

Lesson Plan for Campus Green Team Meeting

By Kim Tupy and Glenda Phipps of the Hialeah Campus

Purpose: This activity allows a group of people involved in environmental decisions to see how the “Precautionary Principle” could be used to further discussions of campus-based issues.

Step #1: The precautionary principle is defined to the group using examples and the definition in Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Precautionary_principle . Stress is put on the development of environmental law as it grew out of civil law which puts the burden of proof on the government. The precautionary principle flips the burden of proof from government to group/org/company advocating a possibly harmful action. (e.g., Toxins near a school, pollution by companies, etc.)

Step#2: Group lists a series of items purchased in quantity on campus that are worth contemplation regarding their potential harm. For example:

Styrofoam cups

Disposable cutlery

Computers

Step#3: Since the precautionary principle necessitates the burden of proof to be placed on the items manufacturer not the buyer to show earth friendliness, the group chooses a product to investigate to see if this is true.

Step#4: In the follow-up meeting, results are shared and possible solutions discussed. Should we demand this of companies? Do we need policies and procedures at MDC for large quantity purchases or do we choose to support only items that have demonstrated environmental sensitivity?