

Project Title: Trashion Show

School: Jamestown Elementary School

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Brief summary of the project

The Science Committee organized a school-wide recycling fashion show as the activity for our school-wide Morning Meeting during Earth Week. Before the event, each class received a bag with colorful duct tape, string, glue, and other art supplies. Teachers were encouraged to use this as an opportunity to teach about what materials are recyclable and reusable and how to clean recyclable materials that came into contact with food. Students then collected all clean recyclable materials that were produced in their classroom for the month of April. During Earth Week each class created 2 outfits from only the collected recyclable materials and the materials in the bag. They then had two students represent the class as models to wear the outfits during the fashion show and wrote blurbs that were read during the fashion show.

Getting Going

How did the project start? The school's Science Committee hosts a school-wide Morning Meeting every year during Earth Week. The committee had an on-going focus on recycling throughout the school year based on the Sustainability Liasion's Site Wide Assessment results, which showed that trash was being mixed into the recycling bins. This event was seen as an opportunity to educate students about which materials could be reused or recycled.

Who were important people to contact at the beginning? The school principal was first contacted to get support for organizing the event. Next, the classroom teachers were informed of the event so they could plan for the potential impact on their schedules and to prepare for storing the recyclables.

What are the threshold resources that need to be identified at the beginning before proceeding further? (For example, robust parent volunteer network, elevated loading docks, nearby outdoor spigot.)

- A large space to host the Trashion Show
- A megaphone or other device to amplify the voice of the teacher who narrates the event

What are the policies (if any) from APS or elsewhere that may affect the project and need to be considered? None

What budget and/or funding sources were needed? None

Implementation

Did you pilot or test the project and then scale it up? If so, describe your process. We held the first Trashion Show in the spring of 2019 and due to its success plan to continue the event as an annual event.

As you rolled the project out, how did you present this to students and encourage their participation?

- Teachers were encouraged to teach students about what materials are recyclable and could be reused. This could be done during a Morning Meeting or another time the teacher chooses. The students then learned about the Trashion Show and that they would need to help collect recyclables in the classroom to have enough supplies for constructing their outfits. Students kept the recyclables they collected in a communal collection in their classroom for the day they would build their outfits. Each teacher chose how the class would design and build the outfit during Earth Week and how 2 classroom models were selected. Teachers were also encouraged to use the outfit design process as an opportunity to reinforce or teach the design thinking process.

Approximately how many students were actively involved, and how many were affected? The whole school, approximately 600 students, participated.

What obstacles were overcome? Are there continuing obstacles? What lessons did you learn from doing this?

- There have been ongoing concerns about non-recyclable materials ending up in recycling bins, such as paper towels, sandwich bags, snack wrappers, and recyclable items contaminated with food. We realized that collecting items for this event was a useful opportunity to help students work through their misconceptions on how to identify and sort recyclables from non-recyclable objects. It could be helpful to create a slideshow of how to locate the recycling symbol on plastics, which commonly mistaken items are not recyclable, and how to clean recyclables contaminated with food before placing in the recycling bin that classroom teachers could show their students.
- We learned that some materials in the bags we provided teachers were more useful than other materials. It could be helpful to survey teachers on what materials they need, if any, for designing the outfits before the next Trashion Show.
- Since only two students are modeling two outfits per class, each classroom teacher had to organize a fair way to involve their class in designing the outfits. Some classes had every child create an accessory out of the collected recycled materials to wear to the Morning Meeting and this helped every student feel involved, even if they did not help create the outfit or model the outfit.

Will the project continue into future years? If so, how will you keep continuity? Do you plan modifications?

- Yes, it is now an annual tradition that is hosted by the Science and Math Committee (formerly the Science Committee).
- If school is a virtual and/or hybrid model: The plan could be modified to teach about recyclables through a video lesson. Then students could each design their own outfit or accessory at home and record their design as a video posted onto Flipgrid or share it at a virtual Morning Meeting.

What effect has it had on the school? This event supports building community as a school, increases joy and creative application of the design thinking process to recycling, and has helped students develop more awareness of what materials are recyclable and reusable.

Are there photos that could help others visualize how this worked for you? If so, please insert them here.



Replication

Do you have resources you used that would be helpful for someone trying to replicate this project? Would you be willing to share them? At this time there are no reusable materials associated with this event.

What else should someone wanting to implement a similar project at their school know?