

Secondary School Engagement

A brief introduction

Between April 2010 and September 2011, the Midwestern Ontario Regional Green Jobs Strategy went into secondary school classrooms to give presentations relating to climate change adaptation, community resiliency and green jobs. Throughout this time, approximately 1,000 students were reached across Midwestern Ontario through these presentations. The observations and experiences collected while developing content, scheduling and delivering the presentations are listed summarily to be included in a toolkit of resources that can be found at www.workgreen.ca.

Best Practices

Preparing for the presentation

1. Developing the content

High school students respond to a variety of interactive teaching techniques including group discussions, videos and activities. An in-class presentation should balance the different techniques to maximize the students' ability to focus and participate in the presentation. Presentations in classrooms are moving away from using Microsoft PowerPoint and towards using Prezi. Prezi is online presentation software. For more information on the features you can view their tutorials at <http://prezi.com/learn/>.

2. Getting the message out about your presentation

Passport to Prosperity is a province-wide program that is funded through the Ontario Ministry of Education to provide communities with the tools and resources to respond to their development needs and contribute to the growth of the local economy. Employer registry is one portion of the Passport to Prosperity program that is a free online community that connects employers (or subject matter experts) and tomorrow's workforce. Educators and Passport to Prosperity Coordinators use this tool to connect elementary and high school students to a range of learning opportunities including in-class presentations. To become registered with the Passport to Prosperity Program you can contact a Passport to Prosperity Coordinator, or sign up with Employer Registry at <http://www.employerregistry.ca/>. For more information on the Passport to Prosperity Program connect go to <http://edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/job/passport/>.

Scheduling presentations

1. Allow for travel and setup time

When scheduling presentations be sure to allow for time to travel and setup if you will be moving between rooms within the school.

2. Audience size

Unless you are an experienced teacher with some facilitation, it is best to keep audience sizes to less than three classes. If you plan on presenting to a larger group then they should be similar grade levels. It can be difficult to keep the attention of various ages and interests.

3. Questions to ask the contact person

Before confirming the presentation, obtain a contact name and phone number, arrival instructions, class and grade levels that will be attending your presentations and parking instructions.

Engaging students through presentations**1. Be prepared and organized**

Know your material and content in detail. Highlighting key points will draw in your audience and give you the freedom to tailor your presentation to specific courses and/or grade levels. Knowing your content and its age appropriate level will allow you to seamlessly go with the flow in case there are last minute additions to the audience.

2. Keep your presentation to the time permitted

As a guest in the classroom it is important to be mindful of their time as well. Check with the teacher(s) beforehand to understand how long the presentation should last. Remember to leave time for a question and answers session at the end. Be aware that clocks in classrooms are often off by minutes or even hours. Check with the teacher to find out where a reliable clock is. If you are wearing a watch that you will rely on it is a good idea to “synchronize” your time with the school’s clocks.