

Educating the Youth in Recycling

Sara Cardona (CE), Erin Devin (ME), Carla Romo (ChE), and Jeremy Spiegel (AE)
Advised by Professors Marja Bakermans (BBT) and Beth Eddy (HUA)



Problem: There is a lack of education of proper recycling management for the youth in the elementary school system.

Background

Most elementary schools have a recycling program and enough recycling bins. Despite this, about 80% of the items thrown in trash cans at elementary schools can actually be recycled. The problem is that there is a lack of education of proper recycling management in elementary schools. The youth is responsible for the planet's future, and if they do not care about the environment now, they will not care about it when they become adults. Thus it is crucial to educate children so they can contribute to greener communities.

Goals

- Reduce the amount of waste generated in elementary schools
- Encourage the school faculty to be more involved in recycling
- Redesign how children learn about recycling
- Teach children how to reuse materials
- Increase children's interaction with nature



Final Product

Our final product is a booklet with a recycling educational plan for elementary schools. This booklet will be distributed to Worcester Public Elementary Schools as a guide to implement or improve a recycling program.

Contacts

Elizabeth Tomaszewski - *Associate Director of Sustainability*
Kristen Bender - *WPI Green Team Secretary*
Rich Dussault - *Senior Custodian at Elm Park Community School*

Methods

Research about recycling in elementary schools

Identify the problems of current recycling educational methods

Interview Contacts

Build a recycling program booklet based on findings

References

1. Evans, L. (2000). Recycling: An Artful Approach to Recycling Education. *Waste*, 3(2).
2. Hoang, S., Memerich, M. (2013). What does 'go green' mean to children? *Early Child Development and Care*, 183(2), 171-184. DOI: 10.1080/03001430.2012.742993
3. Lopez, C. (2014). Predictors of recycling behavior among primary school students in Mexico. *Bilingual Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 14(1), 91-103. DOI:10.1177/1421719710790709386
4. [Photograph of Kids Recycling]. (2013). Retrieved from <http://civildigital.com/los-ninos-de-valdemorillo-aprenden-a-reciclar/>
5. Plantar es Cultura en la Expo Prado [Photograph]. (2013). Retrieved from <http://www.21.com.mx/cultura/1233756-uller-es-civiliza-inep-datos-cultura-expo-prado>
6. [Recycling Bin Image]. Retrieved from <http://galleryslips.com/recycling-powerpoint-template.html>
7. Samuelson, L. & Kaga, Y. (2008). The Contribution of Early Childhood Education to Sustainable Society. *UNESCO*.
8. [WPI Logo]. (2013). Retrieved from https://www.wpi.edu/Images/CMS/Marketing/WPI_Inst_Prin_FullCh.png

Schools' Profile

- Every room has one bin
- About 500 students
- Total of 50-55 bins
- No bins in the hallway
- 75% of staff is committed to recycling
- Kids lack knowledge on what can be recycled and the recycling process



Solution

- Booklet with a program on how to educate children about recycling
- Main problems addressed:
 - Relationships with educators
 - Interaction with the environment
 - Dynamic learning
 - Familiarization with recycling
 - Faculty involvement



Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Elizabeth Tomaszewski (Associate Director of Sustainability), Rich Dussault (Senior Custodian), Kristen Bender (Green Team Secretary), Rebecca Ziino (Research Librarian), Professor Marja Bakermans, and Professor Beth Eddy

