

Learning For a Sustainable Future

The Implementation of Sustainable Development Education into School Curriculum

Jamie Williams

Learning for a Sustainable Future

- Learning for a Sustainable Future is a nonprofit organization who is committed to infusing Canada's educational curriculum with lessons related to sustainability of our environment.

LSF's Mission

- LSF will lead and advance knowledge, understanding and adoption of sustainable development practices in Canada by influencing curriculum development and policies for grades K through 12, and the professional development of educators.
- LSF will also facilitate the creation of partnerships and community based networks composed of educators, academics, students, community and business representatives, and individuals.

History

- Learning for a Sustainable Future was established in 1992 as a response to the Rio Conference on Sustainable Development.
 - 178 country conference in Rio de Janeiro.
 - Acknowledgement, among participants, that education plays a major role in advancing the goals and practices of sustainable development.

Strategy- Advancing Education Policy and Curricula

- LSF attempts to influence curricula at a national, provincial, and territorial level by:
 - Influencing Ministry curriculum
 - reviewing textbooks
 - Assisting curriculum developers
 - Assisting school boards
 - Influencing faculties of education

Strategy- Supporting Sustainable Development Education for Youth and Educators

- **LSF provides workshops and materials for educators, so that they can acquire the skills to teach youth about sustainable development.**
 - Professional Development Workshops
 - Materials and resource development and sharing.

Strategy- Linking Education to Action

- LSF holds annual youth forums in order to have youth apply the skills they are learning to the community. Youth are linked with community members and businesses to work on community projects.

Youth Taking Action

- Each local school invited to send an Action Team.
- Non-governmental organizations and community, business, and government representatives serve as resource people and/or deliver workshops.
- Action Teams outline and commit to carrying out sustainability projects in their school or community.
- The students, teachers, and community members implement the projects over the following year.
- Follow-up events provide an opportunity for students to showcase their projects and celebrate their success.

Strategy- Providing enhanced Sustainable Development Education Opportunities

- A program to develop and deliver enhanced education programs that provide in-depth investigations that involve youth and educators in sustainability activities and develop knowledge.
 - Hurley Island Project
 - Green Street

Green Street

- A program where educators can choose prescreen environmental education curriculum to implement in their classrooms. LSF is the Secretariat for this program. It also involves the following:
 - Green Street Ambassadors
 - Green Street Co-op Placements
 - Green Street Internships
 - Green Street Scholarships
 - Youth Action Opportunities

Hurley Island

- **Internet Based learning about sustainable design for secondary students.**
 - **Addresses real world problems**
 - **Teaches skills in information technology**
 - **Professional mentors help students with lessons**

Curriculum- Preschool

■ Bicycle Island

- Children are told a story about a little girl who lives on an island with no electricity. One day the little girl finds hundreds of bike that have washed ashore.
- Lessons from exercise:
 - Learn how to recognize the presence of energy in their environment.
 - Recognize that energy enables us to meet our basic needs.
 - Learn attitudes and behaviors that encourage the economical use of energy

Preschool- Garbage? No!, Resources

- Children bring in items that were thrown away in the household garbage.
 - **Objectives:**
 - Learn that over-consumption generates garbage.
 - Distinguish the concepts of resources and garbage.
 - Learn that we can reuse or recycle a significant portion of our garbage.
 - Suggest concrete ways to encourage the recuperation of resources.

Curriculum- Fifth Grade- "A Bustling Neighborhood"

- Students take a walk around the school's neighborhood. Afterward, they discuss the change that they think will have the greatest positive impact. They then write a letter to municipal authorities requesting that change is made.
 - Objectives:
 - Identify the characteristics of the school's neighborhood.
 - Understand the link between the needs of human beings and the organization of their environment.
 - Understand people's impact on the quality of their environment.
 - Get the students to suggest ways to improve the quality of life in their neighborhood

Curriculum- 5th Grade- "Curbing Our Transportation"

- From among the different transportation methods at their disposal to travel to school, the students are asked to identify the most environmentally friendly, and to evaluate the role that cars play in their neighborhood, by conducting a public survey.
 - **Objectives**
 - Recognize the different elements associated with transportation in their environment.
 - Become aware of the relationship that exists between transportation and energy consumption.
 - Identify behaviors that encourage the economical use of energy, especially as it concerns transportation.

Curriculum-12th Grade- "Cool Schools"

- **Summary**
- Students learn a detailed list of what can be done to decrease CO2 emissions in schools in order to achieve substantial environmental and economic benefits.
- **Objectives**
 - Learn how a school's consumption of electricity can be reduced by concrete actions.
 - Learn how transportation, tree planting, water use, the use of renewable energy and recycling affect global warming.
 - Learn how to measure electricity consumption.
 - Increase awareness about the need to save energy and reduce carbon emissions.

Curriculum- 12th Grade- "I Am Improving My Corner of The World"

- **Summary**

- The students choose an unattractive site in their neighborhood, study its potential, come up with a development plan, implement it, and eventually run an awareness campaign for the protection of this new area.

- **Objectives**

- Create a development plan taking into account the potential and limits of a site.
 - Help improve the quality of life of the people of a neighborhood. Commit to a course of action that is good for the environment.

Results

- LSF reports in its 2002 annual report that its 2001 goal was to reach every province and territory in Canada by the end of 2003
- By year end 2002 they had reached this goal.
- The organization has provided workshops to over 750 teachers, 800 students, and 175 community members, and provided its sustainable delivery education programs to 45,000 Canadian students.

Results

1. *Advancing Education Policies and Curricula*
2. *Supporting Sustainable Development Education for Youth and Educators*
3. *Creating Sustainable Communities – Linking Education to Action*
4. *Providing Enhanced Sustainable Development Education Opportunities*

Program activity areas for 2002 and goals for 2004

	2002	2004
Newfoundland and Labrador	1,2,4	1,2,3,4
Nova Scotia	1,2,4	1,2,3,4
New Brunswick	1,2,4	1,2,3,4
Prince Edward Island	1,2,4	1,2,3,4
Quebec	1,2,4	1,2,3,4
Ontario	1,2,3,4	1,2,3,4
Manitoba	2,4	1,2,3,4
Saskatchewan	2,4	1,2,3,4
Alberta	2,4	1,2,3,4
British Columbia	2,4	1,2,3,4
Nunavut	2,4	1,2,3,4
Northwest Territories	2,4	1,2,3,4
Yukon	2,4	1,2,3,4

Conclusions

- Learning for a Sustainable Future seems like a great way to teach children, teachers, and other community members about sustainable development.
- LSF should continue in its mission and also try to make this education mandatory, instead of optional.
- LSF should provide more info on exactly who is using programs and the outcomes of these programs.

Sources

- <http://www.lsf-ist.ca/en/about/report.php>