



The Quality of Life

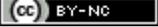
Prepared by

Kathia Rodriguez
kathia.rodriguez@unt.edu

June 26, 2014

This material was produced for Excellence in Curricula and Experiential Learning (EXCEL) Program, which is funded through UNT Sustainability. The University of North Texas holds the copyright. This material is available for use under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 3.0 Unported License.



Document Information	
Title	The Quality of Life
Prepared By	UNT Sustainability
Original Creation Date	June 26, 2014
Version	1.0
Date of Current Version	June 26, 2014
Revised By	
Description	A collection of activities and resources regarding the Quality of Life that meet state education standards and national sustainability standards for the 6 th grade level.
Rights Information	©University of North Texas
Licensing Information	 This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License .

Revision History	
Previous Version	none
Changes	

The Quality of Life
Table of Contents

Introduction 1

 Grade Level 1

 Discipline 1

 TEKS 1

 National Education for Sustainability Learning Standards 1

 Objective 2

 Keywords 2

 Description of Activities 2

Activities 3

 Activity 1: What is Quality of Life? 3

 Introduction 3

 Materials 3

 Products 3

 Process 3

 Activity 2: Measuring Quality of Life 5

 Introduction 5

 Materials 5

 Products 5

 Process 5

 Activity 3: Collecting Data 7

 Introduction 7

 Materials 7

 Products 7

 Process 7

 Activity 4: Quality of Life Related to Sustainability 10

 Introduction 10

 Materials 10

 Products 10

 Process 10

 Activity 5: Analyzing Survey Findings 12

 Introduction 12

 Materials 12

 Products 12

 Process 12

Additional Resources 14

 Online Resources 14

 Educational Literature 14

 Educational Videos 14

Handouts

 “Definition of a Good Life”

 “Walking in Someone Else’s Shoes”

 “Objective: Judgment Based on Observable Phenomena”

 “Subjective: Judgment Based on an Individual’s Feelings or Perceptions”

 “Video Questions”

 “Town X Scenario”



Introduction

Grade Level

These activities are intended for a sixth grade classroom.

Discipline

These activities have a science and social studies focus.

TEKS

Content:

Scientific investigations and reasoning. TEKS §112.18. Science, Grade 6. (a)(4)(A)(i)(ii)(iii)

Throughout social studies in Kindergarten-Grade 12, students build a foundation in history; geography; economics; government; citizenship; culture; science, technology, and society; and social studies skills. The content, as appropriate for the grade level or course, enables students to understand the importance of patriotism, function in a free enterprise society, and appreciate the basic democratic values of our state and nation as referenced in the Texas Education Code (TEC), §28.002(h). TEKS §113.18. Social Studies, Grade 6. (a)(5)

Skills:

The student uses scientific inquiry methods during laboratory and field investigations. TEKS §112.18. Science, Grade 6. (b)(2)(A)(B)(C)(D)(E)

The student knows how to use a variety of tools and safety equipment to conduct science inquiry. TEKS §112.18. Science, Grade 6. (b)(4)(A)(B)

The student uses geographic tools to answer geographic questions. TEKS §113.18. Social Studies, Grade 6. (b)(3)(A)(B)(C)(D)

The student understands how geographic factors influence the economic development, political relationships, and policies of societies. TEKS §113.18. Social Studies, Grade 6. (b)(5)(A)(B)(C)

The student understands the similarities and differences within and among cultures in various world societies. TEKS §113.18. Social Studies, Grade 6. (b)(15)(A)(B)(C)(D)(E)(F)

National Education for Sustainability K-12 Student Learning Standards

2.3 ~ Economic Systems ~ Food Systems

2.4 ~ Social and Cultural Systems ~ Cultural Diversity ~ Multiple Perspectives ~ Resource Distribution ~ Quality of Life Indicators

Objective

Students will explore their understandings of Quality of Life, and discover different definitions of the phrase, and how it varies across cultures.

Key Words

Quality of Life
World Health Organization (WHO)
Physical Health
Psychological Health
Independence
Environment
Spirituality
Survey
Objective
Subjective
Demographics
Data
Ordinal
Likert
Ratio

Description of Activities

The following activities have been compiled to address the topic of “Quality of Life” in sixth grade classrooms. The activities meet the state and national education standards for sixth grade, and are intended to supplement pre-existing curricula, with a focus on integrating sustainability topics. The activities can be used in conjunction or alone.

Activities

Activity 1: What is Quality of Life?

Introduction

In this activity, students will brainstorm about their ideal life and its components. They will break those down into the 6 categories as defined by WHO Quality of life. They will analyze the reasoning behind each of their choices.

Materials

Handout- "Definition of a Good Life"

Products

Questions from handout

Process

1. Ask students to pair up and discuss what a "good life" is. They should also come up with the top 5 things they think are necessary for achieving their definition of a good life.
2. Ask one representative for each pair to share their discussion with the class. Write down all ideas on the board. Pose the following questions to help them consider things that may impact their idea of a good life:
 - How did you define a "good life"? What are the top 5 "good life" items identified?
 - How do you think your choices compare to the average youth (80% of 12-24 year olds say that having close friends is important)? To your parents?
 - Do you think your top 5 items for a good life would change if you were 30 years older? If you had children? If you lived in Alaska?
 - Are there any technologies that are part of your good life?
 - What other factors do you think might impact what your top 5?
3. Provide the students with the definition of Quality Of Life and define other key terms.
4. Introduce the 6 categories of the WHO Quality of Life and provide examples.
 - Physical Health (energy, pain, sleep, illness)
 - Psychological Health (body image, memory, learning, self-esteem)
 - Level of Independence (ability to work and support self, mobility, need for medicines or physical aids)
 - Social Relations (friendships, romantic relationships, social support)
 - Environment (freedom, safety, financial security)
 - Spirituality (spirituality, religion, personal beliefs)
5. Have the students return to their original pairs and ask them to discuss the following questions:

- Which of the 6 categories did each of your top 5 fall in?
 - Did any of the 6 categories get overlooked? If so, is it ok that the category was overlooked?
 - Would you like to change your top 5 or add more items to it? Why or why not?
 - Would you like to redefine Quality Of Life?
6. Have students share out from their pairs. When sharing their answers, draw attention to their reasons for adding or changing their items.
- Probe as to WHY it was important to do so. The goal here is to have them begin to explore why each of these 6 aspects is important to Quality Of Life.
 - Have the students look back at their original definition of Quality Of Life and rewrite it to include the information they learned today.

Activity 2: Measuring Quality of Life

Introduction

Student will create a survey to assess others' definitions of Quality of Life.

Materials

Handout- "Walking in Someone Else's Shoes"

Handout- "Objective: Judgment Based on Observable Phenomena"

Handout- "Subjective: Judgment Based on an Individual's Feelings or Perceptions"

Products

Survey questions

Handout questions

Process

1. Have students find an example (book, newspaper, movie, etc.) of someone from a different culture than them. Have them write a brief summary about this person/people and, writing from the other person's perspective, write what they think Quality Of Life means to them in one paragraph. Use the corresponding handout.
2. Ask students to pair up and share their answers from the handouts from Activities 1 and 2.
 - Specifically, ask them to compare their rankings.
 - Are they the same or different?
 - If they are different, ask them why they think that is?
 - Ask students to decide from their chosen examples which person they think has the better Quality Of Life and why?
3. Have students share out from their discussion. Use their opinion-based ideas of choosing which person has the better Quality Of Life to begin opening the door for creating a way to measure.
 - Ask more than one person: How did you decide which person has a higher Quality Of Life? Compare the various answers.
4. Introduce the idea of subjective and objective means by which to measure Quality Of Life.
 - Objective: Indicators
 - Measurable by quantity or time
 - How could you measure a simpler concept, such as ice cream consumption, using quantity?
 - How could you measure ice cream consumption using time?
 - Subjective: People's opinions/perceptions.
5. Talk about what makes a good survey question.

- Ask for example survey questions and brainstorm with students: Which survey questions are better than others and what makes them better? Good survey questions are:
 - Clear
 - Measuring what it intends to measure
 - NOT double-barreled (asking only one question)
 - Not pressuring the participant (biased or leading)
 - Bad examples:
 - Unclear: Would you enjoy the consumption of ice cream sometime?
 - Not measuring what it is trying to measure: What size ice cream cone do you get?
 - Double-barreled: Do you like ice cream and frozen yogurt?
 - Pressuring participant: Isn't ice cream your favorite?
 - Good Wording: Do you like ice cream? Or Rate the degree to which you agree with this statement – "I like ice cream"
6. Break off into 6 groups (one per category of Quality Of Life).
 7. Using the attached handouts, each group should come up with at least 2 options for objective and 2 options for subjective questions for their Quality Of Life category.
 8. Once the groups have their questions, they should pair up with another group and provide each other feedback. Each group should finally decide on 3 questions (for a total of 18)
 9. The groups should rejoin and share their final decisions with the entire class.

Activity 3: Collecting Data (Activity 2 Cont'd)

Introduction

Students will learn about demographics and what information can be obtained from it as well as how to obtain it and apply it. They will look at different types of data and questions. They will apply that in a practical sense by creating their own surveys.

Materials

Completed Handout-“Objective: Judgment Based on Observable Phenomena”

Completed Handout- “Subjective: Judgment Based on an Individual’s Feelings or Perceptions”

Products

Survey

Process

1. Introduce the concept of demographic data and show why it is important. Through reflecting on their first night’s homework, the students can begin to establish how various individual characteristics may put them at a disadvantage or advantage).
 - Have students take turns in their Quality of Life Survey Question Groups sharing one item of influence for their Quality of Life questions from their homework.
 - The students should then lump any related items into categories. Did they provide the answers: “being old” and “being young”? The category they might come up with is age. Other possible categories may be: race/ethnicity, class/economic status, religious beliefs, education level, location, family situations, gender.
 - Write the students’ lumped categories on the board.
2. Defining Demographics
 - Read out loud the Merriam-Webster definition of demographics: 1 plural: the statistical characteristics of human populations (like age or income) used to identify markets, 2: a market or segment of the population identified by demographics.
 - Ask the students: What does the definition I just read mean to you?
 - Ask the students: Why is this important? Why do we care about demographic data?
 - Ask them: Did any of the categories listed on the board impact your characters from the first night’s homework assignment? Do you think belonging to any of those categories impacts how they might define Quality Of Life? Students should begin to recognize that there may be inequalities based on demographic data.
3. Demographic Questions
 - Before beginning, ask students if they would like to add any more categories to the board based on the previous conversation.
 - Vote: On a piece of paper, have students choose SIX demographic categories they would like to include on their survey from the choices on the board. The six with the most votes will be included in the survey.

- Split students into six groups and assign each a demographic category.
 - Have the groups come up with one good survey question based on their given demographic category.
4. Explain quickly to students different types of data they can collect:
 - Nominal: data that fits within categories
 - Provide the following examples: Yes/No, Male/Female
 - Ordinal: ranking. (When you hear ORDinal, think of putting things in ORDer.)
 - “From favorite to least favorite”
 - Interval: scaled. Increments on the scale should be equidistant from each other.
 - What is the temperature outside?
 - Likert Scale: “Rate the degree to which you agree with this statement...”
 - 1 - Strongly agree, 2- agree, 3 - somewhat agree, 4- neither agree nor disagree, 5 -somewhat disagree, 6 - disagree, 7 - strongly disagree
 - More points on the scale allow the respondent to be more specific.
 - Ratio: This one is tricky because it is closely related to interval. The difference is with ratio, there is a “true zero.”
 - A true zero means that a 0 indicates “an absence” of the measure. Degrees Fahrenheit does not have a true zero. Why? Because when it is 0 degrees there is not an absence of heat. It is just cold!
 - Always consider including a “N/A” and an “Other” category when doing closed ended answers! Ask the students why that might be.
 - Question might not apply to them (i.e. How long have you been married?)
 - You might not provide them with the category they need so they might need to write in their own answer.
 5. The students should return to the four questions they constructed (1 demographic question and 3 Quality Of Life questions from lesson two). Have them decide whether each question should be closed or open ended and also which data type would be a best fit for the question. They should use the handout from day three to record their answers.
 6. Ask students why they might want to pre-test the survey questions. If they are unsure what you mean by pre-test, suggest that they think of it as a trial run. What might they learn from a trial run?
 7. Have each Quality of Life Survey Question Group pair up with another group to answer each other’s survey questions. After answering the questions, each group should take turns interviewing the other group regarding the survey questions that were created. They should ask questions that allow them to refine the questions
 - Did you understand the question?
 - Was it confusing?
 - Is there a way I could have made it clearer?
 - Were the answer choices adequate?
 - What do you think I was measuring? (Does what they think you were measuring match up with what you were actually measuring?)
 - After they have refined the survey questions they should submit them to you so you can enter them into the finalized survey for distribution.

8. Introduce the homework assignment, which is to ask their survey questions and gather data. The teacher should decide who the student should survey (family, another class, etc.), and how many people they need to survey.

Activity 4: Quality of Life Related to Sustainability

Introduction

Students will compare Quality of Life in various situations. They will look at a scenario and take on roles of community members to get a better understanding of the impact that decisions can have on individual's lives as well as on the community.

Materials

Handout- "Video Questions"
Handouts- "Town X Scenario"
Computer

Products

Answers

Process

1. Play the following video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQKkgCijT4k>. Have students fill out the handout for lesson four while they watch the video.
 - After the video, have students review their answers to the handout.
 - Ask students: What are the sustainability issues in the video? They should think about the environment, society, and the economy.
 - What are the Quality of Life issues in the video?
 - How are the Sustainability and Quality of Life issues connected?
2. Tell students they are going to act out a scenario concerning a threat to an imaginary town's Quality of Life.
 - Frame the scenario for the class.
 - We are all residents of Town "X."
 - A large company would like to build a power plant in our town.
 - There is a disagreement on whether this power plant should be built or not.
 - A taskforce has been assembled to decide whether it should be built.
 - During this meeting we will all voice our opinions and at the end we MUST vote to determine whether or not the power plant will be built.
 - Distribute the Town "X" handout. Have everyone read it but tell them not to discuss it.
 - Assign roles to volunteers:
 - If there are 5 (class of 14 or less) volunteers give each volunteer one of the characters. They are not allowed to discuss the details of their character with anyone else
 - If there are 10 (class of 15 or more) volunteers, there are two people per character. They can discuss their character with their partner but not the rest of the class. Their focus is on their character's goals.
 - The students NOT playing characters are objective 3rd party characters. They can discuss the town and weigh pros and cons.
 - Students should be encouraged to consider:

- The various perspectives
 - Societal, economic, and environmental impacts
 - Trade offs
 - Compromises
- They should list on the board 3-5 solutions to vote on. They MUST all vote!
3. After they have voted, ask them to come up with 2-3 ideas of how this story might play out. If they are unsure how to begin, frame it in terms of “best case” and “worst case.”
4. Ask them to consider the following questions:
- How do you feel about the task force decision?
 - Will anyone’s Quality of Life be improved by this decision? How?
 - Will anyone’s Quality of Life be degraded by this decision? How?
 - Will anyone’s Quality of Life be both improved AND degraded?
 - How do you think the decision ties into the concepts of Quality of Life and sustainability?
 - Again, if they have trouble with this question, prompt them by reminding them about the environment, society and economy.

Activity 5: Analyzing Survey Findings (Activities 2 & 3 Cont'd)

Introduction

Students will learn about organizing and displaying data in a clear and manageable manner. They will also work on interpreting the information.

Materials

Computers

Products

Excel sheet
Essay

Process

1. Review the Data
 - Distribute to each student an Excel sheet with all of the collected data.
 - Students should pair up to look at the data and think about how they can potentially display it.
 - Students may feel overwhelmed at this point. This is ok! A valuable lesson here is that data IS overwhelming and that we need to find ways to organize it.
 - After students brainstorm about how to display the data, have them share out.
 - Students should come up with things we discussed on day three (means, percentages, frequencies, pie charts, etc.). However, if they come up with more creative ways to share the data, encourage them to work out how they might represent their ideas.
2. Remind students of how they might use numbers or figures to represent the data and have it tell a story. At this point try not to TELL them, but have them tell you.
3. Data Analysis
 - Students should return to their Quality of Life Survey Question Groups.
 - Each survey group is responsible for analyzing the survey questions they constructed. Distribute the appropriate Excel sheet to each group (with their raw data from their demographic and survey questions).
 - They should come up with a number and/or figure for the demographic data of ALL participants (i.e. 60% of the survey sample were women and 40% were men).
 - They should come up with a number and or figure for:
 - ALL participants for the three Quality of Life survey questions (i.e. 70% of all respondents felt that...)
 - ALL participants, broken down by DEMOGRAPHIC DATA for each Quality of Life survey question (i.e. 30% of the men and 10% of the women felt that...)
 - They should be reminded that they will be presenting this to the rest of the class.
 - Keeping asking them: What is the best way to tell the story?

4. Have groups take turns sharing out their data. The class as a whole should talk about what these data might mean.
 - How does it relate to sustainability?
 - How does it relate to Quality of Life?

Additional Resources

Online Resources

Primary Source

<http://sustainableschools.asu.edu/files/2012/10/QualityofLifeLessonPlan.pdf>

<http://sustainableschools.asu.edu/files/2012/10/QualityofLifeHandouts.pdf>

<http://sustainableschools.asu.edu/files/2012/10/QualityofLifePresentations.pdf>

Educational Videos

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQKkqCiJT4k>

Definition of A Good Life

Name: _____

Close your eyes and imagine that you are living the good life. What does that look like? What do you need?

My definition of "good life" is:

The five things I would need for a high quality of life (a good life) are:

1. _____

QOL Category:

2. _____

QOL Category:

3. _____

QOL Category:

4. _____

QOL Category:

5. _____

QOL Category:

Name: _____

Walking in Someone Else's Shoes

Find an example (book, newspaper, movie, etc.) of someone who lives differently from you (such as someone from: another country or state, someone who has a different health situation from yourself).

Write a brief summary about this person/people:

Putting yourself in their shoes, write a paragraph of what you think quality of life means to them. Be sure to include all of the 6 elements identified today in class (physical health, psychological health, independence, social relations, environment, spiritual wellbeing).

How would you rank the 6 elements in terms of importance to this person? (1 is most important, 6 is least important)

- ___ Physical Health
- ___ Psychological Health
- ___ Independence
- ___ Social Relations
- ___ Environment
- ___ Spiritual Wellbeing

Name: _____ Quality of Life Category: _____

Group Members: _____

Objective: *Judgment based on observable phenomena*

Question 1:

Final question:

Question 2:

Final question:

Subjective: *Judgment based on an individual's feelings or perceptions*

Question 1:

Final question:

Question 2:

Final question:

Video Questions

Name: _____

What event is occurring in this video?

How is it impacting quality of life negatively?

How is it impacting quality of life positively?

Is everyone's quality of life being impacted the same?

Are any of the 6 Quality of Life Categories being affected (that you know of from the video)? If you say yes, please explain.

Physical Health - Y | N

Psychological Health - Y | N

Level of Independence - Y | N

Social Relations - Y | N

Environment - Y | N

Spirituality - Y | N

Town X

Town X is an economically depressed community, an old steel town. While it thrived in the 1970's, the 1980's brought a decrease in steel production nationwide. In 1992, a low-income housing project was built next to the steel mill, unaware of the potential dangers caused by toxic waste being disposed of improperly. Finally, the steel mill was forced to close in 1997 because they had buried toxic waste on the grounds that leaked into the River YU.

Currently the main industry in Town X is a paper mill, which opened in 1979. Located on the River YU, the Paper 4 Life (P4L) mill employs about 55% of the town population. Contrary to popular belief, the P4L plant is a relatively clean industry having no major Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) violations and an excellent community relationship. The biggest drawback is the constant smell of rotten eggs in the air due to the use of sulfur. Unfortunately, P4L has seen a downturn in profits over the past year and has begun laying off employees on the manufacturing and managerial levels.

Some demographic information about Town X:

- Mostly middle-class families: Average household income (family of four): \$40,000
- Ethnic make-up of town population:
 - 71% Caucasian
 - 20% African American
 - 8% Hispanic
 - 1% Other
- 12% of the total town population lives below the poverty line
- At the housing project, the average household income (family of four) is \$17,000
- Ethnic make-up of the housing project:
 - 44% African American
 - 35% Hispanic
 - 20% Caucasian
 - 1% Other
- Town unemployment rate: 7%
- Workers in "blue-collar" jobs: 60%
- Workers in "white-collar" jobs: 40%
- Town's population is stable, surrounding area is growing

Selltech Power

The Selltech Power Corporation wants to open a new power plant to serve Town X and the surrounding region. The proposed site of the plant is on River YU upstream from the housing project. The plant will be powered by a combination of hydroelectric and natural gas turbines (one turbine powered by water, two turbines powered by natural gas). There is an alternate site outside of Town X, however the town would not receive any of the tax revenue generated by the plant if it is situated there.

You live in the housing project next to the old steel mill. You are currently employed at the P4L paper mill, where you earn minimum wage on the factory floor. Your wife, Veri Poore, was also working there, but had to quit about six months ago when one of your children became very sick. You have two children ages 8 and 5. Your family moved to the housing project five years ago after your second child was born and you had just been laid off from another job. Your eight-year-old child has leukemia and is currently in treatment. He is doing well with the chemotherapy, although it is difficult to see him so sick. Two years ago, Veri was diagnosed with breast cancer. She was forced to have a mastectomy and undergo intensive chemotherapy treatment to eradicate the cancer. Today she is doing well.

You feel that it is no coincidence that your family has been so sick. You think that the leaking toxic waste left over from the old steel mill somehow caused these illnesses. Although it was not known that toxic waste was leaking underneath the housing project when you first came, the truth is that you never wanted to move here in the first place because it was dirty and located right next to a steel mill. However, you had little money at the time and had no other options because you could not afford housing located elsewhere. You've been trying to move out since you arrived, but with the economy slowing, then Veri getting sick, and now your child, you just don't have the financial resources.

You are uncertain about the Selltech plant coming. The possibilities of a better paying job and good benefits are enticing, yet the thought of having more chemicals and possible toxins nearby is alarming. You don't know any specifics about the power plant and what sort of by-products it could produce and you haven't had time to find out more because, when you aren't working, you are at home or at the hospital with your child. You found out that there were meetings regarding the power plant after they had occurred, which made you angry because you don't receive the local paper and, even if you had known, the time (during the middle of the day) was impossible for you to attend. You feel excluded, as though you have no voice or say in the issue. It seems as though your opinion and those of your fellow residents are unimportant and being ignored.

The next step is to attend the final "Task-Force" meeting.

Town Member- Anita Job

After losing your job at the paper mill four months ago, you are more than ready to get back to work. At the paper mill, you were a shift manager and earned a decent salary. It has been hard on your family because you were the main source of income. Your husband, Whatta Job, is a stay-at-home dad taking care of the three kids because childcare is so expensive.

If the Selltech power plant is approved and built in your hometown of Town X, it is possible you could find a job at the plant as a shift manager. You've heard that the plant will create 350 job openings; however, you also heard that 50 of those positions will be filled with current Selltech employees from other plants. This worries you because those jobs are usually the managerial jobs, which is what you are seeking.

After attending an information session given by Selltech (you saw an ad in the paper), you have discovered that a shift manager position at Selltech will pay \$5,000 more than your old job at P4L. Selltech also offers continuing education opportunities for their employees and more importantly, free childcare. This would be wonderful for your family because your husband would be able to work outside the home and provide more money to help pay for your family expenses. You desperately want your children to have the opportunity to attend college and the extra income would help you save for this.

You live on the main road through town. If the Selltech plant is built, traffic will increase dramatically, which concerns you. The property value of your home will decrease and, more importantly, trucks carrying natural gas to the plant will be driving by your house daily, and if one should get in an accident it could be disastrous.

You know that power plants can pollute the air. This is also a concern because two of your children have asthma, one of them with acute asthma. This has proven to be an expensive and time-consuming medical condition. On several occasions, your child with acute asthma has needed hospitalization, forcing you to take off of work while your husband kept the other two children at home.

There is an alternate site outside of Town X that Selltech investigated. If the plant were built there you wouldn't have increased traffic and it seems as though this would put your children farther away from the possible pollution. However, it would probably be more difficult to get a job because more county residents would apply in addition to the numerous Town X residents.

The next step is to attend the final "Task-Force" meeting where you will be able to voice your opinion.

Town Member- Forest Green

You are a forester for the county surrounding Town X. You live right outside Town X, downstream from the proposed site of the new Selltech power plant. There are several things that concern you about the power plant. You've done some research and found that the proposed plant will have some serious negative environmental effects.

The proposed plant will level four acres of forestland, which can lead to increased soil erosion and runoff into River YU. In addition, new power lines will be constructed leading out from the plant, which will also cause more deforestation, and Selltech is known to use strong herbicides to control the vegetation around the towers.

The power plant will release a minimum of 2,500 tons of airborne toxins annually if they comply with the minimum EPA guidelines for air quality. It will also produce 250,000 lbs. of hazardous waste per year, which Selltech is required to dispose of properly. One other fact that worries you is that Selltech uses anhydrous ammonia to reduce its nitrogen oxide emissions, which is stored in large tanks. It is possible that these drums could leak, although highly unlikely. There is an alternative to using the ammonia, it is a dry substance called urea; however, it costs more than the ammonia.

You feel that it is no coincidence that the future site of the proposed plant is near the housing project. Its residents are poor and mostly of minority races. In general, they have been ignored in the planning process for town development. For instance, the original site of the housing project was supposed to be on the other side of the river, upstream from the steel mill. However, the land next to the mill was significantly cheaper to purchase and develop and, despite known environmental hazards, it was built there anyway. Later, when it was discovered that toxic waste was leaking from the buried drums next to the project, it took a long arduous court case in which residents of the project were forced to sue both the town and the steel corporation. You feel that a similar situation could easily arise if a power plant is built near the housing project.

Town X is in a serious economic rut. Although your job is not threatened directly, many people you know who work at the paper mill have lost their jobs, or could lose their jobs, because the paper mill is downsizing. The new plant would also provide a reliable power source, which will be a nice change from your current power company. Your electricity flickers constantly and, when a bad storm hits, you always lose power and the company is slow to get it back up and running.

The next step is to attend the final "Task-Force" meeting where you will be able to voice your opinion.

Town Member- Kilo Watts

You are a corporate executive for the Selltech Power Corporation. You live 75 miles away from Town X in the city of Metropoli. This power plant is a great opportunity for you. You will be the supervising executive over the Town X plant which will require you to drive to the plant once a week. However, you will earn 50 percent more than what you currently earn. You truly believe in the Selltech Corporation or, as you like to call it, the Selltech "family". You've spent over a year researching what would be the best location for a new Selltech power plant. You and your task force chose Town X because of its great location on the River YU, the cheap price of the land, the low tax rate for industry, its hard working citizens, and the need for economic rebirth. You believe that this plant will lead Town X down the road to economic recovery as you have seen the "Selltech family" bring about such change in several other localities.

You know that Selltech will bring a much-needed boost to Town X's tax base and an influx of economic activity. In addition to increased economic activity Selltech has a commitment to fostering community development. You have seen the positive effects of Selltech's "Power for You" program, which addresses everything from teen mentoring to neighborhood clean-ups and restoration.

You know that there will be some environmental changes; however, you feel that change is necessary for progress to take place. You are aware that there is a housing project located slightly downstream from the proposed site and that there have been problems in the past with leaky toxic waste from an old industry located nearby. However, you feel that Selltech will not make those same sorts of mistakes and is one of the "cleaner" power corporations in the market today. It does its best to comply with all federally mandated regulations and goes a step further in trying to include local citizens in the decision making process when Selltech deems that it concerns them. In fact, several meetings were held to educate the citizens about Selltech, the proposed plant, and give an opportunity for them to ask questions and voice concerns. These meetings were advertised in the local paper, but turnout was low.

There is an alternate site outside of Town X in the surrounding county; however, the topography doesn't lend itself to building easily. In fact, the modifications made to the plant to accommodate the land and construction costs will raise the electricity prices. You would also have to petition the county government to rezone the land. You think this will be a difficult task because of the strict open space laws. You would much prefer the plant to be located in Town X.

The next step is to attend the final "Task-Force" meeting where you will be representing Selltech.

Town Member- Landon River

You own a large piece of property in the county surrounding Town X. About six months ago Selltech approached you expressing an interest in buying part of your property and building a power plant on it. Initially you were upset because your family has owned this land for almost one hundred years. It started out as a farm that your great-great-grandfather bought and was passed down generation after generation. Today, you use part of the land for farming crops and the remainder as grazing land for your herd of cattle. You earn a modest income (enough to live comfortably) and your family enjoys the farming lifestyle. In your mind, this lifestyle is worth more than anything money could buy.

It seems illogical for Selltech to buy your property and try to build on it. The topography surrounding River YU, which you assume they will be building near, is rocky and hilly. It is not ideal for building a large power plant. About five feet down is a layer of solid bedrock, which is difficult to break apart and move. Other companies have approached you in the past about buying your land to build on, but when they found out what was under the soil, they felt that the construction costs would be astronomical and found other places to build.

Another factor that has driven away companies in the past is the strict county open space laws. About ten years ago when Metropoli was experiencing a boom, county residents wanted to prevent urban sprawl and petitioned the Board of Supervisors to zone the land so that it would be near impossible for suburbs, shopping malls, and industry to spill out of the city. Although Metropoli is on the opposite side of the county, the laws also apply to the area where your land. Selltech would have to try to get the land re-zoned for industry and county residents have been vocal in the past about keeping open space at its current status. For you, the loss of farm and ranchland signifies a threat to your lifestyle.

It would make more sense for the power plant to locate in Town X. The economy of Town X is struggling and the taxes collected from the new plant would give a boost to the ailing town. It would provide money to build new schools (which are currently overcrowded) and a means to carrying out various town beautification projects such as building parks and repairing the apartments in the low-income housing project.

It would be nice to have that extra tax money in the county's budget; however, your county is doing fine and there is not a budget crisis. One positive aspect of the plant being built on your land is that it is likely that more county residents will be hired to fill the jobs than if the plant were built in Town X. You assume that, since Selltech has not followed up on their offer, they are planning on building the plant elsewhere. You want to attend the "Task-Force Meeting" just to make sure that this is indeed the case.

The next step is to attend the final "Task-Force" meeting where you will be able to voice your opinion.



EXCEL is a division of the Sustainable Communities Initiative

