

## Area of Study

### **Local and Global Citizenship (Environmental Studies)**

#### Overview

This transition unit is ideally suited to developing the kinds of skills that are central to the Transition Year experience – in particular it enables students develop research and communication skills, group work skills and organisational skills. Most importantly, it gives students a belief in their own power to effect change and bring about a greener and healthier environment. They engage in a process that enables them to audit, evaluate and change their school environment for the better. This process involves the whole school and there is the ultimate prize of being awarded the status of 'Green School' from an Taisce.

#### Related learning

Junior Cert Links; CSPE, Science, Geography, ICT. Mathematics Leaving Cert Links; Ecology unit in biology, ICT.

#### Outline of the unit

- Students will partake in an audit of the recycling practices in their school.
- Students will design and implement an effective communication network within the school community and outside the school, in the local community. For example, they will need to consider how they can harness the local media to raise awareness and get 'buy in' to their plans and they must also come up with some good PR ideas for promoting the Green School within the school (such as a competition to create hats from recycled materials.)
- Students will construct a permanent recycling infrastructure within the school to facilitate the successful recycling of paper/cardboard/aluminium cans/plastic bottles.
- Students will take direct responsibility for the management of recycling practices.
- Students will record and document the quantities/volumes of material recycled every week.
- Students will present their results and describe their actions in a portfolio presentation.

## Breakdown of the unit (how timetabled)

**The TU works best if it is timetabled for two double periods for 15 weeks.**

**First 3 weeks (9hrs)** will involve the following

1. introduce all aspects concerning the theme of green schools to students
2. conduct an energy audit
- 3 create a communication network
4. allocate specific jobs/responsibilities to each individual student

**The next 12 weeks (36hrs)** will involve students in the active running of their project, management of recycling practices, information gathering, presentation, portfolio construction, etc.

## Aims

*This transition unit aims to:*

- provide students with a forum for finding working solutions to environmental issues affecting their school
- develop students appreciation of their role as stewards of the environment and a sense of their power as agents for change
- foster the development of a range of skills including the skills of communication, team work and portfolio presentation
- enhance the quality of the school environment through the action of the students.

## Learning Outcomes

*On completion of this unit students should be able to:*

- conduct an audit of environmental practices within the school
- record information accurately and present it using appropriate ICT
- use the local media to help communicate and promote their ideas
- construct an individual portfolio of all work carried out and results obtained set up and manage a permanent recycling system within the school
- set up a communication network within the school in order to communicate the value of recycling to the wider school community and illicit everyone's cooperation
- work effectively as a team sharing responsibilities for the various tasks
- maintain a record and document the quantities/volumes of material recycled every week
- summarise and analyse the group's work in one group portfolio application to An Taisce, for accreditation for Green School status.

## Key skills

## How evidenced

information processing	Students will critically analyse all information received, organise and express it in their individual and group portfolios.
critical and creative thinking	Students will have to critically analyse information received and manipulate it so to use it effectively for their project. They will have to design their own communication network, design their own recycling infrastructure, design methods of collecting data and create a template for continued sound environmental practice within their school.
communicating	The very success of this project lies in the formation of an effective formal communication network. Students will be participating in the learning experience as part of a team on a daily basis. Group decisions based on consultation and evaluation will be made. The wider message of Green Schools will need to be shared with the wider school community and to the local community.
working with others	Students will work together in small sub-committees within the class group as well as working with the entire group. The group portfolio will take contributions from all members of the sub-committees. This portfolio will be used as the group's formal application for Green school's status to An Taisce.
being personally effective	The high ownership value of this unit will develop personal effectiveness within the student. Each individual will produce their own personal reflective diary within their portfolio, as evidence of their personal contribution to the unit.

## Learning approaches

Individual research, team-work, portfolio construction and presentation, use of ICT in results presentation, active learning through student's direct involvement in daily recycling practices.

## Assessment approaches

- Individual assessment will be conducted by the teacher through the student's individual portfolio.
- An end of term written assessment. (Short fill in the blanks questions devised by the teacher)
- The group will produce a Group Portfolio (To be assessed externally by An Taisce.) This includes the following:
  - Brief profile of school
  - Description of an audit of environmental practices in the school
  - Creation of a communication network
  - Paper and cardboard recycling - Actions and Results
  - Plastic bottle recycling - Actions and Results
  - Aluminium can recycling - Actions and Results
  - Summary of money saved by the introduction of recycling

This is the basis for the school being awarded Green School status.

## Evaluation methods

- Teacher evaluation at the end of the Transition Unit (See NCCA teacher evaluation)
- Students will be encouraged to submit an end of Unit evaluation questionnaire as a method of feedback (See NCCA student evaluation)

## Resources

The Green Schools Video and An Taisce's Green School's information manual are key resources

Websites.

[www.antaisce.org](http://www.antaisce.org).

[www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie)

[www.greenschools.net](http://www.greenschools.net)

[www.yptenc.org.uk/docs/environmental\\_facts.html](http://www.yptenc.org.uk/docs/environmental_facts.html)

[www.eco-portal.com](http://www.eco-portal.com)