



# Walk a Mile in My Shoes

Developed by: Michelle M. Davies

Subject: Social studies, personal planning, math

Grade level: Grad 6–7

## Brief overview

Through participating in this lesson, students will learn about the educational opportunities available to people living in a variety of developing and more economically developed countries. Through researching and presenting information, making comparisons with their own opportunities for education and advancement in Canada, critically examining their own perspectives, and reflecting on how it would feel to live in other locations around the globe, students will begin to develop empathy with people living in developing countries. Students will realize, moreover, that their placement in this world is as random as the colour of the Smartie that comes out of the box first, and they will become more aware of the interconnected and interrelated nature of the world. Discussion of education, career opportunities, and lifestyle choices will increase student understanding of the inequities across the globe, and a better understanding of their global brothers and sisters will be fostered.

## Themes

- basic education
- gender equality.

## Time required

Three 40–60 minute classes. This includes the time required to do the research and collate the information. Presentations may extend beyond the three lessons needed to complete the assignment.

## Required materials/equipment

- background information sheet (Appendix one, intended for teacher)
- rubric assessment tool (Appendix two)
- use of a computer lab with internet access, or if this is not available, access to a library
- chart paper or large pieces of cardboard for student groups to use in presenting their findings (a large cardboard box that has been opened up would work. It can be painted or left brown.)
- paper and felt pens to make the charts (lined paper and plain paper)
- a box of Smarties, jelly beans, or other coloured candy
- a folder for each group containing paper and an assessment rubric (see Appendix two)
- paper squares and circles (equal number of each) for distribution to students (one item per student; actual shape is irrelevant, as long as there are only two shapes)

- a large map of the world, preferably the Canadian Geographic/ CIDA *A Developing World* map, or a comprehensive set of encyclopedias.

### **Lesson resources**

- Appendix one: Background information sheet
- Appendix two: Data collection in “Walk a Mile in My Shoes”—Group work self-evaluation

### **Procedure**

#### **Class One**

1. Prepare two bags before the students come to class.
  - Bag 1 is to contain an equal number of paper squares and circles for distribution to students (one shape per student).
  - Bag 2 is to contain coloured candies for distribution to students (one per student). There should be five colours, with the same number of each colour (i.e. if there were 30 students, you would have five different colours and six of each colour.) It is not essential to use candy. Paper or any other coloured substance could be substituted. The concept is really the luck of the draw.
2. As the students come into the class have them pick one item from each bag. Remind them that they are not to eat the candy until they are told to do so.
3. Assign students to groups based on the colour of their candy. Now you will have five groups each with a variety of shapes (either square or round).
4. Review [co-operative learning](#) procedures ensuring that each group has assigned [group roles](#) (reporter, recorder, facilitator, and encourager) to its members.
5. Assign each group a country. This will be their nationality for the next three classes. Have student groups locate their country on the large map at the front of the room. You may choose to give them individual maps of the world and have them locate their country and colour it. Some choices to consider are Afghanistan, Turkey, Finland, France, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Sudan, Japan, and Cuba. Be sure to include a few of the more developed countries in terms of education, like Finland, so there is a good contrast in the presentations and graphs.
6. Students may now eat the candy—if they remember their new identity.
7. Have students number themselves within their groups (one-two-one-two). After they are numbered, tell students that the numbers represent their new gender; the ones are female and the twos are male. The shapes that they chose on their way in the classroom represent their socio-economic status. Explain that that means they have been “born” into a rich or poor family. The squares are rich and the circles are poor. Their new identities are now complete.

8. Have the students record their new lots in life on pieces of paper. Give each group a folder and assign the group facilitator to be the keeper of the information. This folder will be handed in at the end of the project. In the folder, there will be an assessment rubric. Bring the students' attention to it at this time and go over all the terminology so they fully understand all the words, and so that they will have a good understanding of how they will be graded.
9. Explain to students that not all people in the world are as fortunate as we are in Canada to have access to free public education. Point out that in a great many places, little or no value is put on girls having an education at all. Facilitate a class discussion about the relative merits of education and the benefits to society when the majority of the population has a basic education. Have students brainstorm all the jobs they can think of and list them on the chalkboard or overhead. Estimate the level of education a person would need to do the various jobs. This will give the students an idea of the value of education. For supplementary information, see Appendix one, background information sheet.

Questions to include in class discussion:

- How many jobs are available here to people without the most basic education?
  - Is there a need for doctors and nurses in every part of the world?
  - What other professions are necessary to have in a society?
10. Tell the students that they are going to be researching their assigned country in terms of:
    - how the society values education (evident from the number of educated people)
    - what the culture says about the roles of women and girls
    - what options are open to females and males in these societies.

A brief discussion about the roles of women and men in Canada and the options open to girls and boys here would be appropriate. Explain that the United Nations is very concerned about several issues concerning social justice and is trying to make the world a fairer and more equal place to live. Two of the goals for the new millennium are to achieve universal primary education, and to promote gender equality and empower women. Canada is in favour of these goals. A discussion about why Canada has an opinion about what goes on in the rest of the world is critical at this point.

11. Lead students through a guided discussion to identify key questions for the understanding of a given country's education system. List the questions on the board and have students copy them and put the into their group folders as a guide to their research. Title the list of questions, "How important is education in [group's assigned country]?"

### **Some key questions**

- What are the major industries in the country?
- What jobs does this industry create?
- How much education does a person need to do these various jobs?
- How many girls go to primary school, secondary school, and university?

- How about the boys (same questions)?
- What is the literacy rate of the country?
- What might be some reasons for this literacy rate? What cultural and other factors should be taken into consideration?
- What is the role of girls who do not go to school?
- Is there a war in this country right now?
- What is the poverty rate?
- Do rich kids go to school more than poor kids?
- Imagine living your life with your newly assigned identity. What would a typical day look like? How would it feel to walk a mile in those shoes?

### **Class two**

#### 1. Small group work

Ask students meet in their small groups to divide the key questions up among themselves so that each student tackles two or three questions.

#### 2. Individual work

Arrange for students go to the computer lab or the library to research their assigned questions.

### **Class three**

#### 1. Small group work

- Ask students to return to their small groups to share the outcomes of their research. Remind students of [co-operative learning](#) procedures, and check that all groups have assigned group roles (facilitator, recorder, reporter, encourager, etc.) to their members.
- Distribute large pieces of chart paper or cardboard and marking pens to the recorder in each of the small groups. The recorder is to record the group's proceedings, titling the paper, "How important is education in [group's assigned country]?" As each group member reports to the group in turn, their key questions are to be written down and the key research findings and discussion points recorded beneath them (or beside them, in chart form). This paper will be used both as a record of group proceedings and as a visual reference later in the session when group reporters report out to the whole class.
- With the facilitator guiding the proceedings, each group member is to report back to the group in turn, sharing their research findings and facilitating a brief discussion on their assigned key questions.
- The group is to prepare a presentation to share this information with the rest of the class. The presentations could include graphs or reports or group reporters might simply present an overview of their charts.

#### 2. Report out to the whole class

- Each group is to post its chart in a position visible to the entire class.
- Using the group chart as a visual reference, group reporters are to present their group's findings to the whole class.
- The audience is to listen actively and take notes when other students are giving their reports.

- Conclude the session with a class discussion about the big picture of global education. A list of the millennium goals of the United Nations ([www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sdgoverview/mdg\\_goals.html](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sdgoverview/mdg_goals.html)) and Sustainability Goals ([www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sdgoverview/post-2015-development-agenda.html](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sdgoverview/post-2015-development-agenda.html)) could be posted and discussed with reference to the new information the students have discovered.

**Assessment strategies:** See Appendix Two for a sample assessment tool

**Suggestions to extend the lesson if appropriate:**

- Integration with mathematics is possible. By graphing the statistics of each country, and Canada as well, students could create a visual representation of educational opportunities in communities around the world.
- Pen pal exchanges with children around the world could link the language arts and computer skills areas of the curriculum.
- Exploration of additional aspects of life in the various countries is a natural extension of this lesson.
- Other global education lessons such as the Fair-Trade Chocolate would be a natural spin off.

## Background Information

Nearly one billion people in the world are illiterate; about two-thirds of these people are women. To be considered literate, a person must have about a grade five level of education. It is interesting to note that worldwide, the literacy rate for people age 15 and over is about 75% for females and almost 90% for males.

One of the millennium goals of the United Nations, supported by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), is to achieve universal primary education to ensure that children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. School enrolment world-wide has increased over the last 15 years, however, we still have 103.5 million illiterate children, the majority being girls who have never been inside a school, and 800 million adults who cannot read or write.

Canada has made the education of girls an international development priority. Studies show that girls who are educated marry later in life, have fewer and healthier children, and are better able to care for their families. Women who are educated have more control over their lives than those who cannot read or write. They are more able to look after their own affairs and are not reliant on men for everything they need to survive.

Since 2000, Canada has quadrupled its investment in basic education for developing countries. The statistics for North America and Western Europe show a literacy rate of around 98% for people 15 years and over. The most impoverished parts of the world, educationally speaking, are sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia.

### Reference

Canadian Geographic and Canadian International Development Agency (2004), *A Developing World*.

This map is highly recommended; a paper copy can be ordered from Canadian Geographic or an interactive version of it can be accessed at

[www.cangeo.ca/worldmap/cida/cidaworldmap.aspx?resolution=1152x864](http://www.cangeo.ca/worldmap/cida/cidaworldmap.aspx?resolution=1152x864).

### Data Collection in Walk a Mile in My Shoes: Group work self-evaluation

Each group should keep the following criteria in mind when doing this project. You will give yourselves a mark, and at the end of the project you will discuss it with your teacher who will also use this rubric to give you your mark.

As you go through each stage, discuss each performance element, decide on what mark you all deserve and record it on this sheet. If you can circle Level 3 then you will get three points.

Level 2 is worth two points and Level 1 is worth one point. Be sure you know what all the words in this chart mean before you start.

Performance element	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
<b>Choosing data collection method</b>	Decides collaboratively (together) how to efficiently gather data.	Needs assistance from other students when deciding how to efficiently gather data.	Requires teacher's help in choosing how to efficiently gather data.
<b>Data gathering</b>	Gathers necessary data correctly. All information has been found either online or in a reference book and relates to the topic.	Gathers necessary data but may make some errors in the collection. Some information is of little relevance, and may not be related to topic.	Consistently makes errors in data collection or collects unnecessary (or incorrect) data. Lack of relevant information.
<b>Data recording</b>	Records data with consistent accuracy.	Records data, but some errors are present. Errors do not alter the conclusion.	Records data haphazardly, resulting in an altered conclusion.
<b>Organization and communication of data</b>	Organizes data into a format that can be used to effectively share the information with others.	Organizes data in an adequate manner to sufficiently share the information with others.	Is unable to organize data into a format to share information with others.
<b>Conclusions</b>	Can make statements about the data collected using her or his own words and examples.	Is somewhat able to make statements about the data collected using her or his own words or examples.	Is unable to make statements about the data collected using her or his own words and examples

<b>Performance element</b>	<b>Level 3</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 1</b>
<b>Recognition of UN millennium goals</b>	Can explain the millennium goals—to achieve universal primary education, and promote gender equality and empower women.	Can recognize the millennium goals—to achieve universal primary education and to promote gender equality and empower women.	Is unaware of the millennium goals.
<b>Applications and possible actions</b>	Can apply gathered data to new ideas and articulate them. Has at least one idea for making the global situation better.	Can read the data and articulate the injustices in educational opportunities around the world.	Is unclear as to what the data means and has no idea of how to apply it to the world.