

AFCU “Deepening Franciscan Identity: Teaching Care for Creation”

Learning activity created by Trina Herber, university of Saint Francis, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Category: Natural and Environmental Sciences

1. Course Title: ENVS 232 Introduction to Environmental Science

Description: Fundamentals of the biological and physical sciences, which underlie environmental science, and their application to the study of the environment, including the state of the biosphere and its effect on quality of human health.

2. Activity Title: Lifestyle Assessment

Description: This concept, adapted from American National Standards for continual improvement of sustainability in businesses (ISO 14001 certification), involves tracing the resources used to maintain one’s individual lifestyle to contemplate and implement change.

3. Foundational Franciscan theme: Respect Creation and Use Resources Wisely

Theme Presentation and Engagement: Early in the semester we discuss the relationship between a religious or spiritual force that drives many people’s choices on ethics of Earth’s stewardship. We briefly highlight how many Christian and non-Christian religions around the world currently and in the past incorporate a deep care for creation including resource consumption and dedication to good land, water and air quality. We discuss the unequal distribution of resources (water, food, energy, etc.) around the world, and how those with the least resources are most affected by environmental degradation.

4. Strategy for Assessment:

The process itself is an excellent learning exercise inducing “Ah ha” moments and comments of “I had no idea...” and “I never thought of it this way”. Aspects and Impacts diagrams are graded for thoroughness considering Bloom’s concepts of remembering and understanding. The written assessment and reflection incorporate Bloom’s applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating categories and are graded for critical thinking, contemplative reflection, originality and creativity – students need to show they truly thought about it carefully, and draw conclusions that yield obtainable and livable goals.

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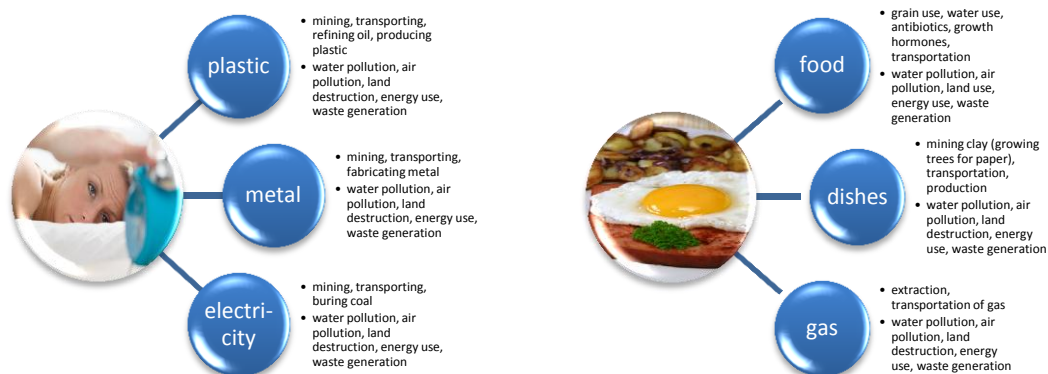
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a) Details of the Learning Activity:

Step 1: Lifestyle Environmental Aspects Diagram: Students receive an oversized blank piece of paper and they recreate their day (or average day), identifying each activity they engage in, each resource used and the materials needed to produce the resource. For example, waking with alarm clock, washing up, having breakfast shown below.



Step 2: Lifestyle Environmental Impacts Diagram: Students brainstorm the methods to obtaining the resources and the environmental impacts resulting. Can coincide with discussion on environmental impacts of obtaining resources.



Step 3: Lifestyle Environmental Assessment: Students consider other pre- and after-consumer impacts of each resource and determine the relationship between the benefit to the individual user and the risk to the environment.

Some pre-consumer concerns: the risks of product research & development, product packaging waste, corporate environmental ethics, risk assessment and management, profit goals, etc. Some after-consumer concerns: donate, recycle, landfill, water treatment, etc. Discussion on government regulation applicable as well.

Step 4: Lifestyle Environmental Reflection: Students calculate their ecological footprint using a free website calculator (i.e. footprintnetwork.org, myfootprint.org). Students are then asked to consider the impact of their lifestyle and consider what could be changed. The class could elect to sign a pledge at this point.