

Lesson Plan: Introduction to the SDGs, Sustainability & Systems Thinking

by Martin Spreckley

Tool(s) used:	Sustainability Compass
Purpose of using tool:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesizing Thinking • Guiding Discussion <p>Overview: Having introduced the SDGs and had students present and collaborate in the creation of a 'class set' of SDG slides, this lesson focussed on defining and discussing Sustainability in general. Following on from individual and then group definitions of sustainability, we looked at the Compass definition and then students used the Compass to map the 17 SDGs. The purpose was to focus the students understanding of the links between all issues and the various points of the Compass.</p>
Context of lesson/case study:	SEED class (Social and Environmental Entrepreneurship Development)
Participants (# and description):	Grade 8 students
Topic, Theme, or Key Understanding of unit/project:	Introduction to the SDGs, Sustainability and Systems Thinking
Length of unit/project:	16 weeks (16 lessons) - including an 'action' aspect
Resources/materials & setting required:	-
<p>Lesson Plan/Description of the Project:</p> <p>Students had previous experience using the Compass model in Grade 7, so this was a lesson intended to re familiarise and introduce to new students. After the initial Sustainability defining exercises (photos in the above linked folder), small groups were each given an A3 size Compass and the 17SDGs cut into small cards. The groups were then tasked with deciding which SDGs linked with which of the compass points. They played the cards in groups by the relevant points on the compass then, when all groups were done, rotated around the groups to see the similarities and differences.</p>	
<p>Reflection</p> <p>Plusses:</p> <p>This is an 'easy to set up' exercise that gets students working in collaboration. It was great for stimulating discussions around what each SDG was about achieving and then which compass point it links most closely with. Many students see that some SDGs link to more than one point and this provided great discussion as there was only one card and they had choose just one point.</p> <p>Challenges:</p> <p>This activity works well, but if students divide the 16 cards between them and choose by themselves where they should be placed, then discussion is limited. Better to suggest that group go through each SDG as a group. Some have little debate, others require a lot of talking through.</p>	

Suggestions for other practitioners and educators:

Preliminary work (digging deeper) into the SDGs helps, otherwise they only have the 'title' of the SDG to base their decision on. In a previous lesson, I divided the class (20) into smaller groups and assigned SDGs for them to focus on, put together a slide and then present for the class.

Evidence and Resources:



Lesson plan submitted by: Martin Spreckley, 2016, while serving as Teacher at UWCSEA, Singapore

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