

ACTIVITY 8: VISIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY: Student Notes

Aim:

When you have completed this activity you will have examined the values underlying the development of Couran Cove Resort and linked them with your own values of peace and sustainability. You will also have linked your values to your preferred vision of a place that is special to you.

You will need:

A definition of Ecologically Sustainable Development (see below)
Paper for drawing up a Table

Procedure:

Introduction:

1. Do you live just for the present? Do you ever think about how your actions today will have effects in the future for an older you and for any children you might have? Brainstorm as a class about the effects of things like study, or health related behaviours. Think about short-term and long-term effects of each action or behaviour.

Part A:

2. The environment is one area where you can eventually see the results of today's behaviour very clearly. Draw up the following Table titled: Results of Present Attitudes, leaving plenty of space beside each behaviour for your answers. Fill in the Table - at first individually, and then form a pair and then a group of four to share your ideas (Think/Pair/Share). You can draw up the Table so that you leave plenty of room for writing your answers:

Behaviour Do you:	✓	Attitude represented	Short term effects: if everyone did this	Long term effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drop litter... (see LIST below)		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One piece of rubbish doesn't matter		

The list of behaviours is: Do you

- Drop litter in the schoolyard or anywhere?
- Have long showers?
- Always use the heater rather than extra clothes in winter?
- Put all rubbish in the bin, including food scraps?
- Walk through gardens to take a short cut?
- Spray any insects that appear in your house>
- Allow pets outside at night?

In your groups of four, consider what the barriers might be to changing your behaviour (eg school rules, parental attitudes). How can these barriers be broken down? What responsibility do we hold to future generations to leave an environment that is not badly damaged? List the barriers and other ideas to share with the rest of the class.

Part B:

1. Look closely at the long-term effects in the Table. Is this what you want for your future? What do you want your environment to be like? Discuss as a class.
2. What you want is closely linked to your values. Values are big ideas or concepts that represent the things that you think are important. Some values are: honesty, democracy, love, justice. Our behaviours are mostly a representation of our values. We hold a small number of values, which are represented usually in our attitudes (what we think, feel and say), and our attitudes influence our behaviour. Take the value of fairness for example: If we hold this as an important value, our attitudes will be represented as respect for the rights of others and the need for all to be represented equally. Our behaviour would involve treating others fairly.
3. Consider the following definition of sustainability:

SUSTAINABILITY is about making decisions which meet our present needs, while

- keeping in mind the rights of future generations to live at least as well as we do; and
- keeping the balance of natural systems by avoiding excessive wastes and by not depleting the natural resources

The overarching value of *sustainability* includes many sub-values or important components, for example:

- Biodiversity
- Intergenerational equity
- Heritage
- Ecological integrity
- Conservation
- Stewardship
- Wilderness
- Interdependence

(Look up any terms you don't fully understand)

1. Look again at the long-term effects column in your Table. How do the expected long-term effects rate against the sub-values of sustainability? Discuss in your groups of four.

Part C:

2. Those long-term effects probably indicate a declining standard of living if current environmental practices continue. They may also indicate that there could be conflict over access to natural resources. Most people value peace rather than conflict. We need therefore to look at the overarching value of *peace* and its sub-values:
 - Cooperation
 - Reconciliation
 - Empathy/respect
 - Tolerance
 - Fairness/justice
 - Knowledge

- Needs fulfillment
- Hope and optimism
- Interdependence

Discuss in your group of four how the long-term effects rate against the sub-values of peace.

Part D:

1. Examine the values of peace and sustainability in relation to the development of the Couran Cove resort. The following practices reflect the values on which Couran Cove was developed:

- Mosquitoes are controlled, not wiped out
- No laundry facilities are provided on the island (laundry is shipped to the mainland)
- 'Bush Tucker' (native foods) guided walks are provided, often with an Aboriginal guide
- boardwalks are built throughout the sensitive rainforest and sand dune areas
- waste water is recycled as drinking water for the resort
- provision of an in-house TV system to monitor water and energy use
- Fun "punishments" for those who exceed water and energy eco-targets
- Bulk products rather than pre-packaged products are sold at the store
- Recyclable materials are compacted and shipped to the mainland
- No petrol-driven vehicles permitted on the island and expected use of bicycles

(a) Research on this web site to find out more about each of these practices and/or related practices

(b) Use a Think/Pair/Share strategy to do the following: Judge whether or to what extent the sub-values of peace and sustainability are represented in these practices. (There may be more than one value for each practice). What other values might be behind the development of Couran Cove?

Part E:

This exercise could be considered by an individual, a pair or a group:

1. Think of a local place that you know well that has been degraded or spoiled, and is not ecologically healthy. The example could be rural, urban, coastal, a waterway, a backyard.
 - (a) Do research and a field study to look at the following aspects of that place: Land and Soil; Water; Biodiversity; and Waste and Pollution Management. Talk to appropriate local government departments.
 - (b) Try to find out the past sequence of events that led to the degradation. Perhaps you can ask your local government authority or talk to a local historian.
 - (c) Predict the consequences of continuing current practices in that place. Why will those consequences occur?
 - (d) Now sit back and dream of how you would like that place to look in the future. Draw a labelled diagram or picture explaining this preferred vision.

10. Now try a Backcasting exercise. This requires you to work backwards from the vision and work out the steps that need to be taken so that the vision can become a reality. To achieve that reality, base your future practices on your values of peace and sustainability.