



Chelsea - Using puppets to spark learning about the 4Rs

What was your goal and what did you achieve?

I educated preschoolers about the 4 Rs (*refuse, reduce, re-use, recycle*) through a puppet show and story. I love puppets and the 4 Rs, it's something I remember so it's a good building block, and I combined the two together. Puppets go back a long time, but building complex puppets are this year. I did a few puppet shows before and then I thought for my YEC project this would be great. Previously I worked with other people and puppets, and the people got stage fright and things have fallen apart so I thought it best to work with myself this time.

Why preschoolers?

They're a more forgiving audience, and I remember when I was in kindy I always loved when puppet shows came to my kindy and performed because it really sinks in, that's how I learnt about cancer at a young age, it was Camp Quality puppets came in and talked about it, and that's how I remember. I spoke to one kindy class a few weeks ago and I'm going to be doing a few more shows because my mum was talking to some people about it and they said I could come and talk to their Reception class.

Did you know the Kindy before?

Yes, the kindy people are the ones who recommended I go to the YEC, so I knew they had an environmental background and were introducing the 4 Rs.

Tell us about your book

Well it has the 4 Rs hidden inside of it, and it's just about Sunshine and a day in her life. She learns along the way, and after I'd read it, we tried to identify them so I had sticky notes with Rs on them that I stuck on the pages so we could talk about it. I left the book with the kids and let them colour it in for me.

What did you learn?

It reinforced the fact that they're a very forgiving audience, which makes me want to perform even more to them. And I improved. I'm going to re-write the song, and will make a better puppet, so I'll keep building on it, and I'm going to re-write the story because it's a bit scabbly around the edges.

What was your biggest challenge?

Building up the courage to write my letter and send it to the kindy because I was so nervous because I really wanted to perform but I thought 'what if they say no?' and I have to go through this entire process again with another kindy, but luckily they said yes the first time.

Biggest success?

Performing to the kindy and at the end Sunshine was asking 'hugs or high fives?' and so Sunshine got a few hugs and high fives, which tied in with what the Kindy is introducing right now which is consent, so I ended up tying in two bits of their curriculum into one.

Next steps?

More performances, and in the future puppeteering, like with Sesame Street they have environmental stuff in it.

Are you part of a puppeteering group outside of school?

No, I've been trying to find one. I attend puppet shows for little kids so I'm usually the oldest one in the audience

Your advice to other students?

Try and find other people who you know are already interested – I found the kindy – and build on that and let them help you spread the message

This case study was transcribed from an interview. These are Chelsea's words and opinions. Text in italics is from NRM Education.