

Sustainability Literacy Assessment

Compiled by Jon Jensen, Emily Neal, and Toby Cain

Draft: 10 January 2019

The survey includes twenty questions that will collect information in three categories: sustainability knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors.

1. The United Nations definition of sustainable development calls for:

- a) Maintaining current incomes and quality of life forever.
- b) Increasing consumption at a constant rate.
- c) Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- d) Setting aside resources for preservation, never to be used.

2. An approach that seeks to understand sustainability problems by examining interactions and feedbacks within and between human and natural systems is called:

- a) Deductive reasoning
- b) Inductive reasoning
- c) Strategic thinking
- d) Systems thinking

3. Many economists argue that electricity prices in the U.S. are too low because:

- a) The prices do not reflect costs caused by pollution from generating electricity.
- b) Profits of electric utilities are too low.
- c) Higher electricity prices would stimulate economic growth.
- d) Low electricity prices make the U.S. less competitive in international markets.

4. What is the primary source of electricity in Decorah and at Luther College?

- a) Natural gas
- b) Renewables
- c) Coal
- d) Nuclear

5. How has the gap in incomes between the richest and poorest households in the United States changed over the last 30 years?

- a) Increased
- b) Decreased
- c) Neither increased or decreased.
- d) Changed volatilyly from year to year.

6. The greenhouse effect warms the Earth's climate because:

- a) The earth's atmosphere becomes thicker, trapping in more solar radiation.

- b) The earth's atmosphere becomes thinner allowing more harmful radiation to hit the earth's surface.
- c) The amount of visible solar radiation that reaches the Earth's surface increases.
- d) The amount of visible solar radiation that reaches the Earth's surface decreases.

7. According to the United Nations' most recent estimates, what percentage of the global population lives in extreme poverty (\$1.90 or less per day)?

- a) 51%
- b) 31%
- c) 11%
- d) 1%

8. What percentage of Iowa's population receives its drinking water from groundwater sources?

- a) 100%
- b) 80%
- c) 30%
- d) 10%

9. As we look at global biodiversity, how are species doing now compared to the past? Rates of species going extinct are:

- a) About the same as they have been over most of human history
- b) Slower than in the past
- c) A little faster than in the past
- d) Much faster than at any time in the last thousand years

10. In the American Midwest, what are the primary impacts of global climate change:

- a) Increased precipitation leading to flooding
- b) Decreased precipitation leading droughts
- c) Sea level rise flooding cities such as Chicago
- d) Heat waves causing increased fires

11. What percent of corn grown in Iowa is sweet corn, grown to be eaten fresh, frozen, or canned by people?

- a) 33%
- b) 25%
- c) 10%
- d) 1%

12. Northeast Iowa is part of the Driftless Area which is characterized by:

- a) Flat, open plains where animals do not tend to drift
- b) Ancient deserts that have been buried in soil
- c) Hills and valleys since the area was not flattened by glaciers

d) Restless people who have drifted here from other places

13. What state leads the nation in wind power production, with the renewable source supplying over 35% of its total electricity production?

- a) California
- b) Kansas
- c) Oregon
- d) Iowa

Beliefs (3 Questions)

14. Which of the issues listed below do you associate with creating a sustainable society? Check all that apply.

- Strengthening the economy
- Reducing income inequality
- Improving access to healthcare
- Improving access to local, nutritious foods
- Protecting the environment
- Conserving resources for future generations
- Decreasing crime
- Ending discrimination Improving public education Keeping taxes low
- Limiting government

15. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following points of view? (This would be on a five, six, or seven-point scale)

- We are exceeding environmental limits that will cause severe harm to future generations.
- Technological innovations will strongly benefit future generations.
- The U.S. should take aggressive action to limit climate change.
- I have a responsibility to live sustainably.
- Everyone's education should include sustainability concepts, practices and solutions.

16. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Since coming to Luther I have . . . (This would be on a five, six, or seven-point scale)

- Gained greater understanding of sustainability.
- Become more sustainable in my personal lifestyle.
- Developed greater motivation for promoting sustainability in the communities of which I am a member.
- Gained confidence in my abilities to create positive change in the world.

Behaviors (4 Questions)

17. Have you engaged in any of the following activities as part of your academic courses in the fall of 2018 or spring of 2019? Check all that apply.

- Used the campus or college farm to learn about sustainability.
- Interacted with Carlisle residents to learn about the local community.
- Went on a field trip to learn about local resources.
- Conducted experiments in a lab to examine sustainability related concepts.
- Developed and tested a solution to a sustainability problem on campus or in a community.
- Examined civic responsibilities, ethical questions or personal values in relation to sustainability.
- Examined sustainability perspectives or approaches in a non U.S. context.
- Created an artistic work to explore or communicate sustainability concepts.
- Conducted a significant research project on a sustainability related topic.

18. Have you engaged in any of the following activities in the past year that were not part of a course? Check all that apply.

- Made conscious efforts to create an inclusive and welcoming climate on campus.
- Participated in a workshop that gave you hands-on experience with sustainability-related skills
- Taken steps to reduce energy use, water use or consumption of new goods
- Advocated for action by elected or other public officials

19. How often do you practice the following behaviors?

- When possible, use means other than a car to get around town.
- Buy bottled water.
- Take care of belongings so they last a long time.
- Turn off lights, computers and other electronics when not in use.
- Recycle
- Eat meals with little or no meat.

20. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- I take pride in Luther's commitment to sustainability.
- Luther's sustainability efforts have enriched my education and college experience.
- Too much emphasis is given to sustainability at Luther.
- Sustainability was an important factor in my decision to come to Luther
- Luther's sustainability performance meets or exceeds my expectations.
- I will incorporate sustainability values and practices in my future professional, civic and personal life.

