



What and where is Puerto Rico? Activity 5: Natural Puerto Rico

Summary:

Through web site resources, class readings, and hands-on activities students will learn where Puerto Rico is, the geography and vegetation of the island, and understand the history of the commonwealth.

Materials:

- PowerPoint on world population by Victoria Dahlby
- LCD projector and computer
- student journals, pens/pencils
- scavenger hunt list
- first aid kit (just in case)
- whistle, or another attention signal

Set-Up:

- Inside: set up LCD projector and computer
- **make copies** of student scavenger hunt list
- Outside: set boundaries in an area for students to explore, preferably in a school forest, local park, somewhere with some diversity of life, bring first aid kit (just in case), whistle, or another attention signal

Procedure:

Natural Puerto Rico – 1-2 hours

This activity has two parts to it. The first part takes place in the classroom for about 30 minutes. The second part takes place in an outdoor area, preferably with different species. This part could take from 30 min to 1 1/2 hours, depending on location, travel time, and how in-depth you want students to get.

1. Show students the PowerPoint: Natural Puerto Rico (photos taken during the summer of 2005). *(designed by Dahlby)*
2. During the slideshow, discuss how Puerto Rico landscape differs from Wisconsin's landscape. Create a Venn Diagram on the board or on large butcher paper and have a student record the differences and similarities the two places have.

Grade Level: 7-8

Goal: Students learn about the history of Puerto Rico, and will be able to compare the tropical vegetation and geography to Wisconsin.

Key Concepts:

- Greater Antilles
- West Indies
- Tropical Vegetation
- Island Origin
- Commonwealth
- Biodiversity

Objectives: Upon completion of this lesson, students will:

- 1) be able to identify Puerto Rico on a world map
- 2) describe the vegetation
- 3) explain the governmental relationship between the US and Puerto Rico

Teaching Location:

Classroom
School Forest or other outdoor area (preferably with trees)

Activity Time:

1-2 hours (depending on travel time)

Subject Areas for Infusion: science, social studies, English, Environmental Ed.

3. The focus for the presentation is on diversity and dense forest vegetation. Students are going to try to identify numbers of species in different parts of the presentation. Students should be able to get a feel for the island now through what they have learned and now what they are seeing. Using this information, they are going to do a comparison of our region with Puerto Rico.
4. After the presentation, have the students complete a scavenger hunt in their area to find things in some of the following categories: largest/smallest, tallest/shortest, colorful/dull, many/few, diverse/monotypic. Have the students come up with some categories as well. The idea is to have them look at extremes and find as many things that fit in those categories as possible. There are several slides in the presentation that depict the same types of categories.
5. **If possible** give each group a digital camera to use to record their findings.
6. Lead the students to the outdoor site and give them a determined amount of time to explore the diversity in their area.
7. When you return to the classroom, tally all of the results on the board in a table. Did some groups find more than others? Why? Did some categories have more than other categories? What are the overall findings? Is one place more diverse than the other place? What counts for the diversity in the tropics? What factors play into each areas diversity?

Standards:

Science:

B.8.4
C.8.3,.4
E.8.I. .2, .3

English:

A.8.4, C.8.2, C.8.3,
E.8.3

Social Studies:

A.8.1, A.8.5, A.8.8,
B.8.3, B.8.8

EE:

A.8.4, A.8.5, B.8.2,
B.8.3, B.8.5, B.8.10,
B.8.12, B.8.15,
B.8.23

Assessment

If you used digital cameras, have the students create a poster or book about their findings on the diversity of the Wisconsin landscape. If you didn't have cameras available, let them choose a medium to explain to you what they learned, it could be through drawing a picture of Wisconsin's landscape and Puerto Rico's landscape, it could be through mathematical equations, it could be through writing a poem. It could be through a play. Allow the students to choose how they show you.