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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2009 Volume V: Green Chemistry

What's Your Green Bottom Line? The Truth About What We Leave Behind

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by Kathryn L. Kinsman

There are so many campaigns right now advertising for us to live a greener lifestyle, but thanks to television, I think most people are suffering from a little green fatigue. I've found that many people, especially my high school students, don't even know what living greener means. Maybe they don't take interest because they can't really see it or they don't feel any personal connection to it. I'd like to change that. The main objective of this unit is to transform the way students think about their everyday actions and how they effect the local environment. In order to do this, first they will be empowered. They will explore the concepts of environmental racism as they are introduced to several people around the nation who have been affected by toxic waste in their neighborhoods. They will even watch a music video by popular musician, will.i.am. A second emphasis will be placed on 2 of the 12 principles of green chemistry and a case study of plastics. Once students realize the importance of individual action, they will be more likely to make necessary daily changes.

(Developed for Environmental Science, grade 9; recommended for Environmental Science and Earth Science, grades 8-12, and Green Chemistry, grades 7-8)

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