

Lesson title: Small Group Work in Geography

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Summary: Students work together to consider some of the roles of geographical features in social life. This classroom exercise engages students with other learners in order to make the day's lesson more dynamic and get students involved in their own learning process.

Objectives:

1. Applying disciplinary contexts: Students will understand how to use historical background, geographical context, political systems, economic structures, and socio-cultural milieu to better understand regional and global developments.
2. Connections: Students will begin to see the connections between world events and the multiple contexts that inform them, and learn that these seemingly disparate factors are always already interconnected and in flux.
3. Living in the world: Students develop knowledge, skills, and attributes needed to live effectively in a world possessing limited natural resources and characterized by ethnic diversity, cultural pluralism and increasing interdependence.
4. Diversity: Students should gain an awareness of international diversity and learn to think about what the world, or specific issues, might look like from other points of view.

Learning Outcomes:

- Students collaborate with other learners to create new knowledge
- Students use and develop interpersonal skills as well as an appreciation both for other learning styles and for other points of view.
- Students are actively involved in learning the material at hand. They create answers to the day's questions through their own reasoning and reflection.

Materials Required:

- Published atlas as required text for course or on reserve (see above).
- Blank world maps for students to fill in. Free online for educators (see site): http://geography.about.com/od/blankmaps/Blank_and_Outline_Maps.htm
- Assignment handout (see below).

Lesson Activities:

1. At the end of the previous class, students are assigned to read Chapter Three in the textbook.
2. Optional: Students may be asked to read Ricardo Hausman's "Prisoners of Geography" (see the bibliography of additional readings for full citation).

3. The next day, the instructor creates small groups and allots different countries, one to each group.
4. Student groups peruse the student atlas and list negative and positive geographical features of the country in regards to possible economic and political development. Afterward, groups report back to the class about their observations.