ENGAGING STUDENTS THROUGH GLOBAL ISSUES
Second Edition

ACTIVITY-BASED LESSONS AND ACTION PROJECTS
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SECOND EDITION

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Engaging Students Through Global Issues, Second Edition is a collection of forty activities designed to help participants develop a deeper understanding of issues that involve the interconnectedness of environment, society, and economy. Often these issues are referred to as “sustainability” issues. Users familiar with Engaging Students Through Global Issues (ESTGI) will notice a number of improvements in this second edition.

Most importantly, this edition has been reformatted to make it useable in a wide range of formal or informal settings such as environmental learning centers, after-school programs, homeschool settings, and adult learning contexts. Activities are no longer formatted as activity plans; however, K-12 teachers will recognize that each activity can easily be used in a classroom setting. Many of the activities include reflective questions along with writing and critical thinking extensions.

Here are the other major changes in this edition:

1. The activities have been streamlined. Any material that is not directly related to the activities has been removed.

2. Activities have been organized alphabetically, and brief descriptions are provided in the table of contents. All activities have been reformatted to make them easier to read and implement.

3. Our understanding of sustainability issues continues to grow and evolve; therefore, the activities in ESTGI have been updated to reflect current scientific research.

4. The readability and vocabulary of student materials have been adjusted to better meet the learning needs of English-Language Learners (ELL), adult learners, and individuals who may or may not have a deep conceptual understanding of sustainability or systems thinking.

How to Use Engaging Students Through Global Issues, Second Edition

This new edition of ESTGI includes forty alphabetized activities. Complete directions for implementation are included in each activity and, where applicable, activities include handouts, cards, and any additional materials required. Several of the activities include suggestions for using the Sides Debate. This activity is useful to set the context for other activities or can be used on its own.

The following information is provided for each activity:

- Overview
- Learning outcomes
- Estimated time required
- Inquiry questions
- A list of any specialized vocabulary introduced in the activity
- A description of materials needed
- Step-by-step instructions for implementing the activity
- Reflection topics (Going Deeper: Critical Considerations)
- Writing Connection (where applicable)
- Further Resources (where applicable)
- Handouts and supplementary materials (where applicable)
SUSTAINABILITY BIG IDEAS

The activities in the second edition of ESTGI are organized around eight sustainability big ideas (Nolet, 2016). High-quality education about sustainability helps learners investigate the meaning and implications of these ideas and incorporate these ideas into their own thinking, problem solving, and decision-making. When learners dig deeper into the meaning and implications of a sustainability big idea, they are better able to acquire new knowledge and skills and apply that knowledge and those skills in new situations. The eight sustainability big ideas that frame the activities in ESTGI are: Connecting with Nature, Equity and Justice, Health and Resiliency, Interconnectedness, Local to Global, Peace and Collaboration, Respect for Limits, and Universal Responsibility. Each of these big ideas is described below.

Connecting with Nature

This big idea involves the way humans interact with the natural world. At the core of this big idea are the notions that nature represents a significant source of expertise and humans have much to learn from the billions of years of evolution of the Earth’s living systems. For example, biomimicry refers to the practice of creating designs and processes that are fashioned after natural materials and systems. Similarly, new scientific approaches that combine indigenous knowledge and western scientific methods have emerged in recent years. Connecting with nature also involves developing an affinity for and an understanding of nature that disrupts dominant discourses such as “nature is something that needs to be conquered,” “nature is an unlimited store of riches and resources,” and “nature is an amusement park and playground.” Instead, education for sustainability promotes a more intimate response to nature. For example, E. O. Wilson used the term “biophilia” to refer to the innate emotional affiliation that humans have with other living organisms. This perspective can lead to a deep respect for nature in all of its forms, as well as a curiosity about the ways that natural systems operate. This perspective also can lead to a desire for a more direct personal engagement with the natural world. Education aimed at helping learners develop this connection can take place anywhere and does not need to entail an expedition to pristine wilderness. In fact, at the core of this big idea is the understanding that nature is everywhere and that each of us has direct access to nature each time we take a breath, look at the sky, or feel the sun’s warmth on our skin.

Equity and Justice

Equity and Justice refers to equitable access to opportunities and resources, as well as just distribution of the impacts of consequences of unsustainability. Attention to equity and justice leads to a consideration of a number of issues, including various dimensions of privilege distinctions between needs and wants, and consideration of interspecies equity. This big idea includes a number of related and overlapping ideas including: social justice, economic justice, environmental justice, gender equity, food justice, climate equity, and intergenerational equity. Intergenerational equity refers to the rights of future generations to have access to adequate resources and opportunities necessary to meet their needs. The ability of future generations to meet their needs might be jeopardized if resources such as water and arable lands are used up by the current generation or if the impacts...
Activity 1
Are You Buying This?

Overview
Participants work in groups to create and present mock television commercials for products linked to unsustainable or unhealthy behavior. Participants first present the commercial as it would typically be seen on television, and then present it again incorporating the product’s negative impacts. An activity extension has the participants create a commercial advertising a new product or variation of their product that would mitigate the negative impacts.

Big Ideas
› Equity and Justice
› Interconnectedness
› Universal Responsibility

Related
Facing the Future Readings
› Big World, Small Planet
› Exploring Global Issues

Time
› 60 minutes

Materials/Preparation
› **Handout:** Product and Consequence Cards, make one double-sided front-to-back copy with “Products” on one side and “Consequences” on the other, and cut into individual cards
› Blank paper and color/pencils for creating props/signage

Inquiry
› How does advertising influence consumption?
› How does advertising shape a society’s vision of “the good life”?
› Who bears responsibility for regulating the marketing and consumption of legal but harmful and/or unsustainable products?

Learning Outcomes
**Participants will:**
› Recognize the connection between advertising, consumption choices, and the unstated consequences of those choices
› Become critical consumers of marketing directed towards them and recognize tactics used by advertisers to influence their behavior
› Understand the power of advertising in selling U.S. values and ideals to foreign countries and cultures
**ACTIVITY**

1. (Optional) Do a Sides Debate using the following prompt: “Only ads promoting healthy foods and activities should be allowed during television shows targeting children under the age of eight.”

2. Ask the group if they have seen an advertisement recently that made them really want to buy a product. Ask them if they remember how the ad presented the product. Was a celebrity promoting it? Did it feature people doing fun and exciting activities unrelated to the product? Were there attractive models involved? Was a certain image projected to reflect a specific lifestyle?

3. Tell the group that in the first nine months of 2004 alone, companies in the U.S. spent over $100 billion advertising their products. The average young person views over 40,000 television ads each year, plus thousands more online, in movies, on billboards, and from other outlets.

4. Explain that most ads leave out any negative consequences tied to consuming that product and generally only include information on potential dangers if required to by law (like with some advertising for prescription drugs). Advertisers do not discuss the impact of their products on the environment or unfair labor practices unless the product is being marketed as “eco-friendly” or “socially responsible.”

5. Tell the group that they are going to try their talent at creating advertisements for products that are often marketed to U.S. citizens. However, not only will they have to create an ad that makes the product look good; they will also have to create an ad that focuses on the product’s less glamorous side.

**Steps**

1. Break the group into groups of four to five participants.

2. Tell the participants that they are going to get a card with the product they are in charge of advertising. One side of the card has some attractive selling points for the product. The other side has some of the consequences of consuming that product.

3. Tell the participants that in order to effectively sell their product, they have to decide:
   a. What is the demographic they are selling to? (Whom they think will buy this product)
   b. What is the advertising technique they will use? A celebrity? Humor? Will using the product make you smarter/sexier/cooler?

4. Tell the participants they have 15-20 minutes to create two commercials that they will act out in front of the group. One commercial will only focus on the attractive side of the product, while the other should only focus on the consequences. Participants should use the same advertising technique for both ads. If they are using supermodels or extreme sports to sell the attractive side of the product, they should use supermodels and extreme sports to sell the consequences as well.

5. Tell the participants that the ads have to be the same length as a regular commercial, so each ad should not be longer than one minute.

6. After the groups put their ads together, have them present both commercials to the group, with the ad selling the attractive side of the product presented first.

7. Bring the group back together for Critical Considerations.
Activity 11
Fueling the Future

Overview
Participants compare energy use and CO₂ emissions by sector in the United States and China (and optionally in another country). They research and discuss energy impacts and sustainable energy solutions, write a resolution addressing energy use, and present their resolutions at a “World Energy Summit.”

Inquiry
- How does energy use by different sectors compare between the U.S. and China?
- How is energy use connected to other global issues?
- What can be done to conserve energy resources and reduce CO₂ emissions?

Big Ideas
- Connecting with Nature
- Health and Resiliency
- Interconnectedness
- Local to Global
- Peace and Collaboration
- Respect for Limits
- Universal Responsibility

Related
Facing the Future Readings
- Exploring Global Issues
- Big World, Small Planet

Time
- 2 hours

Learning Outcomes
- Participants will:
  - Calculate and compare the percentage of energy use and emissions by country and sector to world average energy use and emissions
  - Brainstorm and research impacts of energy use by sector and energy solutions
  - Write and present their resolution at a mock “World Energy Summit”

Materials/Preparation
- A few items to show during the introduction segment of the activity (e.g., food, clothing, a book, computer, etc.)
- Handout: Energy Use by Country and Sectors Table, one per two to four students
- Handout: Fueling the Future Role Cards, copy and cut
- Handout/Master: Writing a Resolution Worksheet, one per student
- Calculators, one per group of two to four students
ACTIVITY Day 1

Introduction

1. Show participants some items (e.g., food, clothing, a book, computer, etc.) one at a time and ask them how energy is connected to the manufacturing and use of the item.

2. Tell the group they are going to do an activity that examines and compares the type and amount of energy use and emissions in the U.S. and China.

Steps

1. Write on the board or overhead these three energy sectors: Transportation, Residential, and Industrial/Commercial.

2. Have participants brainstorm different uses of energy (e.g., cars, home heating and cooling, lights, food production, etc.) and list them below the appropriate sector.

3. Divide the participants into six small groups of two to four participants representing the three energy use sectors (transportation, residential, and industrial/commercial) for both the U.S. and China (Note: For groups with more than 24 participants, divide into nine small groups representing the U.S., China, and another country’s energy sectors. For country profiles of energy use by sector, visit the World Resource Institute’s website at http://www.wri.org/resources).

4. Give each group a copy of Energy Use by Country and Sectors Table and one Role Card (there will be two groups for each energy sector – one for the U.S. and one for China).

5. Give groups about 15 minutes to complete the table for their country and sector, following the prompts on the Role Cards (calculate percent, list uses and impacts, and brainstorm sustainable energy solutions). Each group will need a calculator to figure out their percentages.

6. Have a representative from each small group report to the larger group on the percentages in the first section of the table, and have participants fill in their tables based on the reported data from the other groups.

7. Bring the group back together for the following discussion prompts and questions (after the discussion, have the participants either hold on to their completed Energy Use by Country and Sectors Table or collect the worksheets and pass them out again on day two of the activity).

Going Deeper: Critical Considerations

• Discuss the difference in percentages between U.S. and China energy use and emissions.

• Which sectors use the most energy?

• Which country uses the most energy?

• Why should we care about energy use and emissions?

• Have participants share and discuss their brainstorm lists of energy uses by different sectors.

• Have participants share and discuss their sustainable energy solutions.

ACTIVITY Day 2

Introduction

1. Tell the group that they are going to participate in a “World Energy Summit” in which they will work together in U.S./China sector groups to develop policy addressing energy consumption, conservation, and emission reductions. Tell them that they will be writing a resolution about their energy policy.

Steps

1. Put up the Handout/Overhead, Writing a Resolution Worksheet, and go over what a resolution is with the group.

2. Arrange the group so that each sector joins together with the same sector from the other country. There will be
# Activity 15
## Life: The Long and Short of It

### Overview
Participants compare life expectancy (a common indicator of good health) among several countries and discuss possible explanations for the differences. They also examine the connection between per capita expenditures on healthcare and life expectancy.

### Big Ideas
- Equity and Justice
- Health and Resiliency
- Interconnectedness
- Local to Global

### Inquiry
- Why do people in some countries live longer than people in other countries?
- What factors contribute to long life expectancy?

### Learning Outcomes
- **Participants will:**
  - Identify the many factors that affect life expectancy
  - Compare life expectancy rates for a variety of countries

### Materials/Preparation
- **Handout:** Life Expectancy Country Cards, one card per student (if you do not use all 30 cards, be sure that you still include a range of life expectancies in the ones you do use)
- (Optional) **Handout/Projected Master:** Top 30 Countries for Life Expectancy, one per student, or make an overhead
- 8.5 x 11 sheets of blank paper, one per student

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[Image of a woman and child]
Activity 16
Livin’ the Good Life?

Overview
Participants develop indicators to measure quality of life and conduct a survey of peers and adults to obtain data for their indicators. They analyze the survey data using spreadsheet software and produce charts to demonstrate their results. Participants compare their own performance as measured by the quality of life indicators against averages determined by the survey results.

Big Ideas
- Equity and Justice
- Health and Resiliency
- Interconnectedness
- Local to Global
- Universal Responsibility

Inquiry
- How is quality of life measured?
- What are other ways to measure quality of life?
- How does the concept of what is necessary for a high quality life change over the course of our lives?

Related
Facing the Future Readings
- Exploring Global Issues
- Big World, Small Planet

Learning Outcomes
Participants will:
- Develop quality of life indicators
- Develop and administer a quality of life survey
- Analyze data and present the results
- Understand the connection between how quality of life is measured and global issues such as sustainability, inequality, poverty, and good governance

Materials/Preparation
- Handout: Quality of Life Categories
- Handout: Quality of Life Survey (you can download the survey form from www.facingthefuture.org)
- Handout: Excel Instruction Sheet, one copy per student

Participants will need basic competency with spreadsheet applications (e.g. Microsoft Excel). You may need to review how to enter data and perform basic summing and averaging functions before beginning this exercise.
(Note: Do not change the original indicators given by the small groups, as you will use those indicators for the survey portion of the exercise. Remind participants that there are many different ways to measure quality of life.)

• How do you think people might adjust their lives to be in line with one or more of these indicators? (For example, if it were socially accepted that a quality of life measurement for Relaxation is the number of vacation days taken annually, then people might adjust their balance between work and vacation time.)

Further Resources


www.yesmagazine.org – Yes! Magazine’s 2004 Summer Issue discusses what constitutes the good life according to a range of people including scientists, writers, sociologists, and religious leaders.


http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/research_tools/whoqolbref/en – The World Health Organization’s Quality of Life project uses a life assessment instrument to measure 26 broad areas, including physical health, psychological health, social relationships, and environment.

www.redefiningprogress.org – Redefining Progress is a leading organization in creating indicators that measure progress in the context of sustainable development.

www.timeday.org – Home of the October 24th “Take Back Your Time Day”.

www.sustainablemeasures.com – Sustainable Measures develops indicators that measure progress toward a sustainable economy, society and environment. Their website offers information and resources on sustainable indicators.
QUALITY OF LIFE
Categories

FAMILY

RECREATION

CREATIVE PURSUITS

WORK/EARNING MONEY

FRIENDS

HEALTH

THE ENVIRONMENT

REST/RELAXATION

SPIRITUAL PURSUITS

VOLUNTEERING/HELPING OTHERS
Activity 17
Livin’ the Good Life? Part II

Overview
Participants develop indicators to measure quality of life and conduct a survey of peers and adults to obtain data for their indicators. They analyze the survey data using spreadsheet software and produce charts to demonstrate their results. Participants compare their own performance as measured by the quality of life indicators against averages determined by the survey results.

Big Ideas
- Equity and Justice
- Health and Resiliency
- Interconnectedness
- Local to Global
- Universal Responsibility

Inquiry
- How is quality of life measured?
- What are other ways to measure quality of life?
- How does the concept of what is necessary for a high quality life change over the course of our lives?

Related
Facing the Future Readings
- Exploring Global Issues
- Big World, Small Planet

Learning Outcomes
Participants will:
- Develop quality of life indicators
- Develop and administer a quality of life survey
- Analyze data and present the results
- Understand the connection between how quality of life is measured and global issues such as sustainability, inequality, poverty, and good governance

Materials/Preparation
- Download and save on your computer the Quality of Life Survey from www.facingthefuture.org (or make a copy or retype the handout Quality of Life Survey). Type in the students’ indicators in the “Indicator” section of the survey form
- Make seven copies of the completed Quality of Life Survey for each student in the class (one copy for each student to complete during class, and six for each student to administer outside of class). You may decide that students will conduct more or less than six surveys outside of class, but the quantity of surveys per student should remain an even number to ensure that survey data from their peers and adults is represented equally.
- Make one copy of the Excel Instruction Sheet handout for each student
EXCEL INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1 – Administer Quality of Life Survey:
- Each student will survey three different peers outside of this class (under the age of 18) and three different adults (e.g., parents, teachers, relatives, etc.) using the Quality of Life Survey developed by your class.
- Survey responders do not need to give their name, but you will need to check the “Peer” or “Adult” box on the survey form.
- Explain to the survey responders that your class has developed some quality of life indicators and that you would appreciate them taking five minutes of their time to answer some questions (Note: Be sure that they have not already been given the survey by another student in your class).
- While administering the surveys, be sure to keep the units of measurement constant for each indicator. If an indicator is “hours of sleep per day”, make sure that hours per day is the measurement consistently used for that indicator, and not hours per week, per month, etc.
- If someone cannot answer a question, record that as N/A for “Not Available”.
- Record their answers legibly, since you will need to type it into the Excel sheet later.

Step 2 – Create Excel Spreadsheet and Input Survey Data:
- Create an Excel document like the one in the example below and save it on your computer or on a disk.
- Enter the data from your surveys into the Excel spreadsheet. Enter peer or adult in the left hand column and their response under each category as shown in the example below. The sample data filled in below represents data from one surveyed peer and one surveyed adult (this data is just an example; the categories and indicators your class came up with may produce completely different kinds of numbers).
- If you have surveys with some unanswered indicators, DO NOT enter zero in that category on the Excel sheet. Write N/A, like in the example under the “Creative Pursuits” category. Only use zero if their answer is actually zero.

QUALITY OF LIFE DATA ENTRY SHEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORIES</th>
<th>FAMILY</th>
<th>REC.</th>
<th>CREATIVE PURSUITS</th>
<th>WORK/EARNING MONEY</th>
<th>HEALTH</th>
<th>THE ENVIRONMENT</th>
<th>REST/RELAX</th>
<th>SPIRITUAL PURSUITS</th>
<th>VOLUNTEER/HELPING OTHERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PEER</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADULT</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADULT</td>
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<tr>
<td>PEER</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 3 – Submit Excel Spreadsheet:
- After you have entered all your data, save the spreadsheet and either e-mail or hand in a disk to your teacher.
- Be sure you include your name somewhere in the e-mail or written on the disk.
Activity 19
Making Global Connections

Overview
Participants demonstrate the interconnectedness of global issues and solutions through a kinesthetic exercise using global issue cards and a ball of yarn.

Big Ideas
- Equity and Justice
- Interconnectedness
- Local to Global
- Peace and Collaboration
- Universal Responsibility

Related
Facing the Future Readings
- Exploring Global Issues
- Big World, Small Planet

Time
- 60 minutes

Inquiry
- How are global issues interconnected?
- How does a change in one global issue affect other global issues?
- How are solutions to global problems interconnected?

Learning Outcomes
Participants will:
- Kinesthetically experience the interconnectedness of global issues
- Understand how a change in one issue can positively and negatively affect a change in another issue

Materials/Preparation
- Handout: Global Issues, with one subject on each card per student (or one per pair of participants if you do the activity in pairs)
- Large cards, to be worn around the neck by participants
- Ball of yarn
GLOBAL ISSUES CARDS Page 1

- Poverty
- Consumption
- Population Growth
- Peace and Conflict
- Human Migration
- Environment
- Technology
- Healthcare
ENGAGING STUDENTS THROUGH GLOBAL ISSUES
Second Edition

ACTIVITY-BASED LESSONS AND ACTION PROJECTS
Engaging Students Through Global Issues includes 40 inspiring lesson plans to help students understand complex global issues and sustainable solutions, and offers creative tools for them to take action in their local and global community. Lessons are designed for a range of student levels, from advanced elementary to middle and high school classes to undergraduate college courses.

CORE TEACHING COMPONENTS:
- Global Studies
- Environmental Education
- World Issues
- Global Sustainability
- Geography
- Current Affairs
- Civic Engagement
- Service Learning

CONDENSED UNIT APPLICATION:
- Life and Physical Science
- U.S. History
- World History
- Economics
- Business and Finance
- Mathematics
- Language Arts
- Health and Nutrition

SUBJECT AND SKILLS FRAMEWORK:
- Social Studies
- Science
- Reading and Writing Comprehension
- Math Applications
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Student Collaboration