

On June 9th, Dr. David Suzuki and George Stroumboulopoulos, in partnership with One Million Acts of Green, present an online webcast: "Small Steps Make a Big Difference." Dr. Suzuki will discuss the important role that youth and children play in building a more sustainable world. Since One Million Acts of Green launched last October, students of all ages have showcased their efforts and proven their dedicated involvement. After the webcast, One Million Acts of Green invites your school to give it one 'final push' before the end of the year. Whether you log more acts of green, or whether you dedicate part of your school day to an environmental activity like this one, provided by Green Street: "A Road to Discovery", every small step will make a big difference.

AN ENGAGING APPROACH – ROAD TO DISCOVERY*

A *Road to Discovery* is an excellent way to help young people better understand their surroundings, ask questions about the various elements, formulate hypotheses on problems faced by the community, and imagine solutions that might improve the quality of life or the environment for people living in the community.

PREPARING for the *Road to Discovery*

Prepared in advance by the teacher, the *Road to Discovery* should ideally take place near the school. The activity can range in time and length depending on the age of the students. Some teachers could allow for a 4 to 6 block radius with 30 minutes; others may allow for double the length and time. Whenever possible, the activity should be designed so that the students visit different zones (i.e. residential, commercial, industrial, entertainment, agricultural) as each has its own characteristics.

In order to encourage a more in-depth interpretation of the areas visited, the trip should incorporate two to four stops allowing contrasting and complementary views of the neighbourhood. The teacher should ensure that the students alternate between spaces with different characteristics (boulevards, streets, and alleys), busy areas (commercial streets), quiet areas (parks), and places with different sounds, odours and lighting. The *Road to Discovery* should be a sensory experience!

PREPARING to set out

- Before setting out, form small teams of two or three students and, depending on their age, arrange for accompanying adults.
- Depending on the age and grade level of students, application of the objectives of the activity will vary. Clearly explain to the students the objectives:
 - To take a closer look at your neighbourhood and observe:
 - any environmental concerns that could be addressed (i.e. use of electric outside lights versus solar lighting; how many automobiles are in driveways; is there a lack of trees and plants; is litter a problem; factories; noise; street congestion; urban sprawl; lack of birds, etc...)
 - any positive environmental developments (i.e. the use of composting; the use of solar lights; the number of electric or hybrid automobiles; the abundance of trees, plants, parks, bicycle paths, shared cycling, car pooling opportunities, transit, etc...)
 - To come up with solutions that could address any concerns identified.

- To think about the following as they walk through their neighbourhood:
 - An environmentally-conscious person is someone who
 - This is something you can discuss along the way or pick up in class following the activity.
- Ask the students to carry along a notebook to jot down their observations and questions to pick up in class following the activity.

The FIELD TRIP

In teams, guide the students along the entire route. Coordinate their observations by asking questions and ensure that they are taking notes. The students should be encouraged to pay close attention to their surroundings, search for evidence, carefully observe the people they encounter and share their knowledge with the group.

FOLLOW-UP and additional ACTIVITIES

- a) Key Words – Ask the students to write down between 3 and 5 words that best describe:
 - What they observed during the trip;
 - Their impressions of the trip;
 - What they felt during the trip; and
 - What caught their attention the most or what aspect of the trip was most memorable.
- b) Mind Map – Challenge each student to remember the route taken and to draw a mental map of it. Ask them to identify all the elements they observed. Invite students to compare each other's mind map. What are the similarities and differences? What are the main reference points? Write the students' observations down on the blackboard.
- c) Model and Mural – Suggest the students create a mural or a model of their neighbourhood, including all the information they have gathered.
- d) Synthesizing the Students' Notebooks – Summarize the information gathered by the students during the field trip.
- e) Choose a Cause – Identify the main questions, points of interest and themes likely to prompt the students to get involved. Work with students on a project and access funding through the Green Street program www.green-street.ca to get your project off the ground.



* *An Engaging Approach: Road to Discovery* is one of eight activities highlighted in *Engaging in Our Communities as Global Citizens: A citizenship education initiative centred on the values of the environment, democracy, peace and solidarity*, as originally developed by la Centrale des syndicats du Québec and the Établissements Verts Brundtland. To obtain your complementary Teachers' Kit, please contact info@green-street.ca or info@ctf-fce.ca (Canadian Teachers' Federation).