April 2011

Dear Caitlin,

Thank you for sharing your integrated energy project, “What’s Your Source? Energy in the 21st Century.” It was a valuable science unit, studying alternative/renewable energy and integrating math, social studies, and language arts as well. It was interesting to read your portfolio pieces to see just how you set up this project so that students were clear about the unit’s goals and expectations. The topic was timely and students were engaged along the way. The slide show was invaluable to an onlooker like me and validated that you involved community resources as well. I was amused to understand that someone in your class actually felt ownership enough in this project to call Channel 5 himself and the result was a visit from a TV crew to your Science Fair presentation. What an experience!

I am always excited to view the tools used to make any unit successful. The rubrics, self evaluations, and reflection pieces used with your students were invaluable to me and your collection of professional readings was very helpful. I was particularly interested in the GET REAL piece that simplified this whole process of validating the reliability of source. I will use this “tool” with my students.

As a fellow language arts teacher, how you used literature in an energy unit was particularly valuable. ***Phoenix Rising*** was a perfect choice as it offers many opportunities for critical thinking and conversation about the responsibility component of alternative energy. Comparing and contrasting what was learned about nuclear energy in this text lent itself beautifully to some expository writing.

What a wonderful project, Caitlin! I am looking forward to our working together, as two separate teams here at Warsaw, as we work through another unit on decade studies in the twentieth century. We will learn as much as the students as we pioneer another integrated unit of study.

Thanks,

Marilyn Graham