2020 VISION
SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE USE

Unit 6: Sustainable Living

Teaching Point

Ireland's economy and society have changed over the years, and in particular, during the recent economic boom. Economic growth has had impacts on the environment. We need to plan for the future to find ways to protect the environment while still meeting our needs in terms of energy, transport, food, clean water and clean air.

"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Our common future, the Brundtland report.

To work toward a sustainable society we all need to behave in a way that minimises our negative impact on the environment so that responsible environmental behaviour becomes the norm.

Outcomes

Students will:

- Explore the concept of a greener home.
- Be able to suggest personal and local actions that contribute to more sustainable living.

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Eco Eye Clip and Comprehension

(NB remember to print and prepare these in advance).

Taking the Green Schools' message home

Here we see how primary school children involved in Green Schools bring the message to their communities and their homes through the Green Homes initiative.

Watch the clip and complete the comprehension exercise.

Activities

1. Individual research: A sustainable lifestyle audit

- Students can visit the Green Homes website to research the topic at http://www.greenhome.ie.
- Students are asked to focus on their own or their family's lifestyle in relation to sustainable living. Students should complete a questionnaire at home. See sample questionnaire.

Analysis of results

When the questionnaires are completed analyse the results in class by going through the responses to each question individually.

For example Question 1:

- Yes answers = 13 No Answers = 12.
- Work out the percentage: Yes = 52% No = 48%
- Repeat this process for each of the questions with set answers.

For the open-ended questions the class should list all the possible answers and then classify similar or related answers into groups. Total each of the groups and present as a percentage of the total.

Results and conclusions

Students should now present a short written report showing all the results of the audit and then draw the most important conclusions. They could ask:

- What are these results telling us about our lifestyles?
- What are the key areas which are unsustainable and contributing to global warming and climate change?
- What are the areas that can be changed which might help the situation?

Action

Now take action

- Display your findings in school or in the community (e.g. at a local library, community centre, shopping centre, in a leaflet sent home with students).
- Build a website to highlight the situation or post these results on the school website.
- Extend the project to a much wider investigation in the community.

2. Investigation - fieldwork

Sustainable living: A community audit

Pick a scientific sample using the Register of Electors and complete 200 questionnaires.

Remember the steps!

Step 1: Identify key aims or formulate a hypothesis.

Step 2: Identify and get the background material required.

Step 3: Identify the main methods of gathering your information.

Step 4: Identify the main results and draw a conclusion.

Step 5: Identify some achievable actions that may help the situation.

Investigation title: Sustainable living – A community audit

Step 1: Aims

- To assess the extent to which the principles of sustainable living apply to the households of your community.
- To examine the modes of transport used by the population of the community.
- To look at the sustainability of the activities organised by the Local Authority for the community e.g. are recycling/compost bins provided and collected, are there adequate bring centre facilities in the area?

Step 2: Preparation and background materials

- View the clip and complete the comprehension exercise.
- Prepare the questionnaire and extend it to include questions relating to the Local Authority if desired. Complete a pilot survey to test the effectiveness of the questionnaire. If the class has already completed the individual survey, this will act as a good test of the questionnaire. Make any changes to the questionnaire as required.
- Pick a sample of the population to survey. To pick a sample of 200 residents take the following steps.
    - Get a copy of the recent Register of Electors from the Local Authority offices.
    - Highlight the housing areas that you want to include in your survey and work out a total population for this study area.
    - Select 400 respondents to achieve a completed survey of 200.
    - Divide 400 into the total population. For example if the population is 8500, divide 8500 by 400 = 21.25. Now select every 21st person on the register.
    - Select your starting point by using a random number between 1 and 21. In this way you will select your list of respondents. Now select every second respondent as a

substitute. This will allow you to get 200 representative interviews using a scientific sample.

- Now divide the list up between the class members (students can interview in pairs) and stress that these listed people are the only people that can answer the questions. If the first person cannot be found or refuses they must go to the substitute.

Step 3: Methods of data gathering

- Each student must then interview the listed respondent on the doorstep and return to school with the completed questionnaires.

Step 4: Results and conclusions

- The results and conclusions are then completed in the same way as the household audit.

Step 5: Action

- Make a display of your results and exhibit them in school or in a public building.
- Send your results to the local authority with your suggestions for change.
- Write a report for the newspaper highlighting your findings and recommendations.
- Invite a local representative or speaker from an environmental group to your class to discuss the issue.

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SUSTAINABLE LIVING: A HOUSEHOLD AUDIT

Our Transition Year class is doing a project on Sustainable Living in our local area. I am interviewing 10 households in this area. I wonder would you take 5 minutes to answer some questions please?

Please answer the following questions.

The House:

1. Are the walls of your home insulated? Y❒ N❒ Don't know❒

2. Is the attic of your home insulated? Y❒ N❒ Don't know❒

3. Are the windows double-glazed? Y❒ N❒ Don't know❒

4. Do you have any energy efficient light bulbs? Y❒ N❒ Don't know❒

5. What is the main fuel used to heat the home?

_____

6. Do you have "ECO Friendly" settings on the washing machine / dish washer

Y❒ N❒ Don't know❒

epa Environmental Protection Agency

Do you use them?

Y❒ N❒

7. Is any of the waste from the household sorted and recycled?

Y❒ N❒

If Yes, what happens to the following:

Waste glass?

- Collected for recycling
- Brought to a recycling centre
- Thrown away/put in bin for disposal

Waste paper?

- Collected for recycling
- Brought to a recycling centre
- Thrown away/put in bin for disposal

Waste plastic?

- Collected for recycling
- Brought to a recycling centre
- Thrown away/put in bin for disposal

Waste food?

- Composted at home
- Collected for composting

- Brought to a recycling centre
- Thrown away/put in bin for disposal

The Garden:

8. Does your home have a garden? Y❒ or N❒

9. If yes, what happens to the garden waste? _____

- Composted at home
- Collected for recycling
- Brought to a recycling centre
- Thrown away/put in bin for disposal

10. Do you compost any material? Y❒ or N❒

If yes, what materials are composted?

_____

_____

_____

11. What is used to cut the grass? _____

What fuel is used?_____

Travel:

12. Does the household have a car?

Y❒ or N❒

13. If yes, How many? _____

14. How do you commute to work/school/college? _____

15. What proportion of your family journeys are by public transport? _____

16. How would you rate the quality and availability of public transport in your area?

Good ❒ Very Good ❒ Poor ❒ Very Poor ❒

Shopping:

17. What kind of shopping bags do you use? _____

18. Can you name three products, which you buy regularly, that contain recycled materials,

(i)_____ (ii)_____ (iii)_____

19. What do you do with the packaging off products after you use them?

_____

_____

20. Could you suggest any ways that shops could reduce the amount of waste material generated? _____

_____

_____

21. Could you suggest any ways that consumers could reduce the amount of waste generated?

22. Do you check food labels and try to buy food that is grown locally?

Y❒ or N❒

23. Do you know what your carbon footprint is?

Y❒ or N❒

24. Would you know where to go to calculate it?

Y❒ or N❒

Can I finish by asking you a few questions about yourself?

25. Into what age bracket do you fall?

Under 20 ❒ 20 to 34 ❒ 35 to 49 ❒ 50 to 64 ❒ over 65 ❒

26. Gender? Male ❒ Female ❒

27. What is your marital status? Married ❒ Single ❒ Other ❒

Thank you for your help