

Project Plan for 2009 - Learning for Sustainability – Consumption.

The educational provider (Wilss), that I work for co-ordinates a Waikato Young Leaders day (“WYLD”) of leadership training for Year 9’s (13 year olds) in April. This day directly connects us with 425 students who represent over 30 schools from the region.

After reflecting upon the MSc March workshop certain ideas kept on coming up for me; values, young people, education, climate change and sustainability. My experience of working with Wilss in developing and implementing successful school programmes encouraged my thinking around trying to do ‘something’ around sustainability as a notion of living rather than just around ‘green’ or environmental issues. I had a number of email discussions with Forum for the Future staff and they identified this notion as ‘sustainability literacy’ to which they are also doing inquiry around. Liaising with WWF-UK and other sustainability resource educators has enabled me to source a number of school materials relating to the topic of consumption which we will be able to adapt for a New Zealand context.

So taking on board the advice of Chris Preist and Dawn Baggaley to undertake the second year project within a familiar context I have decided to create and deliver a ‘consumption’ programme to Year 9’s and link this as part of our WYLD training. Linking it by offering the consumption programme to the Deans of the Year 9’s as a way for the students to use their teachings from the WYLD training and organise a sustainability activity/event ie, ‘buy nothing’, ‘E collection’, beach clean-up day or something that the students connect/identify with. Our intention is to deliver further content in modular form to the students so that they can unpack the topic themselves within their own context and then through a number of different activities present their consumption learning journey to their school assemblies and then co-ordinate a whole of school event.

My inquiry with this project is around; Cultural Creatives (Ray & Anderson, 2000), young people and sustainability literacy, behaviour change with buying less and/or buying differently and engaging the wider community through the actions of young people. A question might be – can education make a difference in changing the way young people buy/consume?

The research methods will comprise of; interviews, surveys, focus groups, listening and collecting stories and material from the young people during our content delivery and their engagement and co-ordination of their whole of school/community event/activity.