

Geography Lesson: The Damming Evidence

Piloted by Marianne Kenney

Feedback

Element 1: Classroom Context.

1. This lesson was piloted in a Foundations of Education course at Metropolitan University of Denver.
2. Students range in age from young adult to a few middle age students.
3. There are 22 students in this class: 6 Hispanic, 1 African-American, 15 Caucasian
4. Students participating in this lesson were not geography/economics majors. Content areas represented: 11 English, 5 History, 3 Math, 1 Art, 1 Spanish, 1 Science
5. All students brought a personal laptop to class.
6. The university provided copies.
7. Classroom set-up: 6 tables of four with a Promethean Board

Element 2: Lesson Planning with Rationales for Your Decisions.

1. Attached is the completed CDE Concept-based Temple
2. Attached are handouts created to accompany the lesson

Element 3: Description of the Lesson Implementation.

It took a significant amount behind-the-scenes planning and organization in order for this lesson to be successfully implemented. Cost/benefits cards and note-catchers were cut up and placed in envelopes organized by one of the three assigned dams. To make the execution of the lesson run smoothly a PowerPoint was created incorporating explicit instructions. Both the expert groups and jigsaw were assigned ahead of time. Information for analysis was placed in electronic folders on Blackboard Learn.

As it is, even with all the organization, the lesson took a full hour to complete and it would have taken more time if I had asked students for written reflections.

1. Artifacts of students work have been submitted to Stephanie Hartman, State Social Studies Content Specialist.
2. Stephanie Hartman both observed and participated in the lesson pilot.

Element 4: Reflection.

1. For the most part, the lesson ran smoothly. Since I had one hour, I felt the constraint of time and to have the lesson fit within the larger context of a Constructivist Approach to learning. I think students would have enjoyed spending more time in a rich discussion and reflection; however, this might be the nature of college students.

2. On a purely anecdotal level students provided feedback that they enjoy hands-on lessons that encourages higher-level thinking. They enjoy getting out of their seat and the stimulation of cognitively engaging with other classmates.
3. I am a historian/geographer. From my perspective the weakness of the lesson was in the opening economics section dealing with the cost-benefit analysis. Did I provide enough background for students to understand the concepts of cost/benefit analysis? Should we have referred to their initial prioritizing throughout the decision-making process? I may not have been explicit enough with the students since I was unclear about that concept component.