



YES! Project Guide

DUMPSTER DIVE

Category: Waste Reduction	
Approximate Cost: \$25	
Desired Results	
<i>Project Goal: To demonstrate how much stuff is thrown into the garbage that can be repurposed or recycled</i>	
<p>UNDERSTANDINGS</p> <p><i>Students will understand that...</i></p> <p>Landfills are full of materials that can be recycled or repurposed</p> <p>Reclaiming products can save the school money</p> <p>We can make a difference by purchasing reusable products and products of high quality</p>	<p>ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS</p> <p>What materials are in the school, home or business garbage?</p> <p>Why are products made to be thrown away?</p> <p>How can we change our purchasing practices to reduce garbage?</p>
Knowledge and Skills Acquisition	
<p><i>Students will know...</i></p> <p>Their everyday choices make a difference in how quickly our landfills will fill up</p> <p>Many products are not made to last.</p> <p>They can choose to recycle over throwing something away</p>	<p><i>Students will be skilled at...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Making better choices when buying products ● Presenting in front of their peers by planning and presenting their results ● Team work ● Working with the custodial and administrative staff ● Collaborating with local businesses (waste hauler)

They can impact other students and their families buying choices

Data

Impact Evidence: After the dumpster dive activity, was waste reduced? Was recycling done more effectively?

Qualitative (observations and descriptive data):

Were students alarmed at the amount of reclaimable products in the garbage?
Did students have ideas on how to repurpose any of the products in the garbage?

Quantitative (numerical data):

Gather data from waste hauler on how much garbage was hauled away the previous year.
Gather data monthly moving forward to compare to rates from previous year.
Gather data at the end of the year to compare impact.

Timeline

School year

Process

Pre-Activity:

Contact waste hauler to gather past years data
Research why this project is important
Create an outline of how the activity will work
Identify who will be the presenter to administration and the custodial staff
Create a presentation to give to administration to gain approval for the activity
Work with custodians on how to best and store garbage over 1 week (or 1 day depending on agreed upon terms of the project with administration)
Purchase or borrow pick up sticks, gloves and masks

Device to weigh objects

Activity:

Set up “stage area” with boundaries and a protective covering on floor

Set up areas for 1. Plastic, 2. Glass, 3. Paper, 4. Other products (as identified) and 5. Garb

Students sort through the garbage using pick up sticks and gloves

Count or weigh items in each area and record

Post - Activity:

Track waste hauled away per month and enter onto Customized Metric sheet

Track recycling hauled away per month and enter onto Customized Metric sheet

Resources and Other Tips

<http://www.tesh.com/articles/the-latest-trend-at-colleges-is-dumpster-diving/>

The “Story of Stuff” by Annie Liebowitz