

Questions for the Educated Choices Program, Rethinking Food Waste

1. What grade level did you use this with, and what ages do you think this product is best suited for?

I used the Rethinking Food Waste program with 7th and 8th graders (12-14 year olds) in my environmental club. This program is best suited for, in New Jersey, schools with environmental topics in their science curriculum and are in high school where it is a standard. This lesson package is definitely well-suited for students ages 12 and up (7th grade and up) so long as they have a solid understanding and background in environmental topics.

2. Does this product align with any specific standards or curriculum guidelines? (Please share both general and specifics.)

There are three specific standards that my students utilized as they worked with the video, day 2 prompts (including the option 3 of reinforcing key concepts from the video by creating vertical displays of knowledge), and the use of the quiz:

- Sustainability - Develop knowledge, skills and habits necessary for promoting sustainability at local, regional and global levels.
- Natural Resources and Their Management- Understand the distribution, use and management of natural resources.
- Natural Resources and Their Management- Explore the impact of resource exploitation on the environment.

My school uses NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards) for our district. A standard that aligns well with this product include:

- **HS-ESS3-2. - Evaluate competing design solutions for developing, managing, and utilizing energy and mineral resources based on cost-benefit ratios.*** [Clarification Statement: Emphasis is on the conservation, recycling, and reuse of resources (such as minerals and metals) where possible, and on minimizing impacts where it is not. Examples include developing best practices for agricultural soil use, mining (for coal, tar sands, and oil shales), and pumping (for petroleum and natural gas). Science knowledge indicates what can happen in natural systems—not what should happen.]

While I do not have the luxury of teaching high school students, about four of my 8th graders in the club are enrolled in a local magnet program for high school in environmental sciences, this held their interest well.

3. How did you use this product in your classroom?

(We'd love to hear about any specific lessons or activities where it fit in perfectly. And

while we know you used it with a club setting, we'd like to be sure to offer perspective to the traditional classroom teacher on how they might be able to use it.)

I provided my students with the lesson-created video all about food waste, the quiz (11 out of the 12 questions), and the day 2 lesson plan format provides different choices for students to display their knowledge from the video as well as their preconceived knowledge about food waste in our area. We completed the option 3 task where students are asked to reinforce key concepts from the video by creating vertical displays of knowledge. We utilized these portions as they worked well with our club's mission of collecting breakfast each day from our homerooms to donate to a local church's food pantry. The way we used the materials, this would definitely work best as a three day lesson where day 1 has students watch the 19 minute video and engage with other activities that promote vocabulary acquisition such as CAFOs (concentrated animal feeding operations), the four steps of the food supply chain (production, processing, distribution, and consumption), and food apartheid. Day 2 could ask students to complete an activity similar to my students where they create vertical displays of knowledge from the video and content, and day 3 could ask students to complete the quiz as a checkpoint or check for understanding or encourage students to write to local legislation or school board officials on their findings to educate others on the dangers of food waste in the school community.

4. How did your students react to Rethinking Food Waste?

(Did they say anything memorable or have any notable reactions?)

My students, overall, were fairly impressed with Rethinking Food Waste. The part they enjoyed the most was working with the guided practice from the day 2 lesson where they were asked to find ways to define environmental impacts, stages of the food supply chain and sustainable choices. What I did to help my students start their thinking process was to break them apart into three groups where each group was responsible for environmental impact on food waste, what the stages of the food supply chain are, and what sustainable choices we can make to improve and reduce food waste at the local, statewide, and national levels. My students working together to bounce ideas off each other not only from the video but also their own personal experiences was fantastic. It made the video content seem more realistic and applicable to daily life.

5. How would you sum up your overall experience with Rethinking Food Waste?

I would give my overall experience with Rethinking Food Waste from Educated Choices Program a 4/5 stars. I appreciated the clarity Educated Choices Program has with their lesson guides, the quality of the programs for each lesson day and the space for educators to put their own flair or spin on each lesson package. When I reach for another lesson from Educated

Choices Programs again in the future, I hope to see more interactive opportunities in their videos, differentiated quizzes or other assignments for students, and different styles of homework questions for students to participate in.

6. Was it easy to use and find?

All the materials as well as the video from Educated Choices Program Library are very intuitive. The videos are very clear and provide a great summary portion towards the end to wrap up idea and help students remember the contents of the video. I appreciate how the lesson guides are easy to follow and provide a complete set for educators who are looking to supplement their curriculum with relevant information.

7. What were the top 2 features you liked most about Rethinking Food Waste?

My top two features from Rethinking Food Waste include the lesson packages and the next-step toolkit. While I did not have enough time to utilize the toolkit with my students this time at our meeting, when we meet again, I would love to provide my students with recipes to promote healthier eating habits and less food waste or podcasts to explore how we can incorporate less meat or animal products into our diets and its impact on the climate.

8. What makes Rethinking Food Waste special or unique?

What makes Rethinking Food Waste unique is its versatility amongst different types of educators. The whole learning package, from the video to the guided notes and everything in-between, provides educators with almost a whole week's lesson experience for their students.

9. How does this save you time or make teaching easier?

Having a plan to follow through with each lesson package is fantastic. These plans, as well as their corresponding standards they cover, makes this easy for teachers of all backgrounds to use with their students. Students can cover economics based topics in a history or economics class, they can see the impact of their diet on their well-being in a health or physical education class, find ways to reduce their carbon footprint and learn about sustainable farming practices in a science class, or learn how to best prepare food in a family and consumer sciences class. Education Choices Program learning packages cater to a wide variety of educators.

10. How do you plan to use the Educated Choices programs again in the future?

As a 7th grade science teacher, one of our three main topics includes environmental science, which is our final unit for the school year. While every 7th grade student completes a culminating project in late May, known as NatureFest, where they conduct a research project about an organism or biome native to New Jersey, we do not get to spend a lot of time thinking

about food and agriculture. I could see my students enjoying other programs through Educated Choices, such as Future of Food, The Planet and Our Plates, and Growing Community Roots. These topics have a focus that relies on a global perspective as well as teachers finding ways to bring it back to a more local or state-wide level. These packages could help spur student thinking for their NatureFest projects.

11. Do you have any suggestions for improvement or constructive feedback?

One general consensus felt by the group was the video should be chunked into smaller videos instead of one large one with different “chapters” similar to a YouTube video on the tracking bar. All four parts of the food supply chain are included in the video, which can easily be paused at specific times for students to review a concept, ask questions, or complete an activity engaging in topics from that step in the food supply chain. Some students would like to see questions embedded into the video for checks for understanding, such as after each section, to make sure students could answer these with at least moderate confidence either as a whole group or in a small group setting. This mode of chunking information, according to my students, would make the content and purpose of the video easier to understand and follow along.

12. Did your students have any ah-ha moments, and if so, what were they?

My students were surprised to see how much our food comes from other countries/continents. Many of my students were shocked, for instance, that India is the country that produces the most dairy cows and products. It made them want to check their food labels more or companies they gravitate towards for food and snacks and see their origin of production more.

13. How do you think it'll make students look at food waste differently in the future?

My club students run a program where we collect unopened breakfast items during homeroom. Now that my students have more knowledge about food waste and how it can impact our local and global community, we can apply this content knowledge to our daily breakfast collection and how we have reduced food waste as a school.

14. Is there anything else you'd like us to know about your experience or overall thoughts about this program?

My students and I were very grateful to experience this program together and know that we can take the knowledge from our video and use its contents to better drive our action for decreasing food waste in our school community.