

Recycle and Redesign Teaching Tips for Advisers

The Recycle and Redesign Display event is an opportunity to make principles of conservation and environmental sustainability personally relevant to students. As they inventory items in their homes that are no longer serviceable and explore ways to convert these into useful products, they will truly understand the concept of using resources to meet needs.

Set the stage for this eye-opening project by displaying front and center in the classroom a “Treasure Chest” of used clothing, linens, trims, and other recyclables. In advance, print the words Recycle and Redesign on various colors of paper circles. Have each student randomly select a circle and find the person who has the other word (Recycle or Redesign) on the same color paper to serve as their partner. Allow 30 minutes for partners to select one to five items from the chest and sketch a design for a product. Provide sharing time to enjoy the creative ideas that are born.

Follow up by challenging students to go home and collect items and materials that could be used to design recycled products and bring to class. Remind them to look for items that are no longer useful as is, but are made of a material that is still sturdy and durable—e.g., jeans, shirts, tee shirts, jackets, bedspreads, and sheets. Ask them to bring coordinating materials and accessories and a variety of embellishments, then follow event guidelines to construct and display their recycled designs.

Plan to observe Recycle and Redesign Day in your school to showcase students’ recycled products. Use a recyclable, such as water bottle caps, to design a mascot for the day. Glue pompons onto bottle caps, add eyes, antennae, felt visors, and other details to create recycle characters to be attached to buttons, badges, or magnet strips. Have students create a slogan for the day, print on small paper rectangles, and attach to toothpicks to create flags for mascots to fly. Hold a contest for the best slogan/mascot design to promote recycling and conservation of resources. Recognize all participants for their contributions to the success of Recycle and Redesign Day.

