Northern Ireland Unit

Focus: Can Nonviolent Civil Disobedience be successful without violence.

Outline of information:

Students will examine the Civil Rights Movement in the United States and then compare the movement with the Catholic movement in Northern Ireland. Particular attention will be given to the contrast between the non violent and violent movements in both areas. The question I want students to explore is if non violent protest by a minority can be used to make gains without the threat of violence also existing. After talking to people on both sides of the conflict in Northern Ireland it became apparent that they believed the violence of the troubles was needed as a starting point for the negotiations that are going on today. This made me question the significance of the black power movement on the success of the Civil Rights Movement in American History.

Preclass homework:

Students should read Bobby Sands diary while on the Hungerstrike

Martin Luther King Jr.’s Letter From the Birmingham Jail and Thoreau’s Civil Disobedience.

Then students should be guided through the powerpoint conversation. Teachers should stop the lecture at various points to have kids explore some of the key concepts and extensions that are mentioned at the end of the powerpoint. The culminating activity should be the mural exercise at the end of the powerpoint

See Powerpoint