

WS6 COLLEGE Lesson Plan

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Title: ENERGY AND COMMUNITY: There has to be a better way

Subject: Mountain Top Removal

Connections to the following: English/Language Arts, Arts and Humanities (Music, Drama, Art), Science, Critical Thinking

Length of Lesson: three classes for a MWF class, two classes for TR class, but will extend into other classes depending on projects

Dates outside of classes will occur because of outside dates for performances and outreach campaign

Grade Level: College

The topic of this lesson is mountain top removal and dismantling the Appalachian Mountains. The episode focuses on the wonder and the beauty of the Appalachian Mountains and the devastation caused by mountain top removal. This is such an important topic that is underexplored. Emmylou Harris is featured on this episode and she states, "The Appalachians are at the sacred ground of the music that so many of us love". This is so true and we hope that the students realize this and the beauty and importance of these mountains.

Discussion is very important when introducing this topic. Students may have never heard of mountain top removal. As discussed in the episode, it's not getting enough publicity or covered nearly enough in the news. To begin the lesson, ask students questions regarding the environment. This will prompt them to begin thinking about the dangers of human behaviors and actions on the earth and how it impacts so many aspects of life. The instructor may then ask the students if they understand what mountain top removal is and all of the many devastating results of it. This is not an anti-coal campaign, it's about finding a better way. Within this episode, Emmylou Harris discusses what mountain top removal and is the devastation it creates. It is blowing the tops off of mountains that took thousands of years to evolve, destroying plants, desecrating the mountains for coal that can be extracted in another way. Over 500 mountains have been destroyed, 2000 streams have been obliterated and a process of the mining creates sludge which poisons our environment. There is something better, A BETTER WAY, to save the mountains, homelands, and communities.

Emmylou Harris states that she hopes that tonight's show is another way to communicate to others and spread awareness to stop mountain top removal. The mountain is lost, the culture, the community, the waters are polluted and it's a horrible devastation. People's lives are being disrupted. Again, this will not end our way to get coal, but there are other ways. Mountain top removal needs to be stopped and A BETTER WAY. These mountains are precious and beautiful and that's the thought process we are encouraging within this episode of WoodSongs.

The goal of this lesson plan design is for students to design their own artistic project to depict the ways that mountain top removal devastates the environment and the lives of so many. The project should reflect a collaborative effort in which students apply creative and critical thinking skills. This project will allow students to portray their message creatively by writing their own poems, short stories, ballads and/or including art work and/or photography that will share and symbolize their message. The project will be informative as well and this will allow students the opportunity to understand various ways to present information. Students will organize their project and it will be, based upon approval from their teacher, extend to the community via newspaper or radio for example. This will encourage awareness throughout the entire school and community. This will also allow the students to really feel that their work is being viewed by their teachers and peers. Other examples include poetry being read on local radio stations or in the local paper to raise awareness. Students are encouraged to contact organizations on campus such as environmental organizations and those that would promote their campaign to spread awareness and promote a better way. Students are encouraged to also create a blog in which their campaign may even be promoted nationally. This may encourage the students to really apply themselves because their voices will be heard by a national audience and they are also representing their university.

Description of Lesson/Activities & Procedures:

This lesson is so important in many aspects. The goal is to for students to realize that our mountains are being destroyed which in turn destroys the communities and lives of so many. We want the students to realize there is a BETTER WAY and that mountain top removal needs to stop. This lesson encompasses many subjects. Science is incorporated as students learn about the process of mountain top removal and the devastating results of it. Many aspects of language arts and arts and humanities are also incorporated as students create a newsletter to explain and raise awareness of mountain top removal. Both critical and creative thinking are encouraged and incorporated as students explore the various approaches to present their information. Students are encouraged to incorporate several different approaches within the project. Students may present their information in the form of information text, poetry/ballad, short story, dramatic/theatrical piece to accompany the newsletter, and artistically such as symbolic illustrations and photography. Students are encouraged to think about the many ways that mountain top removal devastates the lives of so many, entire communities, streams and ecosystems. All of the guests of this episode of WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour discuss finding a BETTER WAY and stopping mountain top removal. We must not sacrifice the earth for quick energy. The mountains are actually removed, the trees cut down, and the soil is removed and pushed over into the springs. John Adams (as discussed in the introduction of the plans) founded the National Resource Defense Council in 1970. His wife Patricia is an author and she and John have been together for over 40 years working for the environment. Students are encouraged, as the show discusses, to unite together so that their voices are heard. Fossil fuels and coal can be extracted from the earth but there has to be a better way that doesn't sacrifice our earth. We can get energy from lots of sources and we can get energy from coal in better ways. We need to look at renewable energy such as solar and wind. John Adams states, "We don't need to go to the ends of the earth for energy." We have to find a better way. This is the message that students are encouraged to relay through various art forms. Discussion should prompt students to reflect upon the musicians and artists within the show and their various art form to relay the message of the show.

Activity 1: Introduction and discussion is very important for this topic. Warm up discussion questions will encourage students to begin thinking about the environment and the many ways harm to it influences our lives. For instance, ask students what they think of when they think of ways to be kind to our environment. Students are encouraged to reflect upon how they feel it is a chain reaction once damage is done to the environment. Meaning, how does one action influence another and so on and so forth. Empower the students by asking them what they can do to help treat the environment with love and attention and how they may also raise awareness and prevention to stop some of the damaging acts to our environment. This could lead into the discussion of mountain top removal. Also, empower the students by encouraging them to really take an interest and creatively present their project and outreach campaign that promote a better way and alternatives to mountain top removal. Students are encouraged to demonstrate the beauty of the Appalachian Mountains and importance to stopping this devastation that destroys the mountains. This time will also be used to have students work collaboratively to begin brainstorming for an outreach campaign to stop mountain top removal. Students are encouraged to begin sharing ideas and discussing ideas to include the university and community. This will improve their skills on working collaboratively and also networking as they begin to contact others in the community. Students will need to be knowledgeable of the specifics and ways in which mountain top removal devastates so many lives and communities. This process will encourage to think of the ways they wish to really make an impact and relay their message. This episode will allow students to reflect upon the ways in which the artists throughout the show relay the message to find a better way. For instance, Michael Johnathon's song, Emmylou Harris, and also the poetry recited.

Activity 2: This episode of WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour opens with a beautiful song by Michael Johnathon. Ask students to reflect upon the words of the song, "Appalachian Road." How may the students incorporate this message into their newsletter and outreach efforts. Students are encouraged to raise awareness of mountain top removal through various creative approaches. Encourage students to reflect upon their audience. Project ideas may include an Appalachian poem, short story, and/or ballad they write to express their thoughts and feelings on mountain top removal. Students may look to the episode of WoodSongs for guidance and examples. The poem, titled "Heritage" recited in the show is written by an Appalachian poet named James Still. Also, Emmylou Harris performs songs titled, "Green Rolling Hills" and "Bright Morning Stars", which may also be used as inspiration for writing a performance piece to spread awareness. Encourage students to reflect upon the wonder and the beauty of the Appalachian Mountains. Students may also organize a dramatic/theatrical piece if they wish to work outside of class time and perform this to reflect their message to raise awareness and stop mountain top removal. Informational text is also encouraged to introduce the topic with valuable references to support the evidence and information. Then, students are encouraged to incorporate various artistic ways of relaying and expressing their message. Drawings, paintings, and photography to express this message are also strongly encouraged. Students will also learn through this process that there are various methods to present information and relay messages. Ballad/song-writing is strongly encouraged and working outside of class time to complete this project is encouraged as well. The project for this class will include an outreach campaign organized by the students to stop mountain top removal. This project encompasses critical and creative thinking as students begin to plan and organize their project and include campus organizations.

Activity 3: The project will be presented to others on campus and within the community. Students will organize this project further and continue to raise awareness and they may wish to contact local radio and newspapers. This will help the students to build communication skills and also feel a part of something that is making an impact on the lives of so many people. It is our hope that the students will feel inspired to collaborate and put together a project and/or campaign that really relays the beauty of the Appalachian Mountains and how essential it is to stop mountain top removal. This will include some type of performance piece as well (as discussed under activity 1 and 2) in which students either perform a ballad/song, recite poetry or a short story, present art work, and/or a theatrical piece. Michael Johnathon's "Appalachian Road" is encouraged to be used as an example for the performance piece as students reflect upon the words and images throughout the video. This project encourages creative thinking and for the students to individualize their project in a way they feel best presents the message. The quote at the end of the show by Michael Johnathon is also a great piece to incorporate into their message, "How much life are we willing to give?"...

Final Project Task Descriptions

- Mountain Top Removal Defined; what is it?
- Mountain Top Removal: Explain the devastation it causes
- Demonstrate artistically the devastation caused by mountain top removal; students are also encouraged to relay the beauty of the Appalachian Mountains artistically as well.
- Discuss and relay the message that there is a BETTER WAY
- Students will compose an informative essay to accompany as well in which they research using two scholarly sources
- Students are encouraged to also explore other forms of Appalachian art

Goals & Objectives:

- Students will understand what mountain top removal is and explore better ways and alternatives to this devastating act of mountain top removal
- Creativity encouraged through design of project
- Knowledge of music as applied to creating their own ballad if they choose this within their project
- Knowledge of musical instruments introduced and played in WoodSongs episode
- Builds communication and presentation skills
- Encourages descriptive writing
- Understanding & Application of the science involved
- Understanding & Application of presenting information in a variety of ways
- Understanding & Application of scholarly and reliable sources and documenting sources
- Critical Thinking applied in terms of planning and organizing project (contacting campus organizations)
- Connection to their life experience as they reflect upon the devastation of mountain top removal

Materials/Media Needed:

- Access to Computer/iPad
- Art materials of their choice depending on project design