Tips and Resources for a High School Geography Class

Kyle Tredinnick
GeoFest – Macalester College, St. Paul, Minnesota
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www.geographyforgeographers.weebly.com
www.mrtredinnick.com
Where is it?
The Purpose of a Geography Class

• Social Studies courses are a method for teaching critical thinking, and analysis by examining global topics
• Opening students to new ideas
• Getting students to examine deeper to find patterns and meaning
Penguins in roadway
50 km/h
Objectives:

• Provide suggestions for how to format a geography class, units, and individual lessons
• Address particular points of emphasis involved with teaching geography in a secondary setting
• Suggest resources, and their applications, for participants to use in their own classrooms
Setting up a Geography Class: General Teaching Advice

• Plan to be flexible
• Teach to your strengths
• Don’t expect to be perfect the first time you teach a class...or ever
• Honesty is clutch
• Have backups and build up your “bag of tricks”
• Beg, Borrow, Steal
• Kids should be the exhausted ones at the end of the day...not you
• Build in time for yourself!
• Push for higher level thinking
• NETWORK! – Conferences, FB, E-mail
Setting up a Geography Class: General Geography Advice

• When in doubt check the standards
• Don’t ever assume kids know, or don’t know, anything about the world
• Geography should not be memorizing places and coloring maps
  • GIS Should not be just clicking
• Have a plan, but don’t be tied to it
• Real world examples are clutch
• Don’t be afraid to try something new
• Everyday Fun Stuff
Points of Emphasis

• Scale
  • Getting students to learn the impact on different levels
    • Ex. The impact of Ebola locally, on a national scale, impacts on the continent, and the world as a whole

• Inquiry
  • Getting students to ask geographic questions and answer them with geographic data
    • Ex. Why did the Arab Spring impact the countries that it did and not spread beyond the Middle East?

• Application
  • Help students gain a better understanding of their community, country, and world through looking at real world examples
    • Ex. Explaining the Ukrainian Crisis, or why so many Somalis go to the Twin Cities
Tips for Mapwork

• Have a clear and defined purpose
• Integrate technology when possible
• The more you can get in the better!
• Start large scale and work to smaller scales
• Include discussion of what makes a “good” map
Get Yourself Trained in GIS&T

• Emphasis on incorporating technology into the classroom
  • Included in State Standards
• Geospatial technologies allow a whole other realm of inquiry to take place
  • Can be used in any class
  • Esri Geoinquiries
Tips for Models

- Make it clear that models are almost never perfectly applicable
  - Based on observable trends
  - Meant to be a guide to “test”

- Find Real World Examples to Test the Models against
  - Great time to incorporate GIS analysis
Areas of Caution – Be Prepared

- American Exceptionalism
- Climate Change/Global Warming
- Cultural Relativism
- Development
- Evolution and Continental Drift
- “First World” and “Third World” Countries
- Genocide
- Islam/Muslims
- Israel
- Political Affiliations
- Race/Gender/Sexuality
- Religions
- Stereotypes
- Territorial Disputes
HELP! I’ve finished my lesson, but there is still time left in class

• Games
• Formative Checks for Understanding
  • Exit Tickets
  • Summarize
  • Quiz
  • Quick write
• Current Events
• Interesting Maps
• Geographic Film
• Learn a region of the world

Whatever you do, own it!