Predicting Patterns in Leadership

Mark Johnson
Concordia International School Shanghai
Shanghai, China

Grade Level:
6 – 8, 9-12

Objectives:
At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be able to:

.   Discuss ideas of geographic grouping and historical periodization.

.   Identify geographic and chronological patterns in the list of the 100 most influential leaders in world history.

.   Pose and defend hypotheses as to why patterns exist in the list.

Guiding Question:
What patterns emerge from a close analysis of the list of the 100 most influential world leaders? What accounts for these patterns?

Connections to Common Core:
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.8: .valuate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9: Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

Connections to C3 Framework:
D2.His.6.9-12. Analyze the ways in which the perspective of those writing history shaped the history that they produced.

D2.His.8.9-12. Explain how the perspectives of people in the present shape interpretations of the past.

D2.His.8.9-12. Analyze how current interpretations of the past are limited by the extent to which available historical sources represent perspectives of people at the time.

D2.His.16.9-12. Integrate evidence from multiple relevant sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.

D2.His.17.9-12. Critique the central arguments in secondary works of history on related topics in multiple media in terms of their historical accuracy.

D2.His.1.3-5. Create and use a chronological sequence of related events to compare developments that happened at the same time.

D2.His.1.6-8. Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts.

D2.Geo.1.9.12. Use geospatial and related technologies to create maps to display and explain spatial patterns of cultural and environmental characteristics.

Documents Used:

The only source needed is the access to the NHD 100 Leaders website
        (www.100leaders.org)

Lesson Description:

Overview: The list of the 100 most influential leaders in world history is, by its very nature, debatable. Groups of students will predict what they think will be the geographic dispersal and the chronological distribution of the 100 leaders. Following their predictions, students will then access the list and assess how their predictions compared with the list generated by the NHD panel. Finally, students will analyze and discuss trends they identify in the geographic/chronological distribution of the list.

Time: Two 60-minute lessons.

Materials:
- Students, in small groups, will need large, blank world maps and large sheets of paper to create timelines.
- Eventually, after the brainstorming and prediction phases of the lesson, students will need access to the list of the 100 most influential leaders in world history, as generated by the NHD team.

Lesson Preparation:
- The teacher needs to be familiar with the NHD 100 most influential leaders in world history (however, students should not have visited the list yet since the activity is designed for students to predict patterns that will emerge in the list).
- Copy large, blank world maps (two maps for each small group of students)
- Large sheets of paper for students to create timelines (two per small group of students)

Procedure:
- After the teacher has introduced the idea that NHD has generated a list of the 100 most influential leaders of world history, students will make predictions regarding their best guesses on the geographic and chronological distribution of these individuals on the list.
    - o Small groups of students will be tasked to predict and indicate on large blank maps the geographic locale for the 100 (e.g., Our group predicts that 11% of the final list will be from North America).

- Small groups of students will be tasked to predict and indicate on a timeline the chronological patterns for the 100 (e.g., Our group predicts that 8% of the final list will be from the 19th century, CE).
- Ideally, students will not have visited the NHD site on the 100 yet, thus keeping their predictions free from influence.

. **Option 1**: Students brainstorm, discuss, and generate their own geographic regions and historical eras to apply to the activity:
- Before beginning their brainstorming to predict which percentage of the 100 will be from each region/time period, students are given 10-20 minutes to generate their region/time period. Each small group should have at least seven distinct regions/time periods (the teacher circulates informally discussing with students their categories and prompting them with ideas as needed).
- Part of this exercise is to give students an opportunity to see that geographic and chronological segments and boundaries are, in some ways, human constructs. Instead of imposing a periodization or geographical framework for the students, let them struggle to determine their own chronological periods and geographic regions in which to place their predictions.

. **Option 2**: Define for students the geographic regions and periods of history:
- Periodization: Teachers can choose various styles of periodization to use (some possible choices are given below). Teachers can involve the class in a discussion of periodization, helping students to realize that periodization categories are often arrived at through a particular perspective and civilizational orientation. Given that the list of the 100 most influential leaders is a list of leaders in world history, students should recognize that periodization schema that are more oriented to one geographic or civilizational perspective may not fit perfectly with other views of eras/chronologies.
  - Ancient History (3600 BCE to 500 CE)
  - Post-Classical (500 CE to 1500 CE)
  - Early Modern (1500 CE to 1750 CE)
  - Modern (1750 CE to present)
- Teachers can chose to apply the following periods or sub-divide as needed:
  - Medieval Period (5th century CE to 15th century CE)
  - Renaissance, Reformation, Age of Exploration (14th century to 17th century)
  - The Modern Period can be further subdivided into the Mid-Modern (1750 CE to 1914 CE) and the Contemporary Period (1914 CE to present)

- 19th century
- 20th/21st Centuries
  - o Geographic Regions: Teachers can choose to have students use standard (continental) geographic regions to apply to their predictions of the geographic dispersal of leaders. Alternatively, teachers may choose regions that break out of the continental approach. Some suggested geographic regions might include:
    - Sub-Saharan Africa
    - The Middle East and North Africa
    - The Mediterranean Basin
    - The Atlantic World (west Africa, western Europe, eastern North America, the Caribbean, and the eastern portion of South America)
    - North, Central, South America
    - East Asia
    - Central Asia
    - South Asia
    - Southeast Asia
    - Oceania/Australia/New Zealand

- **Making Predictions**: Next, the students discuss their predictions regarding the breakdown of the 100 most influential leaders in history as grouped into the student created regions/time periods (Option 1) or the regions/time periods distributed by the teacher (Option 2). Rather than to try to name individuals, students should instead look at the categories broadly and think in terms of patterns and eras of great change or possibility for leadership. Students should indicate which percentage of leaders they think will come from each region/time period.
  - o At this point, if there are multiple groups that have covered geography and chronology, have them visit each other's map/timeline predictions and observe how their predictions differ from or are similar to the other groups.
- The students should access the list of the 100 most influential leaders, as presented on the NHD website. As this is a brief introductory or review activity the students are scanning the biographies of the leaders, looking for geographic and chronological information, rather than exhaustively reading each bio. The students closely note the geographic region or time period of each leader, plotting these data points on new blank maps or timelines.
- The students compare their initial predictions with the results as plotted from the NHD list. How much overlap was there between their predictions and the NHD list of 100 leaders? Where/when were the greatest areas of similarity? Where/when were the greatest differences?

.   Finally, students analyze patterns that they see in the list and make assertions as to why they think these patterns exist. These assertions can be expressed either in written format, in class discussion, or both (see Assessment Materials below).

Assessment Materials:

.   Following the predictions and in-class, small group based assessment of how their predictions compared to the official list, students will reflect on the activity by each preparing a short written piece to prepare them for an in-class discussion of the activity:

   o   Are there certain geographic areas or chronological eras that seem more heavily represented in the official list than others? In your opinion, what reasons may account for this?

   o   How/why might the patterns that you have identified be controversial to some?

   o   What questions do you have about the geographic/chronological dispersal of the list? What resources would you need to answer these questions?

   o   The teacher might consider having students access the biographical information of the panel that generated the list of the 100 most influential leaders and consider how/if the make-up of the panel has any bearing on the patterns that emerged.

.   Note: The goal is active, engaged, thought-provoking interaction. This is entire lesson asks students to take risks, from their initial creation of the geographic parameters and chronological periods, to their predictions, and finally to their hypotheses as to what and why patterns may exist. For these reasons, I recommend an informal assessment of student engagement, active participation, listening skills, and contribution to their group efforts rather than a formal, graded assessment of their findings and content mastery.

Methods for Extension:

.   After generating predictions regarding the geography or chronology of the 100, students could also generate additional modes of categorization to analyze the 100. For instance, they could analyze the following

   o   What was the average age of the 100 when they made the impact for which they are most well known?

   o   What field/professions do the 100 represent?

   o   How many of the 100 died a natural death?

   o   How many of the 100 suffered trauma before their 20th birthday?

   o   What was the average level of education attained by the 100?

Adaptations:

.   As the activities of creating the geographic regions and chronological categories, as well as brainstorming the predicted breakdowns are not heavily reliant on

reading ability, the basic activity can be done by grade levels from 6-12 and all ability levels.

. The evaluation of the list of the 100 most influential world leaders also does not require extensive reading abilities as the students' interaction with the list is not deep reading for this activity; rather, quick scanning to determine the geographic location of the leader and his/her life span.

. Therefore, this lesson should be accessible for a broad range of learners. The final assessment of writing to identify and account for patterns could be adapted to a class discussion, a shared group presentation, or a less formal writing assessment.