Landforms’ Influence on Communities and Where People Settle

By

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SEED 766

Final Project

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**Unit Overview**

This project is based on a social studies unit designed for the third-grade classroom. The unit is designed to help students understand the different types of landforms and how they influence where people decide to settle and start a community. Students will be asked to relate their newly acquired information to their own community’s location and to see what resources the landform’s environment provided in order to make it a desirable place to settle. This unit would be most appropriate to teach at the beginning of the school year. I chose this unit because it is something that students will easily be able to see the connections between the classroom and the world around them. Every community has a story as to why it was settled and almost every single one involves something about the environment created by the landform’s design. This topic offers numerous real-life examples and opportunities to provide authentic learning experiences.

There are several highlights in this unit that also involve technology. Students will be asked to make a landform map that will allow them to choose a landform and then research why it would be a great place to settle. Students will then use their maps and other technology tools to make a sales pitch as to why their landform would be the best to settle on. The final capstone project will be a research based project where students use the internet to research the history of their hometown, birth-town, or town of family historical-significance. They will then make a presentation using Microsoft Power Point or some other visual presentation tool that shows the history of why people settled to start this particular community and explain what impact the landform had on this decision. These presentations will then be loaded onto our class wiki.

**TFU Organizer**

**Grade and Subject(s):** 3rd Grade Social Studies

**Overarching Understandings/Goals (Throughlines)**

1. How do different landforms influence where people settle?
2. What type of resources do different landforms typically provide?
3. How can the resources that landforms provide impact the different jobs that people do within the community?
4. How do different landforms either help the community grow or in some way cause the community to have to relocate or die-out?
5. What other factors can influence the growth or “death” of a community other than landforms themselves?

**Generative Topic (Unit):**

How do landforms, the resources they provide, and the typical weather in these areas influence where people decide to settle and help determine if it will be a growing or dying community?

**Unit-Long Understanding Goals:**

1. Students will be able to identify and list common characteristics for all of the major types of landforms.
2. Students will be able to explain the typical resources that can be provided by each landform type.
3. Students will be able to explain and demonstrate the influence landforms have on where people choose to settle and whether or not it will be a growing community or a “dying” community.
4. Students will be able to explain the different natural disasters and the typical weather that can be found on each type of landform and explain how this may impact the community.
5. Students will be able to explain what other outside factors may influence the growth or “death” of a community.

**Sequence of Understanding Performances**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **UGs** | **Understanding Performances** | **Ongoing Assessments** |
| **Introductory Performance(s)** | #1  #2  #4  #5 | Students will be introduced to the different types of landforms through the textbook and also videos on streamingdiscovery.com. Students will learn what types of resources are commonly provided by each landform. Students will learn what type of weather may hinder or encourage community growth. Students will also learn about outside factors that may benefit a community. | During the onset of this unit, teacher observation will be the main source of informal assessment. Students will also discuss in groups what they are reading and have an open discussion about each landform. It is here where students will begin to develop a sense of which landform they would like to perform a sales pitch on. |
| **Guided Inquiry Performance(s)** | #1  #2  #3  #4  #5 | Students will use their newly acquired knowledge to research, using the internet, one landform of their choice. They will draw a map as a handmade visual and will also create a Power Point presentation that helps make their case for why they believe their landform would be the best to settle a community. Students are also required to use an online drawing program where they can create personal visuals that will help them make their case. | Students will be formally assessed using a rubric for this assignment. They will also be assessed informally by their peers through a critique form that will be confidentially filled out by each student immediately after the presentation. Students will be commenting about whether or not they were convinced to settle on the landform. |
| **Culminating Performance(s)** | #1  #2  #3  #4  #5 | The culminating activity for this unit involves students researching a community’s settlement history that is of personal interest. Students will be required to create a power point presentation for their community and explain why it was settled where it was and what factors (be it resources, weather, etc.) helped or hurt the growth of the community. Students are required to use visuals created through the online drawing program, pictures, and to finally post their presentation on the class wiki. | Students will be formally assessed on this project through the use of a rubric by the teacher. Our wiki space will be viewed by the other third grade class and they will receive confidential feedback from their peers in the other classroom. |

**Skill Strands (identify as: Major Focus, Reinforced, or Unsupported/Required)**

1. Student ability to use the internet and streaming discovery.com as a research tool. They should also be able to cite their sources. (\*\*\*)
2. Ability to use Power Point to create their presentation and their ability to load it to the class wiki space. (\*\*\*)
3. Ability to use the online drawing software, capture images, find pictures, and create other visuals that can be used in their presentation. (\*\*\*)
4. Student ability to use digital cameras, video cameras, and other technology that can be put into their presentation. (\*\*)
5. Student ability to create a persuasive presentation (informational presentation) that follows all of the common guidelines for good writing. (\*\*)

\*\*\***Major Focus** \*\***Reinforced** \***Unsupported/Required**

**Lesson Plan One**

**Learning the Different Types of Landforms**

**Objectives and Goals:**

* Students will be able to compare and contrast the different forms of landforms.
* Students will be able to explain the commonly found resources for each landform.
* Students will understand how the weather of a landform may impact the settlement of a community.

**Required Materials**

Teacher prepared Power Point on landforms, student textbook, classroom lab computers, landform worksheet.

**Anticipatory Set**

Teacher will show many different images of landforms and ask students what they know about the landforms they are seeing in the images. Teacher will ask, “From the pictures you are seeing, which of these landforms would you like to live on? What would help you make your decision?”

**Direct Instruction**

Students will receive direct instruction through the form of a teacher led Power Point and through reading the classroom textbook.

**Guided Practice**

Students will be given a worksheet that asks students to correctly match the landform with the correct description, resources, and weather. The teacher will be going around the classroom to informally assess students and to see where there may need to be further instruction.

**Independent Practice**

Students will be allowed to use the classroom lab (class set of computers) to look up their own pictures of landforms and begin thinking about which landform they would want to give their sale speech on.

**Closure**

Teacher will close by reviewing what was covered in class today and introducing the upcoming project so that students may start formulating ideas. Teacher will ask if there are any other questions.

**Assessment and Follow-Up**

The assessment will be the landform worksheet along with informal assessment conducted by the teacher during the student discussion period and while working on the assignment. The follow-up to this lesson will be when they begin to work on their sales pitch project in the next class period.

**Lesson Plan Two**

**Accessing and Using the Internet as a Research Tool.**

**Objectives and Goals:**

* Students will be able to use the internet and other online programs as a form of research.
* Students will be able to use online drawing software to help them draw and create visuals for their presentation.
* Students will be able to use presentation tools such as Power Point and our class wiki.
* Students will be able to use their knowledge of landforms, paired with technological presentation tools, in order to create a persuasive presentation on their chosen landform.

**Required Materials**

Access to the lab or the classroom lab, student textbook, student passwords for streamingdiscovery.com

**Anticipatory Set**

Ask students about their background knowledge on advertising. Using student responses, tell them that they are going to be making a presentation that will act as a advertisement or sales pitch to make people want to settle on their chosen landform.

**Direct Instruction**

Teacher will use a Power Point to go over the rules and tips for creating a persuasive presentation. Teacher will also demonstrate how to access the different online tools that can be used during the student led research period.

**Guided Practice**

Students will access the internet and the teacher will go around the room to help those who are having trouble accessing an online research tool. At this time the teacher will also be informally assessing students and their ability to use the internet to gain factual research.

**Independent Practice**

Students will be allowed to conduct their research, use the online drawing program, search for images, create images, begin constructing their Power Point, and access the classroom wiki space.

**Closure**

We will evaluate class progress on the project and talk about the timeline for completing the assignment. Allow time to answer any questions.

**Assessment and Follow-Up**

Assessment at this point is informal and the follow-up will consist of picking up where each individual student left off with their project. They will have two more class periods to complete their presentation before they have to administer it to the class.

**Lesson Plan Three**

**Student Selected Community History of Settlement**

**Objectives and Goals:**

* Students will be able to use the internet and other online programs as a form of research.
* Students will be able to use online drawing software to help them draw and create visuals for their presentation.
* Students will be able to use presentation tools such as Power Point and our class wiki.
* Students will be able to use their knowledge of landforms, paired with technological presentation tools, in order to create a persuasive presentation on their chosen landform.

**Required Materials**

Access to the lab or the classroom lab, student textbook, student passwords for streamingdiscovery.com, student password to access wiki, access to digital cameras and video cameras

**Anticipatory Set**

Teacher will give a short presentation on the history of settlement for his/her home community. After the presentation he or she will ask the students if they know about the history of a community that is special to them. After student comments, introduce the idea that this presentation is an example of what they will be creating in order to share the history of any community of their choice.

**Direct Instruction**

Teacher will go over the needed information to access the classroom wiki, Power Point, and the internet for research. Teacher will also explain the proper use of the cameras.

**Guided Practice**

Students will be asked to create a outline of what they want their presentation to look like slide-by-slide. Once students have a general outline, they will be allowed to access the internet to conduct their research.

**Independent Practice**

Students will be able to conduct their research, begin drawing using the online drawing software, search for images, begin work on their Power Point, and access the classroom wiki.

**Closure**

We will evaluate class progress on the project and talk about the timeline for completing the assignment. Allow time to answer any questions.

**Assessment and Follow-Up**

Assessment at this point is informal and the follow-up will consist of picking up where each individual student left off with their project. They will have two more class periods to complete their presentation before they have to administer it to the class.

**Reflective Unit Questions**

1. How is the learning in your unit generative?

I feel that this learning is generative because it makes students use the knowledge that they are gaining to help solve problems in another context. They have to apply their understanding to help explain what the impact of certain landforms would have on a community and the everyday life of people living there. This is a large task for students in third grade and I believe that if they are able to apply this knowledge in this way, they will be demonstrating a deep understanding of the material.

1. How do the understanding goals create focus? How are these understanding goals the most important for your students to understand?

These goals create focus because they are all centered around the same common idea; landforms affect where people settle and how they live. The ultimate goal is that students will be able to see how all of the variables centered around landforms impact our everyday lives. These goals are the most important because they are easy to compare and connect to real life. Students will be able to look at how they are living there own life and see that it is because of where you live that you live that way.

1. How are the performances of understanding related to the understanding goals? In what ways to the performances of understanding help students build *and* demonstrate their understanding? Were there other performances that youconsidered using but decided not to use? Why?

All of the performances are directly related to the understanding goals. In some instances, there is a performance for each goal. My favorite is the culminating project where students will have to use all of the knowledge gained by achieving these goals to explain how landforms impact communities. Students are offered authentic learning experiences where they are required to demonstrate their knowledge for the teacher and their fellow students. This learning environment will be one where the students learn from the teacher, they learn from each other, and the teacher learns from the students. These were the only performances that I considered thus far; however, I did consider different uses of technology. I settled on the technology used because I feel that it is easily accessible, easy to understand, and this technology would be the easiest for third-graders to use effectively.

1. In what ways are the assessments clearly articulated, relevant and public? In what ways are the assessments “ongoing”?

The assessments are relevant because they directly assess the goals. They are public because they will be demonstrating their understanding to the class during their presentations. They are also ongoing as the teacher is constantly making observations and also using a checklist of the goals to make sure that after each assessment, each student is adequately demonstrating an understanding of the goals.

1. How did you select the technology used in this unit? How does this technology promote learning?

I chose this technology based on ease of use and accessibility. Third-grade students will need to be instructed on whatever technology is used, and I feel that the technology selected will be easy to instruct and also easy to understand. Ultimately, the technology chosen will serve efficiently for the goals that we want to accomplish. The technology promotes learning because it creates a hands-on learning experience with the material. Also, through the presentations, students will be able to use technology to present material in a way that they will be teaching each other during their presentations.

Summary of Beth B’s Comments and Changes Made:

Beth was concerned that I did not have a lesson that taught students how to use Power Point. I believe that this is a valid point; however, she had no way of knowing that they have been using Power Point in my classroom already. I did have to teach them at the beginning of the year. She was also wondering if I should change my unit-long understanding goals into questions; however, I read that it could also be a statement starting with “Students will…” Beth also suggested that I provide opportunities for students to check each others’ work and provide feedback. I agree with her and made changes accordingly. Overall, Beth’s comments were positive and it was interesting to see how each of us taught the same material in a different way.

Summary of Tammy’s Comments and Changes Made:

Tammy felt that I needed to reword my overarching goals to start with “Students will…” instead of using questions, I did not make a change to this because I believe it said we could use either method and I feel that the questions help us stay focused on the main goal more than switching to statements. She also felt that I should discuss more the different domains that I was covering and I agree, I tried to make a change with this in my unit overview. Tammy did suggest having students conduct self-assessments; however, with teacher assessments and many peer assessments, I did not feel the need to include this. We all assess ourselves without being asked too. I would like to try this unit without them first to see how it goes; however, if needed, I would definitely use them.

TfU Framework

a. Your comfort with the TfU Framework.

I feel comfortable with the framework and can see how planning a unit in this way will enrich the instruction, presentation, assessment, and ultimately the understanding of the material. I believe that units planned with the TFU Framework in mind will make learning more fun and interesting for students and they will get more out of their education because of it.

b. How the TfU Framework fits with your teaching

This framework fits closely with what I have been trying to use in my classroom already. I have tried using the concepts of instructional design, but I feel that the TFU Framework is easier to use and will serve more effectively in my classroom.

c. Comments on collaborative group process for dealing with TfU Framework.

I thought that the group work was great. It allowed us to see how others were thinking and how they were able to put the framework into use. Beth B. and I both chose landforms for our unit and it was fun to see how we used the framework in different ways to help teach the same material in two totally different ways.

d. What resources did your collaborative group use for discussing the TfU framework?

We mainly used Google Docs to post our material and to view each others’ ideas. Along with this technology we used Elluminate to discuss and comment on each others’ work.