My approach to teaching an introductory course in sustainability is to help students envision a sustainable future they would like to bequeath to their children and grandchildren and allowing them the space to do this, as an alternative to focusing on reductive problem solving of current environmental issues. The highlight of the course is a Public Forum, in which the students present their visions for a sustainable world. Research in organizational learning by Peter Senge and others has found that developing the potential of people and organizations to create a desirable future rests on two foundations: 1) positive visions of the future; and 2) understanding the present reality through a systems-thinking perspective. I have stressed each of these aspects in my courses. My hope is that this approach will provide my students with the skills, background knowledge, and habits of mind that will help them to understand the changing world they live in and become active contributors as society seeks to achieve sustainability. Rather than seeing a future fraught with problems, I ask my students to visualize a future filled with solutions and new opportunities.

Sustainability touches upon every aspect of human interactions with the natural world. Thus teaching it requires a broad interdisciplinary perspective that circumscribes, as the extent possible, the totality of these interactions. To augment student exposure to interdisciplinarity (and cover areas where I am not well informed), I invite guest lecturers to class and show selected videos on various themes, with the criterion that the subject areas presented reflect linkages across disciplines. Another important aspect of the students’ experience is an out-of-class project that enhances sustainability. I have found that the process of doing actions such as reducing energy use in their dorms or apartment houses, or starting a recycling program at their places of work, is an empowerment experience for them as they become aware of how their individual actions can directly enhance sustainability. Also, as research has shown, this experience may be the beginning of a life-long commitment to live sustainably.

Beyond courses specifically dedicated to sustainability, the ultimate challenge for higher education is to infuse sustainability throughout the curriculum so that it becomes a part of every student’s learning experience. Succeeding in this goal will require faculty members to incorporate sustainability themes into their courses. To encourage this development, the University of Northern Iowa has established the *UNI Faculty Leadership in Sustainability Education Program*. Twenty-six faculty members participate, representing all five colleges and spanning 19 disciplines as diverse as physics, math, geography, English literature, art and theater. In academic year 2011-2012, the participants revised their syllabi for courses they are already teaching to incorporate issues of sustainability that are relevant to their disciplines (Stigliani et al., 2012). Because Carleton’s interest on integrating geoscience and sustainability, I describe here the outcome of a participating faculty member from the UNI department of geography. He adapted his GIS course to include multi-criteria, sustainability-based models of the environment and human systems. Areas of analysis included erosion from cropland, watershed management, siting of toxic waste sources, bike trails and other recreational areas, and optimal location of town infrastructure.

Several pedagogic methods have been successfully applied to sustainability curriculum. One is systems thinking, which was specifically developed to study complex systems, and thus is well-suited for understanding the inherently complex interactions between the biosphere and human society. Systems thinking can be an effective way to teach students to see the whole pie rather than just the slices. Another effective method is the “pedagogy of place.” Sense of one’s place is important because sustainability should not be taught in an abstract, generic way. Internalizing sustainability requires an understanding of ourselves and our behaviors through affiliation with the space we inhabit. The pedagogy of place is the motivation for requiring hands-on, out-of-class projects that enhance sustainability, where students connect their local, familiar places with sustainability on larger scales.

Three important and successful aspects of my sustainability courses have been: the out-of-class actions to enhance sustainability; giving the students space to envision a positive, sustainable future, and articulating that vision at a Public Forum; and calculation of carbon and ecological footprints, which provides yardsticks for measuring the size of their footprints and comparing them to national and global norms. In my experience the students haven’t responded well to long PowerPoint lectures and much prefer teacher student interaction and the opportunity for student presentations. Also, especially for introductory sustainability courses, the topic is so vast that it is impossible to teach everything, and often it is difficult to discern topic areas that should be included or excluded. Finally, it has been an honor and a privilege to teach students about sustainability so that they can be better prepared to face the challenges they and their children will have to confront. Also, learning to teach sustainability has led me to break down my disciplinary barriers and appreciate complexity and the need for systems thinking. Ultimately sustainability is about people, and whether we have the capacity to prosper in ways that are mutually supportive of society and nature.

W.M. Stigliani, C. Zeman, and G. Betrabet Gulwadi (2012). *Faculty enrichment program for infusing sustainability across the university curriculum*. Presented at the *World Symposium on Sustainable Development at Universities*, June 5-6, 2012, Rio de Janeiro. Also chapter in *Environmental Education, Communication, and Sustainability*, Peter Lang Scientific Publishers: Frankfort am Main, Germany (in press).