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Hitting the Headlines

Summary

Climate change statistics can be over-whelming and intangible, particularly to young people. The idea of this activity is to allow young people to feel connected to both (i) problems locally that may be the result of climate change eg. severe or 'freak' weather events (predicted to increase in frequency as a result of climate change), and (ii) local developments (positive or negative) that relate to climate change eg. airport expansions and wind farm developments

Reporting of these stories in local media can be researched by the young people. In so doing it is hoped that climate change is not seen as 'somebody else's problem' and positive actions in their local community can follow.

This resource is suitable for use in science lessons or mother tongue lessons with potential for creative writing (in response to the pictures alone) or as a comprehension exercise analysing the science within the piece and comparing/contrasting the stories written by the students with what was actually reported.

Materials Needed



Recent stories from local and national newspapers are used as the source material for this activity. Many newspapers archives can be accessed online, or by visiting the local newspaper library. The pictures and/or stories are used as stimulus material for the students' own writing and analysis - **these need to be obtained locally.**

We provide 2 local Norfolk (UK) stories to download as pdf documents as exemplars to support your development of this activity. TSN is most grateful to the staff in the Archant news library in Norwich for their assistance and support in accessing archives



of local papers and for allowing us to reproduce two of their stories to support local development of this activity.

Duration

This activity will usually take 1-2 hours depending on the range of subjects analysed and the writing ability of the young people doing the

activity. Additional time will be required to research the 'library of stories and pictures'

Procedure

This is one suggestion for running the activity. Teachers may wish to use different approaches with different classes. It is most applicable when a collection of stories has been obtained.

In order to obtain this story collection, work in small groups and ask the young people to obtain a 'climate change related' story with a strong image. This story then needs to be duplicated and the story part discarded in the copy, leaving only the picture. A note should be made of the date and location of the story. These pictures should then be catalogued so that each numbered story also has a 'picture-only' version similarly numbered.

Eg. Story 1: "*Flash floods will become normal*", +_Story + Picture (1), May 2009, Norwich
Picture-only: 1. Picture (1), May 2009, Norwich

Working in pairs or groups of 3 depending upon class-size, give 1 picture to each group. With smaller class sizes this could be done individually if you felt the young people would be able to complete the tasks. Ask the young people to write a headline and a brief story to accompany the picture. When this part of the activity is complete, supply the corresponding story and picture and ask the young people to compare their story with the one provided. Discuss the similarities and differences between the two stories.

Conclude the activity by asking the students to identify the key scientific messages within the published article, and explain how these relate to climate change and sustainable living. Relate these messages to some of the future scenarios anticipated for climate change.

The two exemplar stories included in the library as pdf's are *wind-farmsBUS.pdf* and *Flooding-report.pdf*

Wind-farmsBUS.pdf. An impressive offshore wind turbine photograph which may invite stories about renewable energies and future energy supply or the potential for economic development in a region as a result of this new industry. Alternatively, young people may focus of environmental concerns, effects on bird migration, visual pollution etc.

Flooding-report.pdf includes a dramatic flood scene of a local riverside location, which may invite stories about flood defence, the needs and the costs, consequences of flooding, life (present and future) in coastal locations.

Extension/Homework Activities

Students could be asked to carry out their own 'media watch' in relation to climate change and sustainability issues appearing in local or national media. This could be some form of count, length of articles, prominence, with/without pictures.

Alternatively, such an analysis could be compared with the coverage given to health issues for example over the same period in the same newspaper. Just how much coverage is climate change given in comparison to health, is it positive or negative?

From learning to action

Could some of the young people's school-based, sustainable living activities be extended to the local community? Would these activities make positive stories for local media coverage?

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