

Youth

Taking Action
on Climate Change

How to Communicate Your Message at School

Behaviour change rarely occurs as a result of simply providing information

So how can you change your friend's behaviour?
How can you get them to bike more? Recycle? And follow your example?

You need to remove barriers to behaviour!

We know that:

- People naturally gravitate to actions with high benefits and low barriers
- Perceived barriers vary dramatically among individuals
- Behaviour competes with behaviour – when you adopt one behaviour you reject another

What SPECIFICALLY do you want to promote?

- A) Reduced waste at school – THIS IS TOO BROAD
- B) More people recycling cans and paper – THIS IS MORE SPECIFIC and SHOWS A DESIGNATED TARGET.

What are the barriers – Why don't people recycle at school?

- A) Internal Barriers (What they know and what they think)
 - B) External Barriers (convenience and infrastructure)
- There is probably more than one barrier!

A few tips:

- Use fun props
- Pass out flyers and handbills
- Do a banner-drop from your school roof or an upstairs window
 - Get permission
 - Do it at a time when there are lots of folks milling about outside
- The power of chalkboards should not be underestimated!
- Put up posters around your school
 - Use small images and printed material on transparencies to make very impressive banners and large posters
- Put up information on the school website or make a website for your particular campaign
- Start a blog – www.blogger.com
- Make funny, engaging and short PA Announcements
- Think of other ways you can creatively communicate
- Use street theatre
- Stage a day with impact – i.e.: Speed Kills campaign



You need some tools to help change behaviour:

1) Commitment 2) Prompts 3) Norms 4) Communication 5) Incentives

1. Commitment

Get people to VERBALLY agree to a small request.

- “Do you agree to recycle at least one piece of paper per week?”
- Then get them to agree in WRITING – Use a creative way to do this...

2. Prompts

An aid that helps us remember something we might otherwise forget.

- Put stickers on everyone’s locker that agreed to recycle
- Place signs on or around recycling bins
- Make the messages positive “Thanks for recycling this week!”

3. Norms

Everyone else is doing it! (This is a POWERFUL social force)

- Make your information noticeable and encourage positive behaviours
- Use personal contact to reinforce the norms
 - “Last month our school recycled 1000 pounds of paper.”
(This sounds more impressive than one tonne)
 - “Thanks for recycling – I saw you put the paper in the bin!”

4. Communications

- Captivating information gets a captivated audience (vivid, personal and concrete information)
- Frame your message (losses vs. gains)
- Make your message easy to remember (i.e.: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle)
- Provide personal or community goals (create a goal as a school and try to reach it)
- Keep in personal contact and provide feedback

5. Incentives

These are useful when motivation is low or your targets are not doing EXACTLY what you want them to do.

- Pair incentive and behaviour (i.e. the homeroom with the most recycling wins a prize)
- Know your audience (i.e. what is a cool prize the classes will want?)

Evaluate the Pilot Project – is it working?

Is your project doing what you want it to?

Is your project changing behaviour – *focus on behaviour, not on attitude*

What changes can you make to ensure greater impact?

How can you expand your pilot? – expand your project to a larger audience (like the whole school or use it to teach other schools)