3 R's -- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle! Grade Level 6-8

Summary: Students will become the resident experts on the opportunities that CMS recycling presents their schools. This lesson will give students valuable background on the history, processing, and disposal of paper, plastics, glass, and metals. In addition, students should be given the opportunity to present their findings either to their own classmates or perhaps to other students. Under ideal conditions, the best of the presentations may be done for staff meetings or PTSA groups.

Subject: Science 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 2.4, 2.9, 4.2, 5.1, 6.3, 6.5, 6.8
Social studies (eighth grade) 1.3 (seventh grade) 5.2, 5.3
Communication skills goal 1.0, 2.0, 3.0, 4.0
Math (eighth grade) 5.5, 6.5

Time: 1-3 classes

Materials: See attached information, may also want to plan media center or PLCMC visit

Skills: Reading, note taking, outlining, analyzing information, deductive and inductive reasoning, compiling information, oral presentation skills

Objective: Students will access, evaluate, and present information on the 3 R's

Background: Waste reduction, reuse, and recycling are important to us all. Although solid waste is a by-product of human existence and growth, Mecklenburg County continues to generate municipal solid waste at an increasing rate. 8500 CMS students tour the county recycling processing center each year. At this facility, students receive recycling education in addition to seeing how the recyclables that are collected from our curbside program are processed and prepared for market. During the 1998-1999 school year CMS will begin a recycling project that should both help reduce waste and give our students a method of applying concepts that heretofore may have only been taught in theory. By giving students some responsibility for recycling, as teachers, we will also have continued the conditioning process for a more environmentally sound future for ourselves and the students who will become our future leaders.

Leading question: What are the 3 R's?

Procedure:

1. Divide students into small cooperative groups. As a precaution, one must stress the importance of every little bit of recycling does help, as does every little input into cooperative learning groups.
2. Assign each group a topic (glass, paper, plastic, metals) to explore.
3. Give each person a copy of the attached information.
4. Have students read their sections while taking notes or highlighting important points.

5. If media center materials are deemed necessary, one would spend time there or bring the materials to the classroom for students to use. Note there are many valuable sources on the Internet.
6. Each group should prepare a written report on their topic and present it to the class. As another alternative, instead of giving just one topic to the group, one could give them all four topics and allow them to come up with their own informational guide to the 3 R's which might be distributed to the other classes in the school as we embark on the CMS recycling project. This technique will give ownership of the project to the students which we all know is key to any program's success.

Follow-up: After generating and sharing this information with their classmates, plan an activity for students to really show off their wares. Allowing the best group presentations the reward of repeating their performance for a staff or PTSA meeting is sometimes motivational. Even though they might moan and groan about it, most students really do enjoy "showing off" when they've done a good job.

Source: Annette R. Harris, Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools