A Geographic Profile: The Health of Nations

By reading and interpreting data, students will then be able to draw conclusions about why some countries are healthier than others.

*Adapted from a lesson by Lyn Malone, Rhode Island

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Grade Level: 6-7
Duration: 1 class period

Overview
Becoming aware of the demographics of the world’s nations provides a worthwhile perspective to those of us living in the US. By using the provided data resources, students have the opportunity to study and develop meaningful conclusions concerning the state of health care in numerous countries around the world, while making thoughtful comparisons and connections to home.

Purpose
In this lesson, students will use math to analyze demographics of a nation with the eventual goal of creating a span of nations reflecting their world health status.

Materials
- World Health Rating Scale
- World Health Rating Scale key
- Health and Development Data Profile Chart
- Posttest assessment
- Posttest assessment answer key
- Note cards (48 cards with the names of each of the countries written on them)
- Markers
- Chalkboard or Whiteboard
- Tape
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Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Read and interpret data from a demographic profile and then draw simple but relevant conclusions.

2. Anticipate the factors associated with economic growth and predict the factors connected to a healthy nation when given a set of meaningful data.

Procedures

1. Introduce the lesson by reviewing the title and reading and discussing the overview and purpose. Mention that some of the countries being studied are well known to them, some have been in the news recently, and perhaps some they have never heard about until today.

2. Review any vocabulary from the handouts that may seem unclear or cause confusion.

3. Distribute the Health and Development Data Profile Chart.

4. Practice analyzing the health factors, using Afghanistan as an example. Once the procedure is clear, assign each student one of the 48 nations from the profile.
   a. They can pick a note card at random or teacher can designate specific countries.
   b. Distribute blank copies of the World Health Rating Scale.
   c. Follow the directions on the rating scale.
   d. To total the rating, divide by 7 to determine the average/mean.
   e. Round to the nearest whole number, somewhere between 1 and 10. For example, if the mean were 5 2/7, the final answer would be 5 and if the mean were 6 4/7, it would be 7.
   f. Across the board or along one wall, post the numbers 1-10 at two-foot intervals. When a student has determined the average health rating for the country they are studying, they will place the individual note card for that country, on the board, next to or under the number corresponding to the average with a piece of tape.
   g. If time is available, assign a second nation for students to evaluate.

5. When all students have completed the task of rating their country and locating it on the board, it is time for explanations and discussion. Students should locate their nation on the world map. They should then be given the opportunity to tell how they arrived at their average and what they think it signifies for their particular country. When interpreting the results as seen on the board, students should begin to observe patterns and trends. Traditionally poor nations tend to be rated 5 or below, while higher standards of living are usually rated from 8-10. Discussion questions should include: a) which continents have certain tendencies? b) Where are the exceptions? c) What other factors, according to the profile, also influence the health of a nation? (include economy, education, government, resources, population, gender, human rights, and customs)

Assessment

Math: Students should complete the posttest assessment worksheet. The bar graph can be graded for accuracy and proper labeling. Mastery would be 80% or higher. Geography: Questions 1 and 2 would be one point each. Questions 4 and 5 would have a value of five points each. Mastery is considered ten points or higher.
Extensions

Have the students research one of the given countries. Look for photos of life, especially concerning health care in this nation. Have the students create a graphic illustration of health care in the country. This graphic illustration could be done on poster board or it could be computer generated. Culturegrams (See Sources) is an excellent resource for gaining more information.

Have students research world health organizations (WHO, UNICEF, Doctors Without Borders, etc).

Sources

The ideas for this lesson were borrowed from Lyn Malone from the Rhode Island Geography Education Alliance.

Culturegrams by Brigham Young University are a good addition to this lesson.

WHO Estimates of Health Personnel by the World Health Organization.

The World Almanac and Book of Facts by Funk and Wagnalls Corporation

Junior Scholastic Magazine (Oct.’02) by Scholastic, Inc.

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES

www.prb.org Population Reference Bureau
www.popplanet.org Population Planet
www.facingthefuture.org Facing the Future
www.culturgrams.com Culturegrams
www.worldbank.org WorldBank
www.who.int/en/ World Health Organization
www.cia.gov/publications/factbook CIA Factbook

www.populationaction.org Population Action International
www.zpg.org Zero Population Growth
www.unfpa.org United Nations Population Fund
www.census.gov United States Census Bureau