The Changing of West Point
Grade Level: 11th
Time Allotted: 1 class period

New York State Core Standards:

Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies- Grade 11
Standard 1- Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific detail to an understanding of the text as a whole.
Standard 2- Determine the central ideas of information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies- Grade 11
Standard 4- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Learning Objective:
1) Students will be able to explain and assess the changes in West Point’s structure and environment following the 1977 cheating scandal.

Materials
- West Point Cheating Scandal PowerPoint
- Hudson River Valley Article “Carved from Granite but Steeped in Change: West Point and the Making of Leaders”
- Before and After Chart

Motivation
1) The students will take part in a class brainstorm on what qualities make a great military leader.
2) Students will watch a short PowerPoint presentation about the 1977 West Point cheating scandal.
3) The teacher will start a class discussion using the following questions:
   a. Do you think West Point reacted too harshly towards the cadets? (students will mostly like say yes- too harsh)
   b. But, looking at all of the qualities you said make a great leader, cheating violates those. And since the main purpose of West Point is to make strong leaders, shouldn’t the institution rightfully expel the cheating cadets?
Procedure

1) The teacher will hand out the HVRI article, “Carved from Granite but Steeped in Change,” to the students.
2) The teacher will hand out a before and after chart.
3) The teacher will divide the class into two groups.
4) The students will read silently the assigned areas of the reading.
   a. Group one will read the section Academic Program from pages 6-9.
   b. Groups two will read the section Character Development from pages 10-15.
5) While reading students will fill in their before and after charts.
   a. In the before column, students will write about the structure and the environment of West Point before the 1977 cheating scandal.
   b. In the after column, students will write about how the structure and the environment has changed since 1977.
6) Students will share their writing responses with their group and make their before and after charts more complete.
7) Each group will present their findings to the class.

Summary

1) The students will engage in a class discussion using the following teacher-prompt questions:
   a. What do you think are some of the most significant changes made by West Point since 1977?
   b. Do you think the new system still works towards making great military leaders?
   c. Do you think your high school system helps promote leadership? If not, what changes would you make?

Assessment

The teacher will check for student understanding…

- During the motivation classroom discussion
- While monitoring students’ work during the group activity
- During the group presentations
- During the closing class discussion
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