

Area of Study

Local And Global Citizenship

Overview

This unit encourages students to explore the global and local issues that are affecting their environment. It will allow them the opportunity to investigate the links between their own behaviors and habits and how they affect their surroundings. This can be explored through presentations by guest speakers, videos and internet research. They will conduct research and develop an action plan that will propose steps to alter their behaviors and that of others, and so make a positive impact on their surroundings. They will have the chance to carry out practical projects and actions that will improve their locality, e.g. Developing a community garden, recycling, tree planting, bulb planting, wild life gardens, environmental surveys, competitions, and working on the Green school committee, etc.

Related learning

- Builds on their knowledge of stewardship and civic responsibilities in CSPE.
- Links with Biology through surveys and research on the environment.
- Links with geography through exploration of global issues and the effects of climate change on the environment.
- Links with Maths through use of graphs and statistics to analyse survey results.
- Links with English in raising awareness of the language of persuasion and the use of posters and slogans in communicating a message to the wider school and community.

Outline of the unit

- Students will examine the different environmental issues that are currently topical through watching videos/DVD's such as 'The state we're in' or episodes of 'Eco Eye'.
- Students will organise a guest speaker to talk about these environmental concerns and to answer students' questions.

- In groups of 2-3, students will choose an issue from those discussed. Possibilities include:
 - global warming
 - air or water pollution
 - traffic congestion
 - litter and recycling
 - benefits of composting
 - deforestation and the effects.
- They will use the Internet (see resources) and other sources to conduct more in-depth research into the causes and effects of the problem and the steps they can take.
- Students will plan, structure and divide the work load of the research project into sections. Each member of the group will be responsible for carrying out their portion of the group research project.
- Students will agree on a method of presentation, e.g. PowerPoint presentation, posters or a project booklet.
- Students will present the issue to their class and will outline the steps we can take to redress the issue. Their peers will evaluate the presentation.
- Students will display their research work in the School Library to highlight their environmental issue.
- In small groups, students will either choose one from a list of practical projects, or design their own project, that would be beneficial to their school or local environment. For example:
 - maintaining an area in the school garden creating a wildlife garden in an area of the school (encourages wildlife to visit your school)
 - researching and using sensory plants in school garden
 - planting trees during National Tree Week
 - maintaining and mulching around established trees
 - recognising and recording trees in the locality and publishing a map with this information
 - introducing bird tables and feeders and recording the visitors establishing and developing a community garden with members of their local community and teachers (See resources)
 - building nesting boxes for birds and roosting boxes for bats and recording the action
 - entering their project into a competition such as The Young Environmentalist
 - Eco UNESCO
- They will research and make an action plan for their task, list the tools/equipment they need, and a time scale in which to carry it out.

- They will carry out the task, record it and present it in their end of year portfolio, and again in the school library to other classes, as a way of publicising their work and influencing others.
- Students will evaluate their own work at the end of the unit.

Breakdown of the unit (how timetabled)

Class time – one double each week for the year. Approx total of 42 hours

Exploring Issues on DVD – 2 hours

Guest speaker or field visit (optional) – 2/5 hours

Research on internet/media (class based and independent) – 5 hours.

Planning and carrying out group project during class – 10 hours

Delivering presentation and its evaluation – 2/5 hours

Planning and carrying out practical project – 5/10 hours

Writing report on practical project – 2/5 hours

Aims

This transition unit aims to:

- develop an awareness of the local and global environmental issues that affect us
- promote an appreciation of the positive aspects of our local environment and its potential
- encourage students to develop their abilities to plan, prepare and present their project
- develop students' belief in the positive actions that they can take
- help students recognise through practical participation the positive impact that they can have on their environment

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit students should be able to:

- investigate local and global issues that affect their environment
- analyse the cause and effects of an issue
- identify a series of steps that can be taken to combat their issue through a change in their behaviour and habits
- plan and carry out a practical project that will benefit their environment and develop their gardening and practical skills
- record and present their practical work.

Key skills

How evidenced

information processing	Selecting, analysing and evaluating information gathered from the internet, newspapers, libraries, organisations, etc. Using the information gained from research to present and inform their peers on potential actions. This may include the use of ICT for PowerPoint presentations or posters.
critical and creative thinking	Designing and planning a gardening project, a piece of art work or green school project that will highlight and broadcast our responsibilities for our environment. Exploring the language of persuasion and working out how to influence others to make positive changes that will protect the environment.
communicating	Presenting their findings from their research to their peers, developing listening skills and respecting the opinions of their peers. Presenting their practical project to the wider community to highlight their positive steps. Such presentations may be oral or supported by ICT.
working with others	Taking part in a group project that will require team work. Sharing responsibilities and carrying out of tasks to agreed deadlines.
being personally effective	Setting deadlines; reflecting upon and evaluating their projects and their performances. Learning to be more confident when presenting to a group. Showing diligence in carrying out their work. Demonstrating the potential they have to positively affect change.

Learning approaches

A variety of active learning methodologies will be used to foster a sense of responsibility towards the environment and empower students to take action for change:

- use of media and guest speakers to raise awareness of issues
- use of class discussions and brainstorming
- research work using Internet and other sources will require students to engage in independent learning
- students will work in groups to plan and carry out their practical project
- demonstrations will be given on how to safely use gardening tools and students will also learn gardening skills from the practical project they undertake.

Assessment approaches

Self-assessment by student on their work and what they learnt. Assessment by peers of presentations/projects. (See appendix for worksheet which students can use in evaluating each other's projects.)

Credits awarded by teacher to students which will go to the end of year award.

Evaluation methods

Use of student self evaluation sheet at the end of the Transition Unit.

- What was most enjoyable aspect of this project?
- Where was the student most successful?
- What would they do differently?
- What would they like to see being done differently in the unit?

Resources

Sample videos and DVD's.

- A Tigers Tale - published by the EPA (Work sheets accompany A Tigers Tale)
- The Environment, Society and the Economy – Published as DVD's by the EPA. (Student worksheets accompany the DVD)
- Eco Eye – Published as DVD's from RTE
- The Blue Planet – Published as a set of DVD's from the BBC.
- An Inconvenient Truth - Starring Al Gore

Many handouts available free from local councils on these issues.

Resources

Websites related to environmental issues.

www.enfo.ie Irelands public web site on environmental issues, will organise guest speakers, visits to the centre, they have a lending library of media resources for teachers, plenty of posters and leaflets on a variety of issues. Very good and helpful!

www.sei.ie Sustainable Energy Ireland, site for energy saving ideas and lots of alternate energy sources bio fuels, wind turbines, solar panels, lots of download, leaflet on alternates on. Etc

www.ecounesco.ie Eco Unesco; competition for the Young environmentalist. They will visit your school and give workshops/guest speakers, etc.

www.cultivate.ie Organise events and lectures on sustainable living, green issues such as powering down- life after peak oil production.

www.epa.ie The Environmental Protection Agency. Site describing the work of the EPA.

www.npws.ie National Parks. Site dedicated to Irelands National Parks, their flora and fauna.

www.iwt.ie Irish Wildlife Trust.

Websites related to environmental issues.

Recycling http://www.repak.ie/find_your_local_bring_bank.html

Composting <http://www.compostireland.ie/training.html>

Wormeries <http://www.ipcc.ie/compwildwormsupp.html>

Digesters <http://www.greencone.com/home.asp?lang=1>

Community Gardens http://www.indymedia.ie/openwire?search_text=community+gardens

Seed saving <http://www.irishseedsavers.ie> Seeds can be collected in September – October from trees and slightly earlier for flowers and plants.

Resources

Planting Trees <http://www.treecouncil.ie/> register your school for free trees for national tree week, get facts and identification guides for trees etc.

Birds www.birdwatchireland.ie information on birds, their habits and how to identify, and feed them.

The Green School campaign is run by **an Taisce** <http://www.antaisce.org/> as is **National spring clean week**.

The Department of the Environment <http://www.environ.ie/en/> for legislation and laws.

Your local Urban/County Council will have an educational officer who is usually willing to visit the school and talk to the students about the work they do. They can arrange for trips to recycling centres. Some will even give you a free composter! Your local tree surgeon may be willing to donate bark mulch, which is great for suppressing weeds.

Resources for practical work

A variety of garden tools can be used to carry out the practical work. Your school caretaker may have some, and you can always ask the students to bring in what they have from home. Spades, forks, hedge clippers, saws, brushes, buckets, gloves, watering cans, wheelbarrows, etc. are all very useful.



Environmental Studies

Assessment of a Project

Project title.....

Presented by.....

Give an example of one environmental issue/problem that was presented

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List some of the causes of this environmental issue

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List two steps that can be taken to address/change the problem

1.
2.

What was the best aspect of project or presentation and why?

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Do you have any suggestions that might help to improve the project?

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Assessed by..... Class..... Date.....