to write down ideas about things that *happen at school* that bug them (and probably bug the animals in their community).

4. Repeat step three, this time having students use white paper to write down ideas about things that happen in their neighbourhood.

5. Put all of the ideas in a central bin.

Part II

1. Take students outside. Create a space where there is an imaginary line upon which your whole group could stand. This line is a scale. Put a sign on one side of the line that says "don't care" and a sign on the other side of the line that says "really really care".

2. Tell students that you are going to draw ideas from the bin. For example, one thing that bugs one of the students is that her sister leaves the television on. Tell students that in response to the idea of wasting electricity, when you say '1,2,3, go', students should go to stand on the line on the appropriate place on the scale, depending on how much they care about that issue. Explain to students that they are not ranking themselves/comparing themselves to each other. Instead, they are just listening to their own feelings about an issue.

3. Draw a piece of paper from the bin. Read the issue aloud. Ask students to rate their feeling about the issue. While you are saying '1,2,3' (slowly), students should decide where they will stand when you finally say "go".

4. Repeat step 3 for 5-8 of the ideas in the bin.

Part III

1. Use previously prepared signs or make up signs now that reflect the top 7 issues students seem to care about. Make one sign that says "other". Tape the signs to chairs and spread the chairs around an open space.

2. Ask students to look at the issues. When you say "go", tell them that you would like them to go to the sign that has the name of the issue in which they are **least interested**. "1,2,3…go"

3. Ask students to look at the issues. When you say "go", tell them that you would like them to go to the sign that has the name of the issue in which they are somewhat **interested**. "1,2,3…go"

4. Ask students to look at the issues. When you say "go", tell them that you would like them to go to the sign that has the name of the issue in which they are **most interested.** "1,2,3…go"

5. Have these groups sit together to discuss the issue more specifically. Go to each group and try to put students into groups of 2-4 depending on common interests. From here, you can use these groups to research the issue and/or act on the issue.

Activity D2: Visioning a Change

Part I:

1. Use the chart below. Discuss the meaning of each of the headings, using the example to illustrate the meaning.

2. Solicit other examples from the whole group.

3. In small groups, have students work on generating more examples.

4. Debrief in large group.

What Would a School that is Working Toward a Sustainable Future Look Like?

OPERATIONAL PRACTICES	ORGANISATIONAL PRINCIPLES	PHYSICAL SURROUNDINGS	CURRICULUM
• Composting program	• Prioritize tapping into community resources, e.g. Elderly, NGOs, etc.	• a diversity of indigenous (local) plants in the school yard	• local issues are integrated into the curriculum

Part II:

Ask students to brainstorm in small groups: what are some things that happen at your school that are not Earth-friendly? Think of rules, practices.

Part III

Use the value-line activity procedure to have students choose: if you could change one thing about your school, what would be the non-Earth-friendly thing from your list that you would most like to change?

E. CHOOSING A PROJECT

Activity E1: Classifying Project Ideas[7]

Purpose of the activity:

- To begin thinking about opportunities for taking action

Materials:

For each group of students (3-5 students)
- Small "Types of Action" Title cards (on white paper)
- 7-10 action project examples, cut apart (on coloured paper)

Procedure:

1. Introduce different types of action by writing possibilities on the board and **briefly** describing each one (e.g. political action, eco-management, education – see attached sheet for a complete list, p29)

2. In small groups (3-5 students) have students lay out their own "types of action" title cards then read through the sample project cards and categorize them under the appropriate headings

3. If any student has been involved in an action project, they should create a card for themselves and add it to their sorted pile

4. Ask students to pick the project that seems most interesting to them and be ready to share it and describe why they chose it

5. When small groups are done, have students share their most interesting action project and explain why it is interesting. You may also want them to post their cards under the appropriate heading on a piece of chart paper to create a permanent display of possible projects.

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[7] Adapted by MJ Barrett from Project Wild. (1995). *Taking Action: An educator's guide to involving students in environmental action projects.* Bethesda, MD: Western Region Environmental Education Council, Inc. Order from Council for Environmental Education. www.projectwild.org (713) 520-1936Ph.

TYPES OF ACTION

Educate & Inform

This can involve educating peers or younger students, community education programs, newspaper articles, plays, poems, posters, advertisements, workshops etc.

Make Consumer Choices

Personal decisions like refusing to buy items with more than one layer of packaging, buying Canadian made and locally grown products, buying organic, boycotting products produced by known operators of sweatshops, buying used, reducing consumption etc.

Persuade Others To…

Similar to educate and inform, this approach attempts to convince people to make changes. Letters to the editor, PA announcements, advertisements (or anti-ads – see Adbusters' website), pamphlets, street theatre etc. are all useful persuasion tools).

Raise Funds

This can refer either to fundraising for an external cause or raising funds to implement your own project.

Engage in Political Action

This has some crossover with legal action and can include meeting with elected officials, speaking at public meetings and hearings, circulating petitions, supporting political candidates, writing letters to the editor etc.

Initiate Legislative Action

This approach is important and usually involves a longer term process. Short term contributions, such as making a presentation to city hall or town council can help initiate or support a legislative change – e.g. making a presentation to support the creation of an anti-idling bylaw or a law to reduce pesticide use in the community.

Eco-management Projects

These projects make physical changes to the environment including schoolyard naturalization, tree planting, river bank stabilization etc. Be careful to distinguish their ecological value from projects that are simply for "beautification".

Make Lifestyle Choices

In addition to consumer choices, this also includes such decisions as walking, riding a bike or taking public transportation, choosing low-impact entertainment, and generally conducting one's life in ways which have less impact on the planet and are more sustainable in the long term.

Civil Disobedience and Peaceful Dissent

Civil disobedience encompasses the active refusal to obey certain laws, demands and commands of a government or of an occupying power **without resorting to physical violence**.

Examples:
- Rosa Parks sitting in the "white" section of the bus
- Draft dodgers—people who avoid serving military service
- "Tresspassers" who "sit in" an office without permission to attract attention to an issue

Peaceful Dissent is similar in that it involves opposition to a rule or to the usual way of doing things, but it does not involve breaking the law. Examples of peaceful dissent include: parades with protest signs, gatherings in public places (with a permit), wearing gym clothing inside out to protest the use of sweatshop labour, etc.

Other…

Your call – anything that doesn't fit into the above categories.

EXAMPLES OF ACTION PROJECTS—FOCUS ON WATER

Students were concerned when they learned that 2/3 of the world's population will not have access to clean water as of 2025. Students created a compelling audio/visual presentation to play over-and-over again in the foyer of the school during events in which the community was already invited to the school (eg. parent-teacher interviews, holiday concert, etc.). In addition, students identified several non-profit organizations that work to help people throughout the world gain access to clean water. The students printed information from the non-profit organizations to have available for members of the public to take home if they wanted to learn more after seeing/hearing the students' presentation.

Several families at this local school were dealing with low water levels in their household wells. Students began to ask questions about where the local beverage company was getting the water to make the bottled beverages. Students explored these questions with the local municipal government and conservation authority. Then the students wrote an article about what they learned and their concerns. They searched for diverse venues in which to share the article, including: the local newspaper, the school website, the community bulletin board at the library, etc.

Students learned that 75% of India's surface water and 80% of China's surface water has become too contaminated to drink. The students decided to find out what chemicals in their own homes were contaminating their local bodies of water. When students learned that many cleaning products were the culprits, they decided to lead a campaign in their own homes to reduce the use of commercial cleaning products. The students promised that for three weeks, they would offer to clean anything appropriate with baking soda and vinegar instead of the cleaning product their family usually used. At the end of the campaign, students shared stories about which tasks could continue to be done using baking soda and vinegar and which tasks their families were opting to switch back to the commercial cleaner.

When researching water issues on the internet, students learned about peoples'concerns in India related to a particular pop company's practices at their bottling plants in India (for example, the pop company is accused of using up ground water supplies in drought-stricken areas, making beverages from water that has high levels of pesticides in it, producing hazardous waste and not disposing of it properly, etc.). Students decided that they wanted to find out which products in their local stores were sold by the particular pop company they were studying. Then, the students made individual personal pledges to reduce or eliminate their own consumption of the pop products for a two week period. Many of the students decided to continue their personal avoidance of the specific pop products indefinitely.

At a local conference, some students learned about a nonprofit organization that supports park and 'turf' managers to manage lawns and gardens without the use of pesticides (organiclandscape.org). The students were concerned when they learned about the persistence of pesticide chemicals in the water system. The students decided to contact the parks manager for their municipality and the greens keepers for two local golf courses. They prepared a list of questions to ask the managers via email concerning their use of pesticides. Once the students ascertained that pesticides were indeed being used, they requested a meeting at which they tried to persuade the managers to seek the support of the nonprofit organic greens- keeping organization. When one of the managers agreed to do this, the students wrote a letter to the editor of the local newspaper thanking the manager for her openness and forward-thinking approach (and reporting the lack of action by the other two managers).

A group of students designed an audit that they used to analyse the litter found in a local river. They identified the types of litter they found most frequently and the probable sources of the litter. The students then did research to pinpoint some of the potential negative consequences of having the most populous types of litter in the river. Once equipped with compelling and specific information about the litter, the students wrote letters to the businesses that were originally responsible for the litter to ask them to consider alternative types of packaging for their products (eg. biodegradable packaging, reusable containers, etc.). The students learned how to identify the person at the companies that would be most likely to constructively respond to their requests. They also experimented with contacting more than one department at a particular company to see what types of responses they would get from the different employees.

One student watched a television program in which she learned that poor sanitation systems can lead to outbreaks of waterborne diseases such as cholera. She was particularly concerned about the cholera epidemic in Zimbabwe. The student shared this information with her classmates; the classmates felt compelled to act. In small groups, the students researched different organizations that help financially poor communities to build safe sanitation systems to protect the quality of the drinking water. The teacher helped the students to generate a list of criteria to use to decide upon an organization to which they should donate funds. After choosing an organization to support, the students then researched different types of fundraising opportunities. They chose to sell compact fluorescent light bulbs to raise funds for the water charity through http://greenstudents.ca/.

A guest speaker visited a grade eight class and told them about a number of countries in the world where the countries are being forced to sell household tap water distribution system to private companies (the International Monetary Fund often stipulates that certain public services must be privatized in order for the country to qualify for financial loans). Students were angered by the difficult and often tragic position in which this puts financially poor families in cities like La Paz, Bolivia. The students were also moved to try to protect their own municipal water supply. In an effort to try to get members of their community to better appreciate tap water and to reduce the waste associated with plastic water bottles, the students sold stainless steel water bottles (http://greenstudents.ca/.) at school sporting events and gave away free fill-ups of tap water to people who bought the water bottles. The profits that they made were donated to a nonprofit organization that promotes the protection of public rights to water (http://www.canadians.org/).

While on a field trip to a brand new municipal swimming pool, students were concerned about the amount of water being wasted in the change rooms of the new facility. They felt that the facility should have low-flow taps, showers and toilets and that the showers should automatically turn off after a certain period of time. The students created a list of questions to send to the municipal recreation department about some of the decisions made in planning the new facility. Unsatisfied with the answers, and aware that a new arena was in the planning stages, the students requested a meeting with the mayor of the town. They went to the meeting prepared to ask questions about the future direction of by-laws related to municipal buildings and to request that there be strict parameters about water usage in future buildings if these were not already in place.

For a geography project, students studied aerial photos of their local area that were taken in 1956. They noticed that there was a stream running right through their community that they were not aware of because the stream had been paved over. The students asked their teacher for support to learn more about their local stream and they wondered if other streams in their community had also been paved over as the town grew. They contacted the local government and the provincial government to learn more about the rules related to paving over streams and wetlands. Unsatisfied with the current regulations, the students wrote letters to both the municipal and the provincial government to request stricter rules to protect waterways, especially in areas experiencing new construction.

Students tested the quality of water in a local river for a science and geography unit of study. When they discovered that the quality of water was too poor to support many of the species that had originally lived there, the students contacted a number of local non-profit organizations via email to ask questions about potential sources of contamination and potential actions to remediate the problem. Students learned that a number of native plants act as natural water cleaners, but that these plants are often removed when home and business owners landscape their properties that abut the river. As a result, there is not as much natural cleaning of the waterways as there should be. Students engaged in a partnership project with one of the nonprofit organizations to replant native plants along the river bank.

On a field trip to a local waterway, students learned that one of the abundant plants on the waterway was an invasive species that had been imported from Europe for ornamental gardens and had spread to ±wildq areas. They learned that the plant was not a good food source for the birds and insects in their area, but that its presence pushed out the native plant species that were a good food source. In this way, the presence of the invasive species disrupted the entire food web at the waterway. When the students learned that the only viable remedy for this problem was to pull out the plant by hand, they offered to help. The students planned a second trip to the waterway. They discussed methods for removing the invasive species that would involve as little disruption of the native species as possible. They also contacted a local naturalist organization to ask about the best way to destroy the invasive plants. Then they went to work pulling out the invasive species!

When studying natural resource use, students were alarmed and surprised to learn about the massive impacts on rivers caused by large-scale hydro-electric projects and about the amount of water involved in mining oil from the Alberta oil sands. The students became interested in searching for ways to reduce the use of electricity at school so as to reduce their indirect impact on Canadian rivers. The students created an audit to determine all of the ways electricity was wasted at the school. Then the students broke up into small groups; each group took on two electricity-wasting practices in the school and generated ideas about methods to reduce electricity use. As a class, the students brainstormed criteria for choosing the best reduction methods. Each group chose one electricity-reduction strategy (eg. rewards for classes with lights off at recess time) and monitored the impact of their strategy for four weeks after implementation.

Students visited their local drinking water treatment plant and sewage treatment plant. When they became aware of the amount of electricity, chemicals and money that were involved in treating the water that comes to their taps and goes down their drains, many of the students wanted to learn ways in which they could reduce their personal water use. Students were challenged to identify three things that they could do in their own lives and to keep a log for two weeks of every opportunity they had to make a change in their own personal behaviour. For each opportunity, the students were asked to report whether they took the opportunity to do things in a water-saving manner or whether they did things in the conventional, water-wasting way and to explain their choice. At the end of two weeks, students reflected on what, if any, new practices they would continue and how the change (or lack of change) felt.

After watching a video about the resources that go into producing a disposable water bottle, some students decided to reduce their own personal use of disposable plastic water bottles. The students estimated how many plastic water bottles they were usually consuming in a week. The students challenged one another to have the best percentage decrease and/or the fewest number used in a week. The students posted a chart to record the number of bottles used per student per day. At the end of each week, they checked in to see how they were doing. The students continued this for three weeks and then reflected on their personal choices going forward.

Some students noticed that their local school yard was being treated with pesticides. They contacted the department responsible for school ground maintenance and learned that there was no plan in place to eliminate the use of pesticides on school grounds. To protest the use of pesticides in their school yards, students created fake ₌gas masks₍ and wore them during recesses, lunch breaks and outdoor gym periods. The students refused to participate in outdoor gym activities on the grassy area of the schoolyard. The students created a flyer which outlined their concerns and which referred to a web page where students provided more information about their concerns about the impact of pesticides on local waterways and links to other, pesticide-related websites. The students offered gas masks to other students, teachers and visitors to the school.

A group of high school students learned that over 90 First Nations communities in Canada have no access to clean tap water and are on ₌boil-water₍ advisories. After learning that despite many letters, meetings, etc., many of the communities have been living with boil-water advisories for many years, the students wanted to do something to draw attention to the issue. The students planned an event. They gathered camping stoves, reusable mugs, and other necessary equipment. They contacted the media and invited key people, including the local MP and MPP, to the event. They created information flyers and a webpage with more information and other webpage links. On the day of the event, the students gathered on the lawn of the school during the busy period at the end of the school day in which students are leaving the school and many parents have come to the school to pick up their children. They boiled water for drinking and distributed the water and the flyers to as many passers-by as possible.

Facts from speech by Maude Barlow, Senior Advisor on Water Issues to the President of the General Assembly of the United Nations http://video.google.ca/videoplay?docid=-2452563840429862970 ***viewed January 3rd, 2009.***

Activity E2: Defining the Problem

What problem has your group chosen to work on? (e.g. students who do not have good food to eat, students vandalize school garden, students get driven/drive to school, etc.)

_____

What are possible symptoms of this problem?	**What are possible root causes of the problem?**
What are possible remedies for the *symptoms*?	**What are possible remedies for the *root causes*?**

F: BUILDING MOTIVATION: SO WHAT?

General Overview

Students create a concept map of an issue. The central picture of the map depicts the issue. Each line away from the central *picture* asks the question "*so what*?". At the end of each line is a new picture which tries to address the "so what?" question.

Objectives

- Students explore the diverse reasons to care about something.
- Students draw upon emotional and rational dimensions of their responses to an issue.

Materials

- Chart paper (preferably already used on one side)
- Crayons, pencil crayons, etc.
- Old magazines, glue, scissors (not essential but very helpful)

Time Required

45 minutes

Procedure

1. Have your students choose an issue that they care about. You may wish to do this using the "Value Line" activity to help them choose something. You will need to decide on the parameters that you want to set. Does it need to be a particular issue studied in the last unit you covered in your course (eg. Farming issues)? Does it need to fit within a theme in your club?, etc.

2. Model the activity described below using an appropriate issue.
   a. In the centre of a piece of chart paper, draw a square, circle, squiggly shape. Inside that shape, draw a picture (or use pictures from a magazine) that represents something that bugs you. NOTE: trying to use pictures rather than words can help students to try to think about the issue in a more holistic way (eg. Lots of roads are being built in the area in which I live).
   b. Draw a line away from the picture. On top of the line, write the question, "so what?".
   c. Connect the line to a new shape.
   d. Inside the shape, draw a picture of one of the consequences of the thing that bugs you (eg more roads mean more cars on the roads).
   e. Draw a line away from the picture of the cars. On top of the line, write the question, "so what?".
   f. Connect the line to a new shape. In the shape, draw a picture of the consequences of the situation in the previous picture (eg. More cars mean more air pollution).

g. Continue with this one line of thinking until you no longer have an answer to the question so what (for example, my next picture would be of my grandfather dead because older people and very young people are very vulnerable to air pollution.)

h. Start a new spoke from the central picture with a new line of thinking (eg. More roads also bother me because they take habitat away from animals. So what?—fewer animals. So what?--fewer animals for me to see. So what?—less happiness for me.

i. Etc.

3. Have the students create their own "So What?" maps using the issue that they chose in step 1.

4. Have the students post their maps around the room and invite everyone to look at everyone else's. Students should be given the opportunity to *not* post their maps.

G: RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Activity GI: Placemat Research Activity

What's Going On?

In small groups, students write as much as they know about their issue as well as their own questions about the issue on a "placemat". The questions are then coded to determine the best way to find the answers to the questions and the students conduct their research.

Materials

- Chart paper
- Internet access (desirable but not necessary during class time)
- Markers
- Tape
- Scrap paper

Time

- 60 minutes of class time
- Independent or class time for research
- 4-8 days to wait for responses to emailed research questions

Getting Prepared

1. Read the procedure below first; it will help you to understand the preparation instructions.

2. Do one of the activities above to help students to identify an issue of concern.

3. Create placemats for each group of students. Make extras in case some students' topics dictate that they should work on their own or in smaller groups. Each placemat is made from 1 piece of chart paper. Draw 2 diagonal lines on the paper to divide it into 4 sections. In each section, tape a copy of one of the following questions so if 4 people are sitting around the placemat, each person has a clearly defined section with one question in it.

- What is happening that bugs you? Write details and examples.
- Who is involved in this problem? Name as many people or organizations as possible.
- How could this be different? What are alternatives?
- What else do you want to know about this issue?

4. Put a square in the middle of the page with the title: "issue" and a place for students to write the issue that they are concerned about.

5. Make one sample placemat. For example, concerning destruction of habitat in my town, I could write:

   What is happening that bugs you? Describe the problem. Write details and examples.
   - Greenlane got turned into a major road.
   - Rogers Reservoir Conservation Area is now surrounded by a driving range and a bus station.
   - Almost all of the land now has houses or stores on it.

   Who is involved in this problem? Name as many people or organizations as possible.
   - Shop owners
   - Shoppers
   - Building companies
   - Government: municipal, provincial, federal
   - Non-human animals

   How could this be different? What are alternatives?
   - We could make buildings taller instead of wider
   - We could decide to have fewer stores
   - We could plan communities smarter to prioritize habitat for non-human animals. For example, we could plan to have more public transit and therefore less roads, parking lots, garages, etc.

   What else do you want to know about this issue?
   - Who makes planning decisions?
   - If most people voted, would they vote for things to be the way they are?
   - Which communities have done this really well?
   - What are other ways of using space more efficiently?

6. Write the placemat focusing questions on the board or an easel so that you can model the answers and ask for suggestions to check for student understanding before they work on their own placemat.

7. Write the code used in step one (eg circle=…; square = …) on the easel/board.

Procedure

Part I

1. Have students get into groups of 2-4 students in which there is a shared interest in an issue (see *Identifying an Issue* activity D1 in this guide, p25).

2. Tell the students that they are going to find out more about the issue they have chosen. Use the model (see preparation section below) to explain the four focusing questions to the students. Provide and solicit examples.

3. In groups, have students sit around the placemat. **At the same time**, each student writes **one** answer to the question that is directly in front of her/him. When they are ready (or when you say switch), students turn the paper around (OR students can get up and move to the chair to the right but leave the placemat in the same position) so that a new question is facing each student. Each student reads what the previous student wrote and then adds her/his own ideas—**as many as possible**. Students repeat this until everyone in the group has had a chance to answer each question.

4. In their small group, have the students review all of the responses. Do they have anything they want to add?

5. Collect the placemats. You may need time to review them before moving on to part B.

Part II

1. Depending on the age/ability of your students, you may want to do this step for the students or you may want to have them do it in groups. Review the students' "What else do you want to know section".

2. Refer to (or write) the following code on the easel/board:
   a. Circle all of the questions that you think have answers that are accessible in books or on the internet. For example, *what level of government looks after town planning*, is a good question for a text book on levels of government.
   b. Put a squiggly mark around questions that professional people would know the answer to, but the answer probably isn't easy to find on the internet or in a book. For example, *what land in our community is currently designated as protected greenspace?* Is a question that would be best addressed by a phone call or email to a government helpline.
   c. Put a square around all of the questions that you think would require a discussion among people or survey to find the answer to. For example, *what is an appropriate balance between the number of stores we have in our community and the amount of greenspace we protect for non-human habitat and human play areas* is a question that requires a deliberation or a survey.

3. Provide students with a stack of scrap paper. On each piece of paper, students should write only one of their research questions on the top of the page. Students should staple all of their papers together. As students gather information, they should write notes on the page with the question to which the new information applies. For each of their questions, they should follow the appropriate instructions below:

▪ **Circled Questions**: Provide students with a list of possible internet sites (see resource section of this guide for suggestions). Have students choose one site from your list of sites, find one site on their own using a search engine (such as google) and use one book from the library.

▪ **Squiggly Mark Questions:** Have students type up their question as well as a "who might know" list. Depending on the age of the students, you may wish to compile and send the emails yourself or allow them to source the appropriate person and send the email.

▪ **Squared Questions**: students may wish to host a community discussion or a discussion for local high school students. For guidelines about encouraging constructive discussion, check out *Moderator's Guide for Public Deliberations,* Canadian Council for International Co–operation. See "Voluntary Sector Section" at www.ccic.ca (613) 241–7007 X300. Constructing an appropriate survey could be done as a math assignment.

Activity G2: Analysis and Assessment of Information Learned Through Research

What is Going On?

Students review their notes from their research and create a concept map with words and pictures.

Materials

- Chart paper
- Scrap paper of different colours
- Crayons/pencil crayons/markers/pencils/erasers

Preparation

Prepare your own mind map to share with the students or build one together about a concept you are all familiar with. For examples, see the book *Beyond Monet* by Barrie Bennett and Carol Rolheiser or http://classes.aces.uiuc.edu/ACES100/Mind/c-m3.html and for other examples see http://www.george-spencer.notts.sch.uk/LeadingEdge_Website/L2L/images/LearningPower_MindMap.gif and http://www.creativeeducationfoundation.org/images/mindmap-sm.jpg.

Procedure

1. Share and/or build a model mind map with the students (see preparation section below for examples). If possible, read about mind maps before you do this with your students. If that isn't possible, there are steps written below to get you started. Do steps two and three below in your model, but do not try to draw connections between the ideas (step six) at this point.

2. Give each student a piece of chart paper. Have them create a circle in the middle of the paper with a few words/pictures that describe their issue.

3. Ask students to write words and/or pictures around the circle that represent different things they learned about the issue and their own reflections on what they've learned. You might encourage them to use pencil at first. If they want to add details about the words or pictures, you might have them do it on scrap paper and tape them in the appropriate spot in case they want to move the ideas around.

4. Once students have had time to work on their ideas, use your model to discuss the idea of illustrating how the different concepts on the map are connected.

5. Encourage the students to think about and illustrate how the different ideas on the map are connected.

6. Have students pair up and explain to each other what their map represents. Encourage them to actively listen to suggestions from their partner.

7. Encourage students to revise their maps based on the feedback from their partners.

Rubrics

An example of a mindmap rubric is provided below. Some other helpful mindmap rubrics can be found at:
http://dmc.umn.edu/activities/mindmap/assessment.pdf
http://edmall.gsfc.nasa.gov/WebQuest/sysmaprub.htm
http://www.uwstout.edu/soe/profdev/inspirationrubric.html

Example of a Mindmap Rubric

	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1	Student Assmt	Teacher Assmt
Knowledge Lines of thought away from the central image reflect an understanding of the ecological, health, economic, justice, etc. consequences of the issue.	Diagram shows a thorough understanding of the many consequences of the issue.	Diagram shows considerable understanding of the many consequences of the issue.	Diagram shows some understanding of the many consequences of the issue.	Diagram shows limited understanding of the many consequences of the issue.		
Thinking and Inquiry *Relationships* among the consequences of the issue are demonstrated .	Diagram indicates a thorough understanding of relationships.	Diagram indicates considerable understanding of relationships.	Diagram indicates some understanding of relationships.	Diagram indicates limited understanding of relationships.		
Communication • Spelling • Colour • Neatness • Graphics enhance the message	Information is communicated with thorough effectiveness.	Information is communicated with considerable effectiveness.	Information is communicated with some effectiveness.	Information is communicated with limited effectiveness.		

Activity G3: Research Timeline[8]

Purpose

- To research the background and history of an issue
- To highlight major events/ key moments
- To begin identifying stakeholders including possible supporters

Materials

- Blank chart paper taped end-to-end (preferably already used on one side)
- Thick markers (that do not bleed through the paper)

Procedure

1. Research the background and history of the issue. You may want to draw on the following sources:
   - People – parents, local school or government representatives, organizations, businesses involved in the issue
   - Newspapers
   - Magazines
   - Internet
   - Field trip, guest visits and/ or interviews

2. Hang a piece of chart paper on the wall. Draw a horizontal line through the middle of the page. Approximately 1/3 of the way along the line, write the word, 'Now.

3. Develop a timeline that charts the history of the issue. Include as many details as possible.

   On the timeline, highlight key moments and turning points using a bold marker and/or brightly coloured paper. Consider:
   - Local, regional, provincial, national and global events and influences
   - What groups have been in conflict with each other at different points on the timeline
   - What the underlying interests are of groups and individuals involved

4. Discuss the timeline, addressing such questions as:
   - What initiated the problem?
   - What were the driving forces behind some of the major events/ key moments? Was it individuals? An ecological crisis? Money? Other?
   - How does past work influence present efforts?
   - Where are the possible spaces/ opportunities for us to act?

5. List any questions that arise (areas for further research).

This analysis leads nicely into the force field analysis and can help students begin to determine many important things including: root causes of an issue, of what part of the problem/issue they wish to address, possible supporters, and what type of action might be possible and most effective.

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[8] By MJ Barrett

H. PROJECT PLANNING

Activity H1: Project Planning Template

Date: _____   Name:_____

Team Members:_____

1. What is the issue/problem that you want to work on?_____

2. What would you like to see happen? How would you like this to be different?

_____

_____

_____

3. Define the problem using the sheet provided (Activity Sheet E2, p34). Attach the sheet to this document.

4. Examples of actions you could take to deal with this issue:

Type of Action	Examples of Action Someone could Take about the Issue (Be as specific as possible!)
Educate & Inform This can involve educating community members, peers or younger students through: community education programs, newspaper articles, plays, advertisements, workshops etc.	
Persuade Others To… Similar to educate and inform, this approach attempts to convince people to make changes.	
Raise Funds This can refer either to fundraising for an external charity/'cause' or raising funds to implement your own project.	
Engage in Political Action Trying to persuade people with political power to …	
Make Personal Lifestyle Choices Personal decisions that do **not** involve buying things, like: • Bringing reusable bags to the grocery store • Riding your bike or walking instead of asking for a ride • Choosing to leave and/or express disapproval when people tell racist/sexist jokes	

Make Consumer Choices Personal decisions that **do** involve buying things, like: refusing to buy items with more than one layer of packaging, buying Canadian made and locally grown products, buying organic, boycotting products produced by known operators of sweatshops, buying used clothing, buying less stuff, etc.	
Get Your Hands Dirty Projects These projects make physical changes to the environment including schoolyard naturalization, tree planting, river bank stabilization etc. They also include things like: building a school or play structures for children in need, etc.	
Peaceful Dissent *Peaceful Dissent* involves opposition to a rule or to the usual way of doing things, but it does not involve breaking the law (when breaking the law, the term is 'civil disobedience'). Examples of peaceful dissent include: parades with protest signs, gatherings in public places (with a permit), wearing gym clothing inside out to protest the use of sweatshop labour, etc.	

5. What criteria should you use to choose an action?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Choose 3 potential actions. Write a brief description in the top row of the chart. Write the criteria you listed above on the left side of the chart (a few examples are provided for you). For each possible action, put a check, an x or a question mark beside each criterion.

Criteria	Possible Action #1 is: _____ _____	Possible Action #2 is: _____ _____	Possible Action #3 is: _____ _____
1. Will the action address the root cause of the problem (not just a symptom)?			
2. Will this action be effective in making the change we hope for?			
3. Will the results of the action last for a reasonable amount of time?			
4. Is this action suited to the number of people we have working on this project?			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			

7. What action would you like to take to try to improve this issue? Be specific.

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. Why did you choose this particular action?

_____

_____

_____

9. What is the goal of your project?

_____

_____

_____

10. Who is the target audience for your project?

_____

_____

11. What questions do you need answered? Keep a running list here.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

12. For each of your questions above, indicate how the answer to the question can be found:

   a. Regular research (eg. books, internet, etc.). Write 'RR' beside the question.
   b. Find an expert (eg. find the appropriate non-profit organization, government department, etc. and phone and/or email a person there to ask your question). Write "FAE".
   c. Survey (eg. survey people in your school or community and ask them the question.) Write "S" beside the question.

   Use the workplan sheet at the end of this template to help your group to make a plan to find the answers to these questions.

13. Think of EVERYONE who is affected by this issue. Complete the chart.

STAKEHOLDER (=person, plant, animal, place, group, etc. who is affected by your issue)	Likely to **oppose** your action **or** to have **concerns** about your action?

14. How can you engage the supporters so that they can help you?

_____

_____

_____

15. How can you address the concerns of the people who might be resistant to your project

_____

_____

16. How will you know if you are successful?

EVIDENCE THAT WE HAVE MADE PROGRESS TOWARD OUR GOAL	TOOL THAT WE CAN USE TO MEASURE OUR SUCCESS	SPECIFIC MEASUREMENT THAT WE WOULD BE HAPPY WITH	STATUS ON: _____ (Date)	STATUS ON: _____ (Date)
Eg. If the project goal is to get safe bike lanes near the new school, one piece of evidence that we have been successful is that people in the community support the project.	Eg. Count signatures on a petition.	EG. 100 signatures		

17. **Workplan**: Who is doing what?

(Include details about: who is researching the answers to the questions identified in step 5, who is approaching potential supporters, who is addressing potential resistance/concerns with your project, who is buying _____, who is writing_____, who is…)

WHAT?	WHO?	WHEN?	STATUS on _____ (date) (is it done? Is it in progress…)	STATUS on _____ (date) (is it done? Is it in progress…)

Activity H2: Force Field Analysis – Barriers and Supporters[9]

Purpose

- To identify stakeholders who may be involved in an issue
- To analyze the perspective and concerns of each stakeholder
- To develop a list of questions for further research

Materials

- Large chart paper (two pieces side-by-side lengthwise works well)
- Thick markers
- Small squares of paper; enough for 1-2 squares per stakeholder (approx 8cm X8cm)
- Masking tape

Procedure

1. Set up the chart paper by writing the following headings across the top:

   Very supportive ↔ supportive ↔ neutral ↔ some resistance ↔ blocking

2. Set aside one section on the paper to put stakeholders names if your group is very uncertain about the stakeholder's likely position on the issue. Set up another section of the paper to record questions as they arise.

3. After selecting an issue, name the stakeholders who may be involved and write their names on the small squares of paper provided (one stakeholder per piece of paper). Consider both individuals and organizations, as well as differing layers of power and scope of influence (local, sregional, provincial, national and global). You may want to write some stakeholders down more than once since they may fit under two or more different headings.

   > e.g. A class wants to implement a no-idling request/bylaw in front of the school building. The force field may include: the participating class members, other students, school staff (teachers, administration, custodians, cafeteria and office staff etc.), the school board, community members and parents, environmental groups, municipal officials, and possibly the provincial government or other communities who have attempted a similar project.

4. Using masking tape, place the paper under the appropriate heading on the chart (this should require some discussion, highlighting possible stereotypes and areas where further research is needed).

5. As a group, discuss the following questions:
   a. Are there stakeholders you could meet with/appeal to in order to get them to support your efforts in some way?
   b. Is there enough support (and/or few enough barriers) to go ahead with a project on this issue?

---

[9] Adapted from an activity by MJ Barrett

I. SKILL BUILDING ACTIVITIES[10]

Activity I1: Developing Telephone Skills

Purpose

- To identify and develop skills while preparing for, and making, phone calls
- To practice making phone calls to build confidence

Materials

- Copies of telephone tips and scenarios (below)
- Old telephone receiver(s) – optional

Procedure

1. Read through the "Phone Tips" below.

2. Model a simulation (see simulations at end of lesson) using the steps below and then assign students groups of 3 to have them practice the different roles: one person telephoning, one person receiving the call, and one observer. Callers should sit back-to-back; observer should write notes.

3. Take a few minutes for each person to prepare statements, questions and potential responses.

4. After everyone has had a chance to try all three roles, in small groups, students should identify strong and weak points, areas of confusion or misunderstandings, and ways to improve.

5. As a large group, discuss the most common strengths, weaknesses, possibilities for improvement.

Phone Tips

Before Calling

- Know why you are calling
- Know why you were calling this particular person or office
- Know about the person being called: level of knowledge, opinion on subject at hand, past concerns, past statements, etc.
- Do your homework; Explore the organization's website if they have one, so that you are not asking questions that are answered on the website
- Know what you need
- Make notes about what you want to ask
- Make notes about what you want to say

---

[10] These resources and activities were compiled by MJ Barrett and drawn from William F. Hammond Ph.D. Florida Gulf Coast University, and Lee District School System, Lee County Florida. See also "Action in Schools" (1997). Green Teacher ,50.

- Have a paper and pencil ready to take notes; start with the date, time, name of person called, and phone number used
- Prepare yourself to answer questions
- Gather and organize whatever information you may need to help you answer questions
- Know how far you can go in making commitments and promises
- For your first few calls, prepare a tape recorder to tape your end of the conversation for future reference

Starting the Call

- Identify yourself by first and last name
- Briefly identify your association: A member of the _____ class at _____school
- Quickly state your needs:
- I would like to speak with _____
- I would like to speak with someone about _____
- I would like some information about _____

Prepare For Roadblocks

- "Could you suggest a time I might call back?"
- "Could you suggest someone else who might be able to help me?"
- The never-ending computer phone menu
- Be ready to leave a clear message, should you be directed to a voice mailbox

Ending the Call

- Wrap up by repeating and summarizing any commitments either of you have made
- Be sure to say 'thanks'
- If you don't reach the person you need to speak to;
- leave a message,
- Please tell _____that I called about _____.,
- "Please leave a message that I called, and that I will call again.", or
- Find out when you should call back.

After Calling

- Edit, revise and expand your notes
- Review and critique your tape recording
- Initiate your next action steps
- Honour any commitments made
- Call back if necessary

Sample Simulations

- **Simulation 1:** Call the city/town bylaw officer to see if there are any regulations around idling vehicles.

- **Simulation 2:** Call the Conservation Authority to set up a meeting to discuss your proposed wetland rehabilitation project.

- **Simulation 3:** Call the police department to discuss ideas for working together to reduce littering and vandalism in a local ravine.

- **Simulation 4:** Call the water treatment plant to discuss your findings based on water quality tests you completed. (The tests suggest there is a high level of organic matter coming from the water treatment plant).

Activity I2: Lobbying

Purpose

- To introduce the concept of lobbying and to practice basic lobbying skills

Materials

- Lobbying simulations (attached)

Background Information

Though the term may evoke a sense of heading into risky territory, we, and our students, are lobbyists every day. Teachers lobby their principal or department head for support to take on a new project; students lobby their parents for extended curfews, a new phone line, or permission to host a party, etc.

Lobbying is a very sophisticated form of communication fundamental to how things get done in a democratic system of governance. Lobbying gets its name from the fact that this form of communication often takes place in the halls of provincial or national government buildings.

Lobbying can have three main purposes:

1. *Making a connection:* In "introductory lobbying," a team of students meets with a public official just to introduce themselves and seek out any ideas or advice that the public official may have on projects students might be interested in engaging in.

2. *Seeking advice:* This follow-up lobbying session is about "building a relationship and conducting reconnaissance" with an elected or public official. Students are interested in informing the official and seeking advice on a project they are considering. It is also a time to find out who the official thinks might be able to provide expertise to help the students with their work.

3. *Seeking commitment and support:* This request usually occurs on a return visit after the groundwork has been thoroughly completed.

Guidelines for Action

A lobbying team is made up of three team members, each with a specific responsibility.

Lobbyist Role 1: The Recorder

This person's responsibility is to plan the lobbying session with the other two team members and then to observe and record all that occurs during the lobbying session. This person usually leads the lobbying debriefing session with the rest of the team members, right after the lobbying session.

Lobbyist Role 2: The Listener-Support Speaker

This person's responsibility is to co-plan the lobbying session and then to carefully listen to everything each person says during the lobbying session. This person should be ready to assist the primary speaker

noting key points that they may have missed or to add additional information if it seems helpful to the session. They must fully know the objectives for the lobbying session and be sure the primary speaker covers them all. He or she must participate in the debriefing session right after the lobbying session is completed.

Lobbyist Role 3: The Primary Speaker – Presenter

This person's responsibility is to co-plan the lobbying session and then be prepared to be the primary communicator for the lobbying team during the lobbying session. The presenter is also responsible for participating in the lobbying debriefing session right after the lobbying session is completed.

The sequence for lobbying action

1. Do your homework and planning.

2. Make arrangements/appointments for the lobbying session.

3. Make an effective entrance/introductions and setting the stage.

4. Communicate your purpose and plan.

5. Clarify understand and commitments.

6. Summarize the key points of understanding and action follow-ups.

7. Say thank you and remind of follow-ups or commitments to be acted upon.

8. Conduct debriefing session with triad lobbying team to verify what each person observed and to review commitments and follow-up promises.

9. Make thank you note and follow-up with any pertinent information or affirmations of commitments.

10. File a written summary and note cards of your lobbying team's experience.

Simulations

Prepare enough lobbyist simulation cards so that each triad team has an opportunity to present their lobbying task before a "mock" town councilor or other elected official in a realistic simulation. The group will then critique each lobbying team for their effectiveness in accomplishing their assigned task. A variation is to ask the recorder/observer to publicly debrief the lobby team or even let the lobbying triad team publicly debrief in front of the remainder of the class and then get class feedback.

Town Councilor Strategies

- distract the lobbyists from their task by asking about their families, interests, talking about current events etc.
- avoid making any commitment of any kind. Reassure them that they have a good idea, but…
- allow yourself to be interrupted by a phone call or other visitor
- be late
- claim poverty, overwork, other demands
- claim you have no power

Sample Lobbying Simulations

Simulation 1: You are to seek the School Board Chair Dr. Fastfood's support to establish a composting program for all school lunchrooms.

Simulation 2: You are to meet with your school principal Mrs. Iam Green to move your interest in establishing a natural systems community habitat plan on about one quarter of your school grounds closer to reality.

Simulation 3: You are to meet with the town council chair Mr. Buildumbig to seek the support of the council to create a greenway and stream restoration program on a highly impacted town drainage ditch/ stream. The ditch used to be a very productive stream until it was changed into a flood and drainage ditch.

Simulation 4: You are to meet with town councilor Ione Tonnes who is a well known community leader and socialite. Your task is to convince the councilor that the community needs to establish a food bank and community re-use center that would support people bringing in goods that are still functional that other people could come and pick up for their use.

Simulation 5: You are to meet with school superintendent Dr. JJ. Growum to establish a school system community plan for creating a young naturalists mentoring program. The program would match high school students and retirees working with young primary students to help them develop a 'sense of place' with the natural systems in your community.

Simulation 6: County Councilor Bigalot has repeatedly directed county park staff not to spend money on implementing the Fall River Valley Wild Spaces Plan and Recreation Trail System. Get him to support the protection and development of passive recreation facilities in the Fall River Valley.

Simulation 8: You are to meet with town councilor Sisalow to inform him of the need for a nature reserve along the Credit River near the Village of Inglewood – very close to where an aggregate company wants to expand its gravel pits. You need to inform him of your project and gain his support.

Simulation 9: You are to meet with councilor Walsell to find out what her opinion of your Nature Reserve is and what she would recommend you do to achieve your goal.

Simulation 10: County Councilor Jacobs is said to oppose the Nature Reserve concept. Try to Change his position.

Simulation 11: County Councilor Tightmoney has been overheard saying that the Nature Reserve is a waste of taxpayer's money. Check it out with him and persuade him to a support your idea.

Activity I3: Letter Writing

Materials

- Municipal, Provincial and House of Commons web sites for local councilor, MPP and MP addresses
- Paper, envelopes, stamps or email access

Procedure

1. Read through the "letter writing tips" below.

2. Identify the most appropriate person/people to write your letter to.

3. Make sure you have done your research.

4. Write the letter, using proper business letter format.

5. Have it reviewed and proofread by peers and your teacher.

6. Mail the letter.

Letter Writing Tips

A good letter requires background research to identify to whom you need to write, and to be able to present an informed opinion. Be sure to use appropriate business letter format and consider including 3 paragraphs:

Paragraph 1: The introductory paragraph identifies you, your relationship to the recipient (e.g. concerned student, child of taxpayers in the riding etc.) and identifies the purpose of the letter.

Paragraph 2: The body paragraph clearly states your position on the issue and explains your rationale for taking that position. This is where you include some of your supporting evidence and explain how it backs up your position as well as explaining how the issue affects you.

Paragraph 3: The concluding paragraph identifies what you are requesting and asks for a reply.

Consider the following advice for writing a letter to your MP, adapted from the Canadian Psychological association's website: http://www.cpa.ca/documents/advocacy_p5.htm

✓ **Be direct.** State the subject of your letter clearly, keep it brief and address only one issue in each letter.

✓ **Be accurate.** Beware of false or misleading information. Always double-check if you are not sure.

✓ **Be informative.** State your own views, support them with your expert knowledge, and cite the bill number (Bill C-###) of relevant legislation, if appropriate. Your personally written letter is more highly regarded than pre-printed materials or postcards.

✓ **Be courteous.** Never threaten your MP. Keep in mind that there may be other issues where your organization will lobby this MP. A cordial relationship keeps the door open.

✓ **Be constructive.** Rely on the facts and avoid emotional arguments, threats of political influence, or demands.

✓ **Personalize your message.** Cite examples from your own experience to support your position. Give personal examples of how the issue will impact your community.

✓ **Be political.** Explain the hometown or school relevance of this issue. Use your institution's stationery, if authorized.

✓ **Be discriminating.** Write only on the issues that are very important to you and avoid the risk of diluting your effectiveness.

✓ **Be inquiring.** Ask for the MP's view on the subject and how she or he intends to vote on relevant legislation. Expect a reply, even if it's only a form letter.

✓ **Be available.** Offer additional information if needed and make sure your MP knows how to reach you.

✓ **Be appreciative.** Remember to say "thanks" when it is deserved. Follow the issue after you write and send a letter of thanks if your MP votes your way.

REMEMBER, no postage is required to mail a letter to your MP in Canada. Furthermore, since a fax gets more attention, faster, send it also by fax.

Follow-up to Your Letter

MPs' offices receive hundreds of pieces of mail every day, which means it can take a week or more to research the issue properly and to answer your letter. If you don't hear from them after three or four weeks, however, follow up with a phone call, or with another letter that references the first one.

▪ If the reply you receive asks specific questions about the issue, make sure you respond with the answers.

▪ If your representative votes or takes a public stand that reflects your position, send a thank-you. It's just as important to let your representatives know you support a position as it is to let them know you oppose one.

▪ If you are lobbying as part of a larger movement, make sure you send copies of all your correspondence with elected officials to the (local organizing committee). This allows groups to track grassroots communications and determine where they might need to get more people involved.

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J. REFLECTION ACTIVITIES

Activity J1: Individual Reflection Questions

We suggest that the last 15 minutes of every period be reserved for individual reflection. The responses to these questions should be compiled in the project log/diary (see assessment tools below). We strongly suggest that you provide meaningful formative feedback early on in the process so that students understand what is expected.

Examples of Questions:

DAY ONE:

1. What did you do today?
2. What happened that was positive?
3. What happened that was negative?
4. What did you learn today?
5. What questions do you still have?
6. What do you hope to accomplish tomorrow?

DAY THREE:

1. I am concerned about the problem we are trying to work on because… (describe the consequences of the problem in as detail as possible).
2. Some of the ways we were successful today are…
3. Some of the frustrations/problems we have encountered are…
4. This is how we hope to address the things that frustrated us today…
5. One thing that I can change/do differently tomorrow to be even more successful is…
6. Do you think this action plan will result in a positive change to the situation? Why or why not?

DAY FIVE:

1. Something that has frustrated me about this project is… (may be more than one thing)
2. Some ways that I have tried to solve these issues are…
3. Some things that I have learned about trying to make change are…
4. What levels of government are involved in your issue? Which levels of government are not involved? Do you think this division of responsibilities is appropriate (i.e. is the appropriate level of government dealing with the issue?)
5. Rate the quality of your work today. Explain.

DAY EIGHT:

1. Who exerts power in terms of your issue (company, government, person etc.)? (who has the power to make the decisions? Who has the power to make the rules? Who has the power to make the changes?). Explain.

2. Create a graphic organizer and list the positive and negative aspects of each of the following processes of decision making: a) **consensus model** b) **majority wins model** c) **dictatorship model**.

Consensus Building

A conversational style of decision making whereby issues and opinions are discussed across a range of perspectives with the objective of reaching a shared opinion or compromise agreement amongst a group of participants.

Majority Wins (vote)

Definition/Example: In Canada, the party which wins the most seats in a general election forms the government. If the party wins more than half of the seats in the House of Commons or legislative assembly, then the party forms a majority government. A majority government can pass legislation and maintain the confidence of the House of Commons or legislative assembly to stay in power much more easily than a minority government.

http://canadaonline.about.com/od/elections/g/majority.htm

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3. How do decisions seem to be made in your group? Did you use any of the three models mentioned above?

4. Do you feel that using this method worked for your group? Why or why not? Would you change this next time?

FINAL INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

1. What did you learn about planning a project?
2. Take a look at your group's action plan. A) What steps in the plan really helped you with the project? Explain. B) What steps did not seem to matter to the project? Explain.
3. What steps, if any, will you use when planning another project? Explain why you chose those steps.
4. What skills would you like to develop before taking on another big project? Explain.

Activity J2: Group Reflection[11]

Purpose

- To reflect on the group's progress thus far and plan for future action
- To identify barriers to the action process
- To identify things the group has going for them
- To identify opportunities and resources to overcome barriers

Materials

- Chart paper- (two pieces side-by-side lengthwise to make a large chart)
- Thick markers (1 per group of 2-5 students)
- Coloured paper cut out in the shapes of boulders (beige), fish (pink), stream invertebrates (blue) and humans (yellow); simply using different colours of paper will also work.

Procedure

1. Individually, participants should quietly reflect on the following questions:

   - What are the challenges/barriers you have encountered in moving forward in your action project thus far (e.g. lack of time, current political climate, etc.)?

   - What strengths do you have going for you that have helped you move this far along?

   - What resources (human and non-human) are available to assist? (e.g. local expertise, organization, sources of funding, meeting space, water quality test kits, etc.)

   - Where are the "windows of opportunity" you can draw on to help you? (e.g. an upcoming event – spirit week or community election campaign, an unused ravine etc.)

2. Create a visual metaphor to illustrate the action project journey thus far. For example, your group could use a stream metaphor – the start of your journey (perhaps your group is traveling on a kite board, a surf board, in a canoe, a kayak…) on your action project is at one end of the large paper; the successful completion of the journey is at the other end. On the way the group will encounter boulders (barriers) that you need to navigate around as well as food (resources) that help you. You will have had small successes (fancy tricks in your water craft) as well as some problems (dents and scratches in your boat?).

3. 3.Use the metaphor to create shapes that represent the barriers (eg. rocks) and resources (eg. food plants). Write one barrier per rock ("eg.too many other commitments") and one resource per picture of food until all barriers and resources are listed.

4. Discuss the visual. Any surprises? Any cautions abut the journey ahead?

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[11] Activity by MJ Barrett

Activity J2: Reflecting at the End - Keepers/Changers[12]

Purpose

- To reflect on what worked and what didn't when taking action

Materials

- Blackboard or chart paper and thick markers
- 8 1/2 X 11 sheets of paper (for option 2)

Procedure

Option 1

1. On the board or chart paper, create a chart:

| Keepers
(things that you would do again) | Changers
(things you would do differently) |
| --- | --- |
| | |

1. In small groups, have students brainstorm what things they would do the same or differently, if you were to take on a similar action project again.
2. Discuss as a large group.

Option 2

1. Brainstorm categories for reflection (e.g. public relations, letter writing campaign, communication with community partners, class teamwork etc.), whatever makes sense based on the components of your project.
2. Put the title of each category on an 8 1/2 by 11 sheet of paper, with the keepers/changers chart below the title.
3. Post these pages around the room and have students move from one sheet to the next, adding their input. If they agree with something someone else has already written down, they can put a checkmark beside that comment.
4. Bring ideas together and discuss.

Note: If possible, involve community partners or school administration in at least some part of the reflection process.

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[12] Activity by MJ Barrett

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

The Project

The class identified an issue/problem that is important to the large group. You are expected to do two main things in response to this issue/problem:

> 1. Develop an understanding of the process of taking action so that if there is another issue/problem that you care about, you can do something to try to make a positive change to the situation.
>
> 2. Actually do something real that could make a positive change in our community regarding the problem/issue.

Goals 1 and 2 above are equally as important; therefore, you will be assessed based on the work you do throughout the process as well as the final product.

Draft Action Plan (1 Copy per Group)

- Use the action planning sheets that your teacher will provide see page 42.

- Keep a copy of your plan (hard copy or electronic) and label it: "***Draft 1"***.

- Each time you revise the plan, make the changes and give it a new title, e.g. "Draft 2" (for electronic versions) or write the date of the change that you made on the original hard copy.

- Keep a copy of all drafts in your folder in the classroom. You will want to reflect on these to help you with the assignments below.

Project Assessment/Evaluation:
1) OVERALL   - Learning Skills Assessment
2) DIARY/SCRAPBOOK- Rubric attached

Assignment One--Project Diary/Scrapbook (1 per Person)

The Project diary/scrapbook is your record of what actually happened from the very beginning to the very end of the project. It will be made up of at least 3 main components:

1. Your individual reflections that you write/create at the end of each period. You will be given guiding questions for these reflections.

2. The 'story' of what actually happened. This story should be clear enough that someone who was not in the class can pick up your log and understand what you did, what happened when, etc. You can use any combination of the following things to tell the story.

    ▪ Words

    ▪ Pictures (drawn, photos)

    ▪ Videos

    ▪ Examples of documents about your issue and/or that you developed for your project (brochures, posters, etc.)

    ▪ Interviews with people involved

    ▪ Notes/photos of activities done throughout the process (e.g. so what chart, force field analysis chart, etc.)

3. **_Your own completed assessment of the PROJECT ITSELF (Learning Skills) using the rubric below._**

4. **_Your own completed assessment of your PROJECT DIARY using the rubric below._**

SAMPLE RUBRIC: PROJECT DIARY/SCRAPBOOK

	LEVEL FOUR	LEVEL THREE	LEVEL TWO	LEVEL ONE	Self Assmt	Tchr Assmt
KNOWLEDGE/ UNDERSTANDING *Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of an issue related to local citizenship (issue, process, positive change, level of government)*	Thorough knowledge and understanding…	Considerable knowledge and understanding…	Some Knowldege and understanding	Limited knowledge and understanding		
THINKING/ INQUIRY *Demonstrates the use of critical and creative thinking skills to use an active process to achieve a goal of citizenship (questions raised, problem solving, decision making, research, reflection).*						
APPLICATION Demonstrates the use of the suggested project planning process to carry out a plan to make a positive change in the community.						
COMMUNICATION Communicates project process through Project Log. (spelling, grammar, organization, effectiveness of layout, thoroughness, clarity, terminology etc.)						

(Also see the mind map rubric on page 40)

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Books

Bennet, Doug and Tim Tiner (1997) *Up North Again.* McClelland and Stewart, Inc.
This book contains an almanac that is perfect for creating a bulletin board to help students to learn about what is going on in their own backyard. This book is focused on *Ontario* wildlife.

Bennett, Barrie and Carol Rolheiser (2001) *Beyond Monet: The Artful Science of Instructional Integration*. Toronto: Bookation Inc.

Bigelow, Bill and Bob Peterson (2002) *Rethinking Globalization Teaching for Justice in an Unjust World*. Rethinking Schools Press

Gatto, John Taylor (2002) *Dumbing Us Down*. Gabriola Island, B.C.: New Society Publishers.
This is a very slim book with some extremely down–to–earth and thought provoking essays about the implicit curriculum in schools.

Mark and Craig Kielburger (2002)*Take Action! A Guide to Active Citizenship*. Toronto: Gage Learning.

Mark Kielburger, Craig Kielburger, Deepa Shankaran (2004)*Take More Action*! Thomson Nelson.

Pike, Graham and David Selby (1988) *Global Teacher Global Learner.* London: Hodder & Stoughton
The introduction to this book of activities contains an excellent discussion of the following issues: interconnectedness, integration, the implicit curriculum, the development of the inner self.

Schniedewind, Nancy and Ellen Davidson (1998) *Open Minds to Equality A Sourcebook of Learning Activities to Affirm Diversity and Promote Equity*. Second Edition. Toronto: Allyn and Bacon.
This book is overflowing with classroom–ready activities that help people to confront and understand the "isms" in our society (racism, ableism, sexism, classism, etc.). The introduction provides a user–friendly overview of the issues. There is an annotated bibliography of additional materials.

Sobel, David (2004) Place-Based Education Connecting Classrooms and Communities. Barrington, Maine: The Orion Society.

Weber, Larry (1996) *Backyard Almanac A 365-day guide to the plants and critters that live in your backyard.* Duluth: Pfeifer-Hamilton Publishers

Magazines

Alternatives Journal
For thirty years, Alternatives Journal has reported on *Canadian* and international environmental and social justice issues. The format is easy to read with a good balance of easy–to–digest shorter pieces and more in–depth articles. Websites for follow–up/further information are consistently provided. www.alternativesjournal.ca 1–866–437–2587

Green Teacher Magazine
You will notice that many of the articles provided in the workshop were published in Green Teacher magazine. Green Teacher publishes helpful, classroom–ready articles with reference lists that can lead to deeper exploration if desired. The events listings and resource reviews are extremely helpful. To order *Green Teacher* magazine, call (416) 960–1244 or fax (416) 925–3474. $30/yr

New Internationalist Magazine
New Internationalist magazine reports on international global justice issues. Articles illuminate the people and the organizations involved in issues such as pesticide use, fair trade, the debt crisis, etc. "The Facts" feature is a two–page spread of nifty graphics and statistics. The final page features a profile of a different country each month. Literacy, income distribution, self–reliance, freedom, position of women, and life expectancy are rated. Back copies are available (almost) in full on the net. www.newint.org/ $38.50/yr

Websites

Economics for All
This FREE Grade Eight Geography Unitspecifically covers one third of the Ontario geography curriculum. The FREE unit includes: a day–by–day unit overview, an assessment overview, 18 step–by–step lesson plans, photocopier–ready student worksheets, appendices with additional information about the issues raised in the unit, cross–curricular lesson suggestions. Many of the activities and issues in the guide are perfect for expanding into an action project. Contact teriburgess@hotmail.com

www.rethinkingschools.org/

Water and Migration
This FREE grade eight integrated unit addresses a major portion of both the geography and science courses. The FREE unit includes a day–by–day unit overview, an assessment overview, 18 step–by–step lesson plans, photocopier–ready student worksheets, appendices with additional information about the issues raised in the unit, cross–curricular lesson suggestions. Many of the activities and issues in the guide are perfect for expanding into an action project. Contact teriburgess@hotmail.com

www.earthday.ca The *ecoaction Team Guides are great resources that outline simple actions that can be taken regarding waste, transportation, water use and gardening. These guides would be useful to your group and would work as effective educational tools for educating others.*

www.yorku.ca/fes/envedu/ecoschools.asp The Ecoschools guides are available for free in PDF form. The Celebrating Ecoschools: Festival Ideas and the 20/20 Planner: A practical guide to Reduce Home Energy Use are particularly useful.

Green Teacher Magazine – Action related Articles

Green Teacher publishes helpful, classroom–ready articles with reference lists that can lead to deeper exploration if desired. The events listings and resource reviews are extremely helpful. To order *Green Teacher* magazine, call (416) 960–1244 or fax (416) 925–3474. $30/yr

The articles below appeared in the Green teacher Issue indicated by the number.

Schoolyard Rehabilitation & Environmental Restoration

A World A-greening: International Snapshots of Schoolyard Projects. 47*
Fashion a Field Fuide to Your School Nature Area. 47
Transfoming School Grounds. 47
Avian Attraction. 47
Outdoor Classrooms: The Learning Links. 47
Ecological Restoration: Bringing Back the Prairie. 52
Setting Down Roots: Creating a Schoolyard Tree Nursery. 47
Schoolyard Naturalization: Who Ya Gonna Call? 47

Environmental Monitoring

Choosing an Environmental Monitoring Program: A Survey of the Types of Monitoring Programs Available to School and Community Groups. 55
Keeping Our Heads Above Water. 55
Beyond Substituted Experience: Environmental Monitoring as a Resource for Educational Development. 55
Exploring Wetlands: A Six-Step Model for Wetlands Monitoring and Stewardship at the High School Level. 47
Environmental Monitoring Programs and Resources. 55

Agriculture

Homegrown Hope: The Youth Farmstand Project. 52

Working With Wildlife

The Stevenson Salmon Hatchery. 56
Birdathons: Counting for Conservation. 60

Green Community Mapping

Community Mapping: Creating a Sense of Place. 55
Green Mapmaking. 58
Valley Quest: Strengthening Community Through Educational Treasure Hunts. 61

High School Subject Integration

Identifying a Local Issue and Taking Action

Miscellaneous

Compiled by MJ Barrett