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GETTING GLOBAL WARMING INTO THE CLASSROOM

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Communicating climate change information to the public is essential if we are to reduce greenhouse emissions. One way to do this is through educating high school students. There are many websites and teacher resources available, but the key is to come up with a package that can and will be easily implemented in the classroom.

The Department of Education, Tasmania has implemented a new curriculum, the Essential Learnings (ELs). This curriculum consists of five ELs – Thinking, Communicating, World Futures, Personal Futures and Social Responsibility – which are sub-divided to 18 key elements.

I have been working with high school teachers to write a learning sequence for global warming that specifically ties in with the relevant World Futures key elements:

- Investigating the natural and constructed world,
- Understanding systems,
- Designing and evaluating technological solutions,
- Creating sustainable futures,

thus guaranteeing ease of implementation in the classroom.

We have created a teaching package that we predict will be used by most schools across Tasmania starting next year. Many states in Australia are also switching to an ELs type curriculum and so we hope our program can be adapted for teaching Australia wide.

Our teaching outline includes:

- History project to determine how the weather has changed in the students' local area,
- Trips to the beach to predict sea level rise,
- Research projects on environmental impacts such as the extinction of Australian native animals,
- Lab experiments on the thermal expansion of water,
- Carbon calculators,
- Home based project to reduce greenhouse emissions,
- Understanding graphs through studying global warming predictions,
- And a geography lesson on maps to learn about sea level rise.

The learning sequence can be found at http://www.ltag.education.tas.gov.au/planning/unitsamples/default.htm#sample%20units