Impact Study: Looking at Europe

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**Table of Contents**

Unit Goals and Objectives........................................................................................................... 2

Assessment Plan .......................................................................................................................... 3

Daily Lesson Plans ...................................................................................................................... 4

Pre-Assessment and Region Introduction........................................................................ 4

Day One .......................................................................................................................... 4

Day Two ………………………………………………………………………………... 5

Day Three ………………………………………………………………………………. 7

Day Four.......................................................................................................................... 8

Day Five …………………………………………………………………………….… 9

Day Six........................................................................................................................... 12

Data Analysis ............................................................................................................................ 13

Impact Study Reflection............................................................................................................. 17

**Unit Goals and Objectives**

At the high school where I completed my internship, World Geography is taught with a specific regional focus, so each individual unit addresses multiple SOL strands from the perspective of a single region. Principally focusing on developing students essential understandings of how the physical, economic, and cultural characteristics of Europe impacted the regional development of Europe (WG.4), the Unit I designed and taught to my students also sought to impart:

* How geographic information may be acquired from a variety of sources and supports the process of inquiry into the nature of Europe(WG.1)
* How Europe is an area with unifying characteristics (WG.3)
* How human populations differ over time with specific illustrations from the Europe region (WG.5);
* How natural, human, and capital resources have influenced human activity in the Europe region (WG.7);
* Why Europe is part of the developed world, and how the Industrial Revolution impacted development across the region (WG. 8);
* How economic, social and spatial relationships have changed over time in the Europe region, and why improvements in transportation and communication have promoted Europe’s globalization (WG.9);
* How political divisions across Europe have generated conflict throughout Europe’s history (and continue to generate conflict) and how cooperation between states breaks down political divisions (WG.10).

From the multiple SOL strands that were addressed in this unit, the main goal of the unit was to make students better global citizens through the understanding that the world region of Europe has unique characteristics and needs, which impacts how that world region acts in our global society. Regarding the specific unit objectives, as a result of this unit of study, students will be able to:

* Describe the physical, economic, and cultural characteristics of Europe;
* Evaluate how the unique resources and characteristics of the Europe region have impacted human activity within the region;
* Distinguish between the characteristics of the developed world and the developing world and assess which characteristics of Europe make it part of the developed world
* Identify significant historical and current conflicts within Europe and hypothesize about possible future conflicts based upon current conditions
* Demonstrate how economic, social and spatial relationships have changed over time in Europe
* Recognize and describe how the forces of cooperation have broken down political divisions across Europe;
* Explain how the modernization of communication and transportation has promoted Europe’s globalization

**Assessment Plan**

Incorporating a pre-assessment activity, a range of formative assessments, and a unit test as a summative assessment, multiple assessment tools were used to observe student growth and understanding throughout the unit and to inform my instruction throughout the unit. Beginning with a multiple-choice pre-assessment benchmark, the initial assessment highlighted areas where student understanding was weakest particularly focusing on student knowledge of the economic and cultural characteristics of Europe. This unit utilized multiple assessments to focus instruction on building understanding and on closing those learning gaps that were revealed through the continuous use of assessment in the unit.

Throughout the unit, formative assessments took various forms, including assessments like: focus questions (the daily warm-up activity used throughout the year in this class), a stations activity, a ‘book-look’ activity, a matching game activity, a map quiz, exit slips, guided note-sheet responses, in-class discussion, a review game, and a study guide. These formative assessments revealed areas that needed further review and helped students identify areas of strengths and weaknesses in their learning. Finally, the unit concluded with a summative assessment to measure and evaluates overall learning in the unit. The summative assessment took the form of a 50 question multiple-choice test; the test incorporated the questions that were asked in the pre-assessment activity to measure specific knowledge growth against a benchmark.

**Daily Lesson Plans**

**Pre-Assessment and Region Introduction**

*SOLs Addressed:*

* (WG.4) The student will locate and analyze physical, economic, and cultural characteristics of Europe
* (WG.2) The student will analyze how selected physical and ecological processes shape the Earth’s surface by: describing how humans influence the environment and are influenced by it; explaining how technology affects one’s ability to modify the environment and adapt to it.

*Assessments:*

* Pre-Assessment Multiple Choice Benchmark
* Map of Europe

*Outline:*

* After the class finishes their Russia Unit Test, I will administer an eight-question benchmark pre-assessment for the Europe Unit
* Once students complete the pre-assessment activity for the Europe Unit, students will begin working on their Europe Map to introduce the physical characteristics and political divisions of Europe

**Day One**

*SOLs Addressed:*

* WG.4) The student will locate and analyze physical, economic, and cultural characteristics of Europe
* (WG.1) The student will use maps, globes, satellite images, photographs, or diagrams to obtain geographical information about the world’s countries, cities, and environments; Create and compare political, physical, and thematic maps;
* (WG.2) The student will analyze how selected physical and ecological processes shape the Earth’s surface by: describing how humans influence the environment and are influenced by it; explaining how technology affects one’s ability to modify the environment and adapt to it.
* (WG.5) The student will compare and contrast the distribution, growth rates, and characteristics of human population in terms of settlement pattern and the location of natural and capital resources in the Europe Region
* (WG.9)The student will analyze the global patterns and networks of economic interdependence in the Europe Region

*Assessments:*

* Focus Question Response
* Welcome to Europe note-sheet and questions within presentation

*Lesson Outline:*

* Focus Question:
* Welcome to Europe interactive PowerPoint with guided note-sheet:
  + This is an interactive PowerPoint that students will look at individually in the computer lab. This audio-visual PowerPoint Presentation introduces some of the physical, cultural and economic features of Europe, along with presenting some historical context. *I will bring in examples, stories, pictures, video-clips, discussions, and open-ended questions to keep students engaged with the material and to help students process and recognize the material through multiple formats*. At the end of the PowerPoint presentation students should be able to identify some of the physical, cultural, and economic characteristics and be able to move on to an activity that will allow them to engage with material in greater depth by the next block
  + Along with the presentation students will be completing a guided note-sheet with variable difficulty for my diverse learner needs; *the essential information will be very basic fill in the blank straight from the PowerPoint so slower readers will be able to access the information, but to help engage my more advanced learners there will also be sections that call for students to write their own answers or to deduce the information from what is present in the PowerPoint slides without actually giving the information to them verbatim (I will try to help support my less advanced students in this section with class discussion and examples that they can draw from).*
* Wrap-up: Finish Maps
  + I will ask the class to take out their maps which they are still completing and to write at the top of their maps that they have a map quiz coming up on either Tuesday 2/25 or Wednesday 2/26 (depending upon which block they’re in)
  + While in the computer lab, students will visit worldatlas.com to help them complete their maps so they will be ready for the upcoming map quiz (which will be, as always, an open map quiz).

**Day Two**

*SOLs Addressed***:**

* (WG.4) The student will locate and analyze physical, economic, and cultural characteristics of Europe
* (WG.1) The student will use maps, globes, satellite images, photographs, or diagrams to obtain geographical information about the world’s countries, cities, and environments; Create and compare political, physical, and thematic maps;
* (WG.2) The student will analyze how selected physical and ecological processes shape the Earth’s surface by: describing how humans influence the environment and are influenced by it; explaining how technology affects one’s ability to modify the environment and adapt to it.
* (WG.5) The student will compare and contrast the distribution, growth rates, and characteristics of human population in terms of settlement pattern and the location of natural and capital resources
* (WG.9)The student will analyze the global patterns and networks of economic interdependence

*Assessments:*

* Passport to Europe: Stations activity
* Focus Question

*Differentiation Strategies:*

* Students engage with the material on Europe in a multitude of ways to appeal to vast array of learner needs: multi-media audio-visual approach, written words, through their own drawing, maps and graphics, and creating a graphic timeline with written descriptions
* Additionally, students will be completing these stations as a group, so to further differentiate students will assume rolls in the group that appeals to their strengths like recorder (writes down final product), leader ( keeps track of time and keeps group on task), researchers, and organizers (organizes responses and assembles information that researchers have gathered)

*Lesson Outline***:**

* Focus: This major German river flows northward into the North Sea.
* Passport to Europe: Stations activity (80 minutes- just under 20 minutes a station): I will break students into four groups (teacher selected groups); I will then explain that each individual in the group is to take on a roll (leader, recorder, researchers, and organizers) while they will be doing the work of Geographers and students will be able to choose which roll they would like to assume [there may be some overlap of responsibilities and that’s fine]. Each section of the ‘Passport’ has a clip-art like stamp in the corner which signifies the theme of the activity that they are completing at each station. While students will be able to work on the ‘Passport’ packet in groups, each student will turn in an individual passport:
  + Mini- WebQuest station (using laptops from the laptop cart) where students will explore some of the economic characteristics of Europe using web-based multi-media sources. To help students better understand how the European Union and NATO function they will look at the structure and formation of the EU and what it takes to become a member of both the EU and NATO. Additionally, students will research how the advanced infrastructure of Europe has helped mobility and trade (through the Chunnel)
  + Snapshot Timeline of Europe Using the blue textbooks, students will assemble a mini timeline of European history that addresses major historical events and ages in Europe; their timeline will span from 400 B.C. (Peak of Ancient Greece) through the formation of the European Union. Students should witness and be able to explain the vast and diverse nature of European history after completing this timeline while being introduced to the idea that Europe’s Empires impacted all of the regions of the world.
  + Maps and Graphics At a station near the Smart board, students will use an assortment of maps and graphics, to explore and answer questions regarding Europe’s physical features, population density, and some of the impacts of pollution on Europe (and students who still have questions or haven’t completed their own Europe maps for the upcoming Map Quiz can take this information and use it towards their own goals of having a more solid mental map of Europe). This station will reinforce both content knowledge and map and graphic reading skills.
  + Visit Europe! Students will use travel books and brochures to read about some of the major landmarks of Europe. Students will read about a major European landmark, draw a picture of the landmark and write a detailed description of the landmark as if they were creating their own travel book.

**Day Three**

*SOLs Addressed:*

* (WG.4) The student will locate and analyze physical, economic, and cultural characteristics of Europe
* (WG.1) The student will use maps, globes, satellite images, photographs, or diagrams to obtain geographical information about the world’s countries, cities, and environments
* (WG.3) The student will apply the concept of a region by analyzing how cultural characteristics, including the world’s major languages, ethnicities and religions, link or divide regions
* (WG.10) The student will analyze how the forces of conflict and cooperation affect the division and control of the Earth’s surface by explaining and analyzing reasons for the creation of different political divisions

*Assessments:*

* Focus question
* Map quiz
* Baseline data assessment
* Note sheet and student responses to questions during lecture
* Current Events analysis

*Differentiation Strategies:*

* Using video clips, pictures, illustrative stories, written words and examples, the Prezi presentation should help to engage learners and be appropriate for a variety of learner needs. To help support my slower readers, students will have directed note-sheets so they will be able to pick up on the essential points behind why there was and continues to be conflict in Europe. For my more advanced learners, I will try to pepper in some more esoteric questions (verbally) that will push them to use their higher order thinking skills to respond.
* The current events discussion will have pictures to help students see and picture what they are reading about and we are discussing. To help students process the information and focus on the important points they will have their 5 Ws (Who, What, Where, Why, When) to guide their reading and discussion. To push the more advanced students, I will incorporate a critical thinking question about the nature of the Ukraine’s relationship with both Western Europe and Russia.

*Lesson Outline***:**

* Focus Question: What two early civilizations are considered the birthplaces of Western Culture? Greece and Rome (2-3 min).
* Collect students’ focuses and then pass out the map quiz. Map quiz (10-15 minutes)
* When students complete the map quiz they will pick up and complete their baseline data assessment (an ongoing assessment to measure students map reading skills)(5-10 minutes).
* After the baseline data assessment, I’ll pass out the directed note-sheet and begin the Conflicts of Europe lesson which will cover (30-35 minutes):
  + Multi-ethnic nature of Europe and close proximity of countries to one another
  + Long history of conflict (touch upon what students had done in the timeline station)
  + Religious differences (Protestant/Catholic/Eastern Orthodox/Muslim in former Yugoslavia)
  + Battles for territory (England & France/ Alsace-Lorraine/Napoleonic Wars/Hitler invasion)
  + Empires and Imperialism
  + Modern and ongoing conflicts
  + What is currently happening in the Ukraine to transition into the current events discussion…
* Current events discussion (20-25 minutes) - students will look at what is happening In the Ukraine from the perspective of both the western European countries and Russia with the articles “EU imposes Ukraine sanctions after deadly Kiev clashes” (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-26280710>) and “Ukraine, as viewed from Moscow” (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-26293446>). As a class, we will discuss Who these complementary articles are about, What is occurring in both articles, Where is this happening, Why is this happening- with considerations about the differing motivations of both sides (Russia and Western Europe), and When is this happening
* Wrap-up: Inform students that their Europe test is coming up next week on March 5th & 6th (Wednesday/Thursday) and that if they missed the intro to Europe notes or the stations activity they can find these things on their SCORE page. Additionally, I’ll let students know that their interims will be going out this Friday (2/28).

**Day Four**

*SOLs Addressed:*

* (WG.4) The student will locate and analyze physical, economic, and cultural characteristics of Europe
* (WG.1) The student will use maps, globes, satellite images, photographs, or diagrams to obtain geographical information about the world’s countries, cities, and environments; Create and compare political, physical, and thematic maps;
* (WG.2) The student will analyze how selected physical and ecological processes shape the Earth’s surface by: describing how humans influence the environment and are influenced by it; explaining how technology affects one’s ability to modify the environment and adapt to it
* (WG.3) The student will apply the concept of a region by analyzing how cultural characteristics, including the world’s major languages, ethnicities and religions, link or divide regions

*Assessment:*

* Focus question
* Europe Book-Look Activity
* What country does this belong to?

*Differentiation strategies:*.

* The Europe Book-Look Activity will be available on students score page, so my slower readers and students who have trouble focusing on reading and writing will have the opportunity to complete this assignment with online supports in addition to a traditional textbook. Additionally, the Book-Look Activity will have leveled questions from lower –level identification to critical thinking short answers questions to reach a range of learners.
* The wrap-up game is going to be a matching game on the Smart board that will incorporate pictures, written words, and spoken descriptions.

*Lesson Outline:*

* Focus Question: What country was the birthplace of the industrial revolution?
* Europe Book-Look:
  + Students will use their textbook (with the potential for online materials to supplement the textbook) to complete an activity packet filled with word puzzles, multiple choice questions, matching, fill in the blank, and short answer questions. This packet will serve as a supplement to the study-guide as it will bring everything students need to know about the unit together.
* Wrap Up: “Europe Matching Game”:
  + Matching game where students will match each major European landmark, cultural icon, city, physical features with the appropriate country
  + Remind students that their Europe test will be on March 5th and 6th (depending on their block) and that if they are missing any assignments that would help them study, they can find those assignments on their SCORE page. Hand out interims.

**Day Five**

*SOLs Addressed:*

* (WG.4) The student will locate and analyze physical, economic, and cultural characteristics of Europe
* (WG.1) The student will use maps, globes, satellite images, photographs, or diagrams to obtain geographical information about the world’s countries, cities, and environments; Create and compare political, physical, and thematic maps;
* (WG.2) The student will analyze how selected physical and ecological processes shape the Earth’s surface by: describing how humans influence the environment and are influenced by it; explaining how technology affects one’s ability to modify the environment and adapt to it.
* (WG.3) The student will apply the concept of a region by analyzing how cultural characteristics, including the world’s major languages, ethnicities and religions, link or divide regions
* (WG.5) The student will compare and contrast the distribution, growth rates, and characteristics of human population in terms of settlement pattern and the location of natural and capital resources
* (WG.9)The student will analyze the global patterns and networks of economic interdependence by
* (WG.10) The student will analyze how the forces of conflict and cooperation affect the division and control of the Earth’s surface by explaining and analyzing reasons for the creation of different political divisions

*Assessments:*

* Focus Question
* Matching Game (for those that missed activity because of snow)
* Review Game
* Studyguide

*Differentiation Strategies:*

* Students will be able to use their notes, maps, quiz, Book Look, and Stations Activity as supports while the play the review game which is a multi-media ‘Jeopardy’ style game. The ‘Jeopardy’ game incorporates pictures, text, and graphics to help engage students in the review and remember the content covered. Additionally, students will be interacting with the Smart board (if it works) and the content as they choose topics and content within the game.
* Jeopardy is played in groups which allows students work together and provides an additional support for students who struggle with organization and reading and challenges advanced students with the leadership role of ‘spokesperson’ where they need to be able to analyze their teams strengths and weaknesses to succeed in the game.
* The Jeopardy game, matching game and study guide will also be on Score (students online resource page) so they can interact with these review items on their own and use their computers as a personal resource to look up things that were difficult to process

*Lesson Outline:*

* Focus Question: What two ancient civilizations are considered the birthplace of western culture?
* Europe Matching Game:
  + I will break each class into 5 teams by their current seating arrangements and have the students clump their desks together to form a more cohesive team cluster. Each cluster will need to select a “spokesperson” who will be responsible for keeping teams on task and sharing answers
  + This game will be completed “survey style” where each team spokesperson will hold up the letter their team thinks is the best match for each physical, cultural, and economic feature
  + Students will play a matching game to help reinforce the relationships between the physical, cultural, and economic features and their location
* Jeopardy Review Game**:**
  + Staying in their 5 teams, students will play a “Jeopardy” style review game. Team spokespeople will be responsible for announcing the teams chosen categories and point values and relaying team answers. Additionally, I will pass out study guides and instruct students to highlight on the study guide any questions where students struggle to find the answer or are unable to answer during the review game
  + I will outline and remind students of the rules of Jeopardy and the modifications to the game that I have made, which include:
    - Unlike traditional Jeopardy, responses to the prompts will be turn based. If, however, there is no one on the team that knows the appropriate response to the prompt, I will then open up the “Answer” to the rest of the class for a chance to steal (also unlike regular Jeopardy, there will be no penalty for not supplying the response in the form of a question)
    - Final Jeopardy is a team activity where the team must agree to a wager amount prior to the final Jeopardy Question being revealed
    - Much like regular Jeopardy:
      * Teams will gain points for the correct response and loose points for incorrect responses;
      * As the point values increase, the questions will become commensurately more difficult;
      * There will be multiple categories within the Jeopardy field
      * There will be a timer going for each turn so no team is given endless amounts of time
  + Scores will be totaled and a winner announced. I will wrap-up the game with asking students to take out the piece of paper where they had written down the questions that they found difficult or missed for the next activity.
* Wrap-Up: Study Guide
  + Students will work on their study guides, particularly focusing on areas where they struggled during the review game- I will monitor student progress throughout the activity and help students who are having problems with specific content
  + Remind students that their test is next block and that they can find their review materials on Score

**Day Six**

*SOLs Addressed:*

* (WG.4) The student will locate and analyze physical, economic, and cultural characteristics of Europe
* (WG.1) The student will use maps, globes, satellite images, photographs, or diagrams to obtain geographical information about the world’s countries, cities, and environments; Create and compare political, physical, and thematic maps;
* (WG.2) The student will analyze how selected physical and ecological processes shape the Earth’s surface by: describing how humans influence the environment and are influenced by it; explaining how technology affects one’s ability to modify the environment and adapt to it.
* (WG.3) The student will apply the concept of a region by analyzing how cultural characteristics, including the world’s major languages, ethnicities and religions, link or divide regions
* (WG.5) The student will compare and contrast the distribution, growth rates, and characteristics of human population in terms of settlement pattern and the location of natural and capital resources
* (WG.9)The student will analyze the global patterns and networks of economic interdependence by
* (WG.10) The student will analyze how the forces of conflict and cooperation affect the division and control of the Earth’s surface by explaining and analyzing reasons for the creation of different political divisions

*Assessments:*

* Focus Question
* Unit Test

*Lesson Description:*

* Focus Question: (introduces the Asia Unit)
* Summative assessment of student comprehension and knowledge of the Europe Unit and continuation of map and graphic reading skills based questions
* Begin the transition to the Asia Unit (South, East, and Southeast Asia) with Asia Maps

**Data Analysis**

From the data I collected comparing the pre-assessment to the post assessment (in addition to student performance on the various other assessments that were implemented throughout the unit), it was clear that student learning headed in a positive direction over the course of the unit. Below you will find a chart and bar-graph detailing individual student gains from the pre-assessment to the post assessment:



The following chart and line graph illustrate student growth by ethnic group:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Ethnicity | Pre-Assessment | Post Assessment |
| Black | 35% | 75% |
| Hispanic | 33% | 67% |
| White | 22% | 77% |
| Multi-Ethnic | 50% | 63% |

Below is a chart and line graph illustrating the growth of my special student populations compared to the entire class (which I thought of as the ‘control group’, in this instance):

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Population | Pre-Assessment | Post Assessment |
| 504s | 0% | 75% |
| Low Lexile Score | 19% | 50% |
| Advanced Learners | 38% | 88% |
| Entire Class | 29% | 73% |

Based upon the data, it was clear that students acquired knowledge as a result of this unit with two individual exceptions. Looking at the data of students broken down by ethnicity, the group that exhibited the highest rate of growth were the white students; I believe this may have occurred because most of the lowest scorers on the pre-test were included in this group, while the other ethnicities began with a higher benchmark in place. Examining the growth data of my special populations, it was clear that the extra attention paid to the students with 504s in place made a significant difference, whereas there were modest gains achieved by my lower lexile score students. Individually, there were two students who exhibited no growth between the pre-assessment and the post assessment (and one of the students was within my low lexile score group). After talking with these students, it was clear that the main issue preventing them from exhibiting their learning growth in the final assessment was the format of the final assessment.

During the pre-assessment, students knew I was collecting data and there were not any stakes attached to their performance; for the post assessment, the questions were imbedded within a larger summative assessment that would count as a larger portion of their individual grades. Attaching stakes to the assessment changed the outcome for these students as both students appeared to suffer from anxiety over testing situations. As a result, I worked with the students individually and re-administered the post-assessment without any stakes attached to it and both students exhibited growth from the pre-assessment. Unfortunately, neither of these students has accommodations in place outside of my classroom and they will have to take the SOL test without any individual accommodations.

While I was pleased with student’s overall growth, there was room for remediation and further growth. To further reinforce this unit material, I will conduct a post-test analysis as part of the next unit and target areas where students had particular difficulties. Moving forward, I will try to incorporate more review into future units and adapt assessments to accommodate learner needs from the outset, including: administer more questions in a verbal fashion for my lower lexile students, allow my students with test taking anxiety to complete assessments outside of the traditional setting (in the hall, individually during student flex time, or after class), provide scratch paper for my students who need to write down questions in order to arrive at answers, and have students who struggle with comprehending what a test question is asking write on their tests (as opposed to simply using a scantron) so they can visually eliminate choices that are not correct. Finally, in future units I will incorporate even more diverse assessments and try to differentiate lessons and assessments to better meet individual learner needs.

**Reflection**

After completing this unit of instruction, there were obviously some things that worked well, and things that did not work well. From student engagement and responses during the first two lessons in the unit (the computer lab introduction to the unit and the stations activity), these lessons were clearly successful and students illustrated their understanding on all of the assessments related to that material. Both lessons required students to take a more active role in their own learning, and the stations activity required students to work together and support each other’s learning. I think the more authentic and engaging nature of those plans had a positive impact on student learning. After those lessons, the review day lesson also seemed to be a very effective part of the unit. During the review activities, students were engaged and actively participating; students highlighted areas where they were struggling, asked targeted questions regarding material they did not understand, and discussed

Regarding the less successful aspects of the unit, one of the weakest days in the entire unit was day three. This lesson was the only lesson to feature direct instruction, and student engagement in the lesson was down. Unfortunately, I did not appropriately chunk the material for the students on this day and they were clearly tuning out as they were being bombarded with information. As a result, I modified the next lesson and included a review of the previous day’s material and an exit slip to see where students required additional support with the material. This strategy appeared to be effective as students performed well on the exit slip and did well with this section of material on the summative assessment. After completing the impact study, it was clear that lessons that were centered on student performance and required real participation were the most effective lessons.