LESSON PLAN 4 by Corbin Smith

Lesson: Factory Farming in Modern America Length 45 min. Age or Grade Intended-Middle School

Academic Standard(s):
SOCIAL STUDIES
8.4.11 Use a variety of information resources to compare and contrast job skills needed in different time periods in United States history.
8.4.6 Relate technological change and inventions to changes in labor productivity in the United States in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
ENGLISH
8.2.5 Use information from a variety of consumer and public documents to explain a situation or decision and to solve a problem.

Performance Objectives:
1. The middle school students will read the article of their choice about the environmental effects of modern factory farming in the United States.
2. The middle school students will write a comparative essay looking at job skills needed from previous periods in American history compared with modern American agriculture while investigating the hazardous practice of factory farming.

Assessment:
Students will be turning in a comparative essay investigating the difference in job skills and labor productivity from earlier periods in American history through modern history and examine the hazardous practice of factory farming. The assignment will be worth 15 points.

Advanced Preparation by Teacher:
Materials:
1. All students should have pencils and text with them when they arrive to class.
2. The projector will be used to introduce today’s assignment using a YouTube clip.
3. Students should have notes from previous classes to help write their comparative essays.

Presentation:
1. Students will take their assigned seats at the beginning of class.
2. Students will watch a clip from the documentary “Fowl Play” to set the theme for class.
3. Students will individually choose the article of their choice over environment issues with factory farming and write a comparative essay based on the article and their notes.

Procedure:
Introduction/Motivation: We’ve discussed in the past few days how America grew as an agricultural power from the colonization period through the 20th century. We’re now going to look at a real-world problem that impacts each and every one of you. Factory farming has become the main method for big food corporations to increase the amount of produce on the market, but it has plenty of negative impact on the environment. While watching this clip, consider the conditions these animals are living in and the harsh realities that are associated with factory farming.

Step-by-Step Plan:
1. Students will watch a clip from “Fowl Play,” which sets the theme for the lesson by showing animals that are raised in factory farms and the awful treatment that they receive at these farms. This will provide a strong base for the students when they begin reading their article of choice about environmental hazards associated with factory farming.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SDXWB2zVR-8 (Gardner’s: Visual/Spatial)
2. Students will have the option to choose one of 10 articles off of “The Rapsheet on Animal Factories” to read. All of the articles are one page and provide insight to a real-life example of factory farming being cruel to animals and hurting the environment. Students will read these individually. The ten articles are found on the following site:
3. Students will write a comparative essay after reading their article. Students will examine a number of issues, including the differences in how labor in agriculture has changed over time in the United States and how technology has impacted changes in American agriculture. Students will also be asked to briefly confront the main issues presented in the article and determine ways we can improve the situation. Students will have 30 minutes to read their articles and write their essays. If more time is needed, the essay can be brought home as homework. (Gardner’s- Verbal/Linguistic)

4. The class will discuss their respective articles in the last 5-10 minutes to hear student insight on factory farming and what they feel should be done to address the issue. This allows students to take the subject and relate it to their own lives and personally reflect on it. This also will provide time for the teacher to field questions regarding the unit exam, which students will be reminded to review their notes for. (Gardner’s- Intrapersonal)

Closure: We’ve now seen a disturbing new trend that is threatening American agriculture. New laws are slowly being implemented to try to prevent factory farms from running private farms out of business, but clearly this is an issue that needs to be addressed. When considering the nasty conditions that animals are put through and how these places impact the environment, how do you feel about it? The class will end with a brief discussion where students can share their thoughts on their articles and general feelings toward the issues presented by factory farms. Students will also be reminded to review their notes from the previous 3 days of class to prepare for an overview exam from the American Agriculture unit.

Adaptations/Enrichment:
Adaptations for students with hearing impairments: First off, during the YouTube video, I could put captioning on the screen so that students with hearing impairments can still understand what is being said in the video. I also could put the main ideas of reading the articles into a word format on the computer and show it on the computer to meet the student’s needs. Instructions will be clearly defined not only verbally, but also in writing.

Self-Reflection: My goal during this lesson was to continue instruction on American agriculture while also investigating a disturbing new trend that has real-life implications. This is authentic curriculum, and I want my students to understand that a lot of changes in technology have directly impacted how labor functions, and agriculture is no exception. Students should find this topic interesting because of its real-life importance and how broadly it affects Americans, whether it is the inhumane treatment of animals or the environmental effects. This provides an opportunity for students to investigate a real problem and look at possible solutions through critical thinking and analysis. This lesson also provides an opportunity for students to work on their writing skills while applying what they have learned during the “Down On the Farm” interdisciplinary unit.
COMPARATIVE ESSAY - FACTORY FARMING

Using your article of choice and your notes from the previous class sessions, compare and contrast agriculture from the 17th-19th centuries in America to modern agriculture. Here are some questions to help guide you in your writing:

1. How has technology changed labor and productivity in agriculture compared to previously in the United States? Use support from the article to help with your analysis.
2. Have these changes in labor caused a shift in what skills workers need to be in the agricultural field?

After answering these questions, finish your essay looking at the problem presented by your article. What is the problem that is addressed by the article? How does this problem impact you as an American citizen? What do you believe can be done to fix this problem?