

Fresh Market Investigation

Overview: Students observe a fresh market and gain understanding of the systems at work through making connections using the Compass of Sustainability.

Grade: 4 – 7

Estimated duration: 45 minutes plus market visit

Topic: Our Environment

Significant Concept: Global Awareness: Where our food comes from determines the impact on the environment.

Unit: Fits well in How the world works;
 Sharing the planet;
 Where we are in place and time

Area of Interaction: Environments

Essential skills: Communication, note taking, interviewing, observation

Background required: none

Resources/ Materials/Setting required: Access to a fresh market (or supermarket in a different context)
4x whiteboards & markers (or 4x butcher paper & pens)
Colored raffia string or yarn
Laminated cards and dry erase markers (optional)

Outline:

1. Students are grouped into the four Compass points, then visit a fresh market (or supermarket), observing through their particular lens of the Compass.
2. Four whiteboards are placed around the room. Students move around the room while music plays or a gong is beaten. When music stops they can write any related idea or thought on the Compass whiteboard.
3. The completed whiteboards are given to each Compass group who add any additional information from their specific Compass point perspective.
4. Each group comes up with 3 assets and 3 concerns based upon their observations.
5. Each person writes one aspect of their chosen issue on a laminated card. (This could be done on paper if not repeating the activity often.)
6. All groups come together in a circle and share the issues and aspects they have discussed. When someone notes a connection between Compass points, colored raffia string is stretched between those two people, and students comment whether it is a positive or negative link.
7. As the system starts to emerge, students are asked to consider where we might make a change to lead to the market being more sustainable.

Leader perspective:

“The individual reflection that the movement between whiteboards created allowed students to express the many ideas they had thought about in the market and ensured that everyone had a voice.”

“We liked doing the activity because it gave a structure to visiting a market and allowed consideration from a variety of perspectives.”



What the compass does:

- Focuses observations
- Simplifies entry to understand a complex system
- Encourages deeper thinking and connections