Physical Geography of China focusing on the Three Gorges Dam

Class: Social Studies  
Subject: Physical Geography of China  
Lesson Title: Physical Geography of China focusing on the Three Gorges Dam  
Grade Level: 7th

Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is for students to understand the positive and negative aspects China faced while building the Three Gorges Dam along the Yangtze River. Students will debate the government's point of view compared to the Chinese people's point of view. Students will then create a photo essay about a topic they feel strongly about so they can relate their thoughts and feelings with those of the people of China.

Objectives

Content Objectives

1. ELLs will become familiar with the positive (it will control the river's flooding which has caused more than 2,000 deaths and left nearly 14 million people homeless) and negative ($24 billion to complete and 2 million people have been forced to relocate) effects of the building of the Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze River.
2. ELLs will investigate the reasons behind the building of the dam and the Chinese people's thoughts on the dam. They will also investigate a current event they feel strongly about by researching and presenting it to the class.
3. ELLs will create their own photo essay about a current situation they feel strongly about and participate in a class debate.

Language Objectives

1. ELLs will read with a partner (or two) one of the articles listed using the jigsaw method.
2. ELLs will discuss/list the main points in their assigned group to prepare for the class debate.
3. ELLs will rewrite the main points about the positive and negative affects of the building of the Three Gorges Dam.
Culture Objectives

1. ELLs will pair with a native English speaking student to differentiate between countries, regions, etc. when students are asked to move to their assigned groups to discuss their debate topic (affects of building the Three Gorges Dam in China). ELLs will be paired with an English speaking student when creating a photo essay on a topic they feel strongly about (they will be encouraged to pick a topic related to their home country).

State Standards

2.01 Identify key physical characteristics such as landforms, water forms, and climate and evaluate their influence on the development of cultures in selected African, Asian, and Australian regions.

Teacher Materials

- Map of China illustrating the Yangtze River
- Online images of the Three Gorges Dam and surrounding areas
- Textbook
- Computer Lab
- Websites: gathered from www.pbs.org:
  - Dam Corruption [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/environment/julydec03/dam_10-17.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/environment/julydec03/dam_10-17.html)
Activity 1, Day 1: Students will be assigned groups of 4-5 to begin reading the Physical Geography of China section in their textbook using the jigsaw method. Once students are in their groups, have them switch partners, then switch groups, etc. completely confusing the class. Now, ask the class: Do you like moving? How did it make you feel? How did you like moving 2-3 times? Were you confused? Then explain that the government of China has forced nearly 2 million people out of their homes in order to build the Three Gorges Dam. Ask students: Do you think they like being forced to move? Do you think they felt confused about where to go? (idea from Breaking News English website)

Activity 2, Day 1: Show the power point presentation that gives background information on the flooding of the Yangtze River (including pictures), the construction of the Three Gorges Dam (including pictures), and the pros and cons of this construction.

Activity 3, Day 1: The remaining class time will be spent in the computer lab where students will be put in 2 groups (1 representing the government of China and 1 representing the people of China) to prepare for their debate: Is it right for the Chinese government to build the Three Gorges Dam and displace an estimated 2 million people? Students will use the websites listed in teacher materials to prepare their arguments. (idea from pbs website)

Activity 4, Day 2: Students will debate topic given yesterday. After debating, discuss eminent domain in the United States, focusing on the widening of Brawley School Road in Mooresville. Brawley families were displaced when the state of North Carolina decided to take their homes in order to widen the road. Is this the same practice as in China? Discuss.

Activity 5, Day 2: With a partner, students will discuss a current event or issue that they feel strongly about (idea from pbs website). They will create a photo essay consisting of pictures or computer graphics to express their views. They may use the hypermedia tool of their choice to display their project: PowerPoint presentation, glogster poster, wiki, or slide show maker. Students will have the remaining class time to work on these and will present on Day 3.

Activity 6, Day 3: Present photo essays.
Instructional Technology Used for Teaching

3 - Teacher Helper. This will be used during the teacher-directed discussion on the construction of the Three Gorges Dam. (teacher created PowerPoint presentation)

4 – Teacher-made Resources for Students. Informative websites will be placed on teacher website for easy access so that students may research the building of the dam.

5 – Student Use Only. Students will have time and access to research their own articles/information on the building of the dam.

9 – Student Made Resources. Students will create their own hypermedia version of their photo essay and present to class using a data projector.

Block VIII – Sources

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0710/071015-three_gorges.html
www.pbs.org/pov/pov2008/uptheyangtze/for.html

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