

Teachers and Future Teachers Solid Waste Alternatives—07-02

University of Northern Iowa Center for Energy and Environmental Education

Susan Salterberg, www.uni.edu/ceee/wastereduction, 319-337-4816, salterberg@uni.edu

Purpose

The University of Northern Iowa offered mini-workshops about waste reduction to teacher education majors and/or teachers at educator conferences and meetings. They also offered one Waste Reduction: Addressing the Overlooked “R” graduate course to educators.

Did your project go as planned? Explain what went well and why. Explain what you would do differently if you did the project again, and why.

The project went as planned. We exceeded the mini-workshop goal by reaching more than 285 educators, and had 32 in attendance at the waste reduction workshop. At some educator conferences, when we offered a free book to teachers who attended the workshop, we had great response...sometimes more than 60 people packed into a room to participate in the session. Also, networking with Iowa Reading Association state leaders has resulted in bookings for additional speaking engagements. Lastly, it worked well to partner with the East Central Iowa Council of Governments. Their solid waste educator is very talented and engages teachers, sharing her techniques for educating about waste.

Lessons learned: I will think carefully before accepting the first slot of a conference—participants are still arriving and attendance seems to be very low. I now will ask specifically to not get that slot. Same goes for last session of a conference.

Outputs: The outputs were to reach 150-200 teachers or future teachers through educator conferences and/or meetings; and reach 30-35 educators through the waste reduction workshop. Both were met.

Outcomes: The outcomes are listed in Attachment II. West Delaware 6th grade science teacher Lisa Senne’s comment is indicative of some positive outcomes that happen as a result of the workshops and teachers’ mini-units: “...there has been carryover ... because the mini-unit was completed on February 22, and still kids [in mid-April] are writing in their journals and telling about things they’ve done outside of the school day related to reducing.” Here’s a summary of other ways the project has worked:

- All of the graduate course workshop participants indicated they observed a difference in behavior in at least some of their students because of the mini-units they taught. 88% reported they observed a difference in behavior during and/or after the mini-unit by 50% or more of their students.¹
- 84% of those completing the graduate course evaluation form reported that 75% or more of their students demonstrated interest and/or curiosity about learning. And all educators felt that at least some of their students demonstrated curiosity about learning.²
- 100% of the graduate course teacher-participants indicated that, as a result of the workshop, they have taken at least one action to live in a more environmentally friendly manner. Of those, 54% reported that they have taken three or more actions.

No negative outcomes that I am aware of.

My most effective marketing tool was free registrations offered to teachers through support of solid waste agencies. The partnerships with SWAs are proving to be very useful...more so every year.

¹Examples: more participation in school recycling, giving peers a hard time when wasteful, getting families to recycle.

²Examples: looking ahead in resource books(s), looking at books after unit was completed, talking to one another about issues outside of class.