



Connor - Peer teaching about waste decomposition

What was your goal and what did you achieve?

My project is about waste decomposition so I met up with the F-Yr1s on Tuesday. First I talked to them about the impact waste has on the environment, and then afterwards we went outside and we have some plastic containers which we filled with potting mix and then we split up into five groups, me and four Year 8s from my class helped.

We read a book to them about the journey of where certain products go and then we put items into the containers and mixed them around a bit and then hopefully next year every two weeks they'll check them to see which products have decomposed more and if any actually ever do - we have some bits of plastic, paper, cardboard and aluminium foil.

I was hoping they would learn the impacts of waste then they'd have the knowledge they could tell their parents, their friends from other classes and their family.

Who did you work with?

I have four other Year 8s who are involved, my principal helped a lot, and my home group teacher.

I'm part of the Environment Group at our school so when I get back from events like YEC I go and speak to them and tell them what I've learned so that they can tell their friends.

The teacher of the class I did this project with, she's the leader of the Environment Group so she then tells the Environment Group about what we've done.

The principal has been really supportive, I've taken my ideas to him and he's approved every single one of them. I'm hoping to speak at assembly - we'll have an F-12 assembly which is the whole school. I also want to do a thing in the newsletter about it so then parents will also see what I've done.

Biggest success?

My biggest success was the kids -they really got into it and enjoyed it, and every day at school now since I did the session, they come up to me and ask me questions about how these items decompose and what they can do to help so that's really great to see.

Next steps?

I'm hoping the next few years I'm at the school, every year I'll be able to do this lesson with the new F-Yr 1 class so as they get older they'll still have that knowledge so they'll know what to put in what bin. We do have a compost bin system - each class has a compost bin and then two members of the class who are in the Enviro Club will come round to collect them and take them out to our compost bin. So if I teach them young, as they get older they'll know what's wrong and what is right.

What did you learn about doing a project?

I've learned some things could be very time consuming and it's very good to plan ahead because just showing up and not knowing what you're doing, you can take a lot of time. An example is, one of the people who was helping me found out that they weren't going to be here for that lesson which kind of mixed up everything so then I had to plan to go a different way about it.

Some things I learnt through the project were that simple things such as a foam cup can take years to decompose and other materials take longer, so you might think leaving a little bit of plastic on the ground is nothing but it might still be there in 500 years.

What did you enjoy most?

I enjoyed learning about what the kids already learnt and teaching them, and I enjoyed how they were so enthusiastic about everything.

Your advice to other students?

My advice to others doing a similar project is - if you're really enthusiastic and care about it, go for it! Try your best and if it doesn't work out the way you're exactly looking for, at least you've tried and someone would have got something out of it.

This case study was transcribed from an interview. These are Connor's words and opinions.