OVERVIEW
Engaging youth in discussions about family planning is difficult for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the general discomfort adolescents have talking with adults about sex. Sometimes it can be easier to talk about uncomfortable issues when the spotlight is turned on someone else’s situation. This lesson plan offers that opportunity by embedding health information in a social studies lesson.

By focusing on clips from the film Motherland, which features patients at a public maternity hospital in the Philippines, students can take a step back from the topic and learn about it with some critical distance. The lesson provides students with a way to examine policy and practice and learn about birth control methods, without getting mired in controversial debate, personal religious beliefs or their own embarrassment.

POV offers a lending library of DVDs that you can borrow anytime during the school year—FOR FREE! Get started by joining our Community Network.

OBJECTIVES
In this lesson, students will:
• Write a pamphlet that demonstrates knowledge of birth control methods
• Consider the factors that influence family planning strategies and review the benefits and drawbacks of various birth control methods for specific situations
• Learn how a predominantly Catholic country, the Philippines, approaches family planning

GRADE LEVELS: 9-12

SUBJECT AREAS
English/Language Arts
Global Studies
Health
Research Skills

MATERIALS
• Film clips from Motherland and equipment on which to show them
• Internet access for research

ESTIMATED TIME NEEDED
Approx. 70 minutes plus homework

FILM CLIPS
Video clips provided with this lesson are from Motherland.
Clip 1: “Fabella Memorial Hospital” (1:40 min.)  
The clip begins at 6:30 with a pan of the hospital ward and ends at 8:10 after Lea says, “I have to buy one.”  
The clip provides an initial feel for hospital conditions and introduces Lea. The clip also shows that patients are expected to provide their own blankets in the hospital.

Clip 2: “Unemployed Husbands” (2:40 min.)  
The clip begins at 37:20 and ends at 40:00, after Lea says she doesn’t have enough money to buy milk.  
As Lea talks with another mother about how her husband doesn’t have the 35 cents for transportation, we learn that she is 25 years old, already has a 2-year-old child, can’t afford diapers for her premature newborn twins and must breastfeed because she can’t afford milk.

Clip 3: “Lerma” (2:30 min.)  
The clip starts at 19:20, as Lerma begins to share her story with the other mothers. It ends at 21:50 after Lerma says, “It’s really hard.”  
As a counterpoint to Lea’s story, we meet Lerma, who has had seven children and who has chosen to undergo a tubal ligation to prevent future pregnancies. She jokes about being like a virgin again or being able to be promiscuous because she can’t get pregnant. She also talks about having so many kids that she can’t give love to them all.

Clip 4: “Dads” (3:10 min.)  
The clip starts at 32:40 and ends at 35:50. It shows a conversation between two fathers.  
Visiting fathers of premature babies hold their babies against their bodies to keep the infants warm because the hospital doesn’t have incubators. They talk about the expense of having sick babies and their lack of basics services, like electricity and running water, in their homes.

Clip 5: “Family Planning” (4:05 min.)  
The clip begins at 25:10 with a shot of a sign designating the “Family Planning” counseling area. It ends at 29:15 with a teen mother signing a consent form to have an IUD inserted.  
We see a counselor discussing birth control options with a couple of different mothers. Options are determined by circumstances. A woman with only one child is not permitted to choose tubal ligation, and pills and injections are contraindicated for women who are breastfeeding. IUDs are recommended to several women. One young woman resists because her mother opposes birth control. Another expresses fear of pain.

Clip 6: “Family Planning Continued” (2:30 min.)  
The clip begins at 1:07:15 with a teen mother looking at an IUD. It ends at 1:09:45, after the nurse says, “Once it happens, it can happen again.”  
A nurse tries to convince a resistant teen mother to get an IUD. The clip also touches on
the issue of domestic violence.

ACTIVITY

Step 1: Introduction
Introduce the activity to students by saying something like the following:

"Nearly every nation in the world has some sort of family planning policy. What is the definition of "family planning"?"

Fill in the definition as needed (deciding when to have children and how many to have) and note that government family planning policies can cover a range of issues, including legality of abortion, who should pay for birth control and education methods. Then ask and briefly discuss: Why do governments care about family planning? What is their interest in the matter? Answers might include: keeping mothers and children healthy, which lowers medical costs; making sure children are wanted and can be supported, which lowers the risk of abuse or neglect; and even a desire to promote social goals, such as gender equality.

Let students know that in this activity they are going to look at a family planning policy in one country and see an example of how the policy plays out in real life. That country is the Philippines. Solicit what students already know about the Philippines and fill in gaps as needed. In addition to location, students should know basic demographic information.

For example, the total population of the Philippines is just under 103 million; more than 80 percent of the population identifies as Catholic; nearly everyone is literate; more than one fifth of the population lives in poverty—in rural areas that figure jumps to one third; the unemployment rate for people aged 15 to 25 is above 16 percent. Additional information is available at: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rp.html

Step 2: Family Planning Policy
Either individually or in small groups, have students read a summary of the current official family planning policy in the Philippines: doh.gov.ph/family-planning. Ask them to list its major features. Briefly discuss whether they were surprised by anything they read. Throughout this lesson, be clear that students are not being asked to agree or disagree with any particular family planning strategy; their job is to understand such strategies and how they are being implemented in the Philippines.

Step 3: Film Viewing Prep
To help students connect policy to real life, introduce students to the documentary Motherland. Let them know they will see clips of a public hospital serving poor mothers in the Philippines. Make it clear that the people they will see represent a significant minority in the island nation. Like all nations, the Philippines has a diverse population, and students should take care not to overgeneralize.

Before you begin showing the clips, tell students they will hear references to certain types of birth control and they need to be clear about what each term means:

- tubal ligation
- IUD
- the pill
• injection (Depo-Provera)

Step 4: Viewing Clips

Show Clips 1 through 4, pausing between each to check in with students about what they noticed, whether there was anything they could relate to their own experiences and what questions they have. Note that the purpose of viewing these clips is primarily to get a picture of who is being treated at this hospital and the issues they face.

Show Clips 5 and 6. These are explicitly about the family planning information shared by hospital staff. After the final clip, ask if there are any forms of birth control they know about that weren’t mentioned in the film (e.g., the film doesn’t really talk about abstinence as a strategy, nor does it reference implants or vasectomies). Wrap up the discussion by asking what features of the family planning policy that they read seem to address effectively the needs of the people they saw.

ASSIGNMENT: To provide students an opportunity to synthesize and personalize what they have learned, pose this scenario: The hospital in the film wants to develop a family planning pamphlet that it can send home with patients or provide to visitors. Their job is to write that pamphlet. It can recommend whatever each student thinks is the best advice (so, for example, students who are strongly in favor of abstinence-only policies can focus on abstinence). The only requirement is that the information they provide be accurate.

Tell students they will be evaluated on the accuracy of their information, clarity of writing and effective use of graphic features (like titles, sub-headings, illustrations and breakout boxes). As an option, you might also assign more advanced students to write cover letters explaining how their pamphlets reflect the directives and goals of the official Philippines family planning policy.

EXTENSIONS/ADAPTATIONS

Research and debate current U.S. policy denying monetary aid for family planning to any organization that performs abortions.

Write position papers on the benefits and drawbacks of abstinence-only sex education as a strategy for U.S. schools.

Do a media literacy analysis of a TV series featuring teen parents or pregnant teens. Discuss the options and consequences portrayed. Compare the depiction in *Motherland* with the depiction in the TV show.

Have students investigate the family planning methods available to them, along with each option’s associated costs. Which are covered by insurance and which are not? How is each obtained? What are the major benefits and drawbacks of each method? Consider inviting a local medical professional to class to answer questions.

RESOURCES

*Motherland*
http://www.pbs.org/pov/motherland/ - The POV website for the film offers information about the film, a discussion guide with additional activity and resource ideas and more.

POV: Media Literacy Questions for Analyzing POV Films
http://www.pbs.org/pov/educators/media-literacy.php
This list of questions provides a useful starting point for leading rich discussions that challenge students to think critically about documentaries.

Family Planning – Philippines

Philippines Statistics Authority
https://psa.gov.ph/tags/family-planning - Government statistics related to family planning

Philippines Department of Health
www.doh.gov.ph/family-planning - Summary of the government’s family planning policy

Family Planning 2020
www.familyplanning2020.org/entities/152 - Updates on implementation of family planning efforts in the Philippines

Family Planning Organization of the Philippines
www.fpop1969.org/ - Reproductive health service provider and advocacy group that provides educational information related to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

VOA: Challenges to Family Planning
www.voanews.com/a/anniversary-of-philippines-family-planning-law-finds-challenges/2922591.html - News report featuring Fabella Memorial Hospital summarizing government efforts to promote free family planning services for the poor and religious opposition to those efforts in this majority Catholic nation

Family Planning - General

Kaiser Family Foundation
http://kff.org/global-health-policy/fact-sheet/the-u-s-government-and-international-family-planning-reproductive-health-efforts/ - Global statistics related to family planning and an excellent summary of U.S. efforts to support family planning initiatives in the developing world

Guttmacher Institute
www.guttmacher.org – Research and statistics on family planning in the U.S.

STANDARDS

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects
(http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI_ELA%20Standards.pdf)

SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups and teacher-led) with diverse partners, texts and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.

Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary and techniques such as metaphor, simile and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.

Content Knowledge: [http://www2.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp](http://www2.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp) a compilation of content standards and benchmarks for K-12 curriculum by McREL (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning).

Language Arts, Standard 1: Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process.
Language Arts, Standard 2: Uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing.
Language Arts, Standard 8: Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes.
Language Arts, Standard 9: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Faith Rogow, Ph.D., is the co-author of The Teacher’s Guide to Media Literacy: Critical Thinking in a Multimedia World (Corwin, 2012) and past president of the National Association for Media Literacy Education. She has written discussion guides and lesson plans for more than 250 independent films.