More than 100 students descended on Arkansas Tech University on Tuesday, bringing a little culture with them.

The students were participants in the Russellville High School Model United Nations and represented six schools from across the state.

Paul Gray, advisor for RHS Model UN, said the event, which was for sixth through ninth grades, served as a learning opportunity for many schools.

"This gives them a chance to learn some things before they compete at the high school or college level," Gray said. "Our students have been giving them some tips and hints throughout the day, and that's definitely something you won't see at a higher level of competition."

The students represented delegations from about 20 countries. They wrote, debated and voted on resolutions in various committees throughout the day before bringing the resolutions before the General Assembly.

Delegates met in various committees, beginning at 9:30 a.m. Committees included Special Political, Legal, Economic and Social, Cultural and Humanitarian and Security Council.

Schools represented included Russellville Junior High, Pulaski Academy, Huntsville, Sheridan, Pangburn and Caddo Hills.

Marci Burnett is the Model UN advisor for RJH. She said the experience was good for her students.

"This is really a time for them to learn," Burnett said. "It will prepare them for next year, when they're competing against other high school students."

Twelve ninth-graders represented RJH, Burnett said.

Nancy Schaefer, seventh-grade world cultures teacher from Pulaski Academy, said the event was her first exposure to Model UN.

"I'm so impressed," Schaefer said. "The students do it all themselves. They prepare all of these resolutions, and they went through a great deal of research before they came.

"Our students were so excited about coming, and I'm so excited for them."

Schaefer said Pulaski Academy just began expanding the Model UN activities to seventh and
eighth graders this year. She said she hopes that will result in growth in the program.

"Our students like to debate in my class, so this is a good opportunity for them to put that to a
good use," Schaefer said.

Sandy Roe, advisor from Pangburn, said this was her first year to be involved as well.

She had a group of 10 seventh and eighth graders at the event.

"I think it's wonderful," Roe said. "I think it's an awesome program. The kids learned a lot about
global issues they've probably never thought of before.

"I think the kids have enjoyed it. There are so many of the current global issues they probably
would not have taken the time to research if it were not for this program.

"We will definitely be back next year."

Huntsville's advisor, Lonnie Roach, is a veteran when it comes to Model UN.

"Our high school group has been competing at the Arkansas Model UN in Conway for 16 years,"
Roach said. "I had some freshmen this year who thought this would be a lot of fun. So I thought
that would be great to get them trained for next year.

"Some of them have been researching for months on their topics."

Roach had eight students participating Tuesday.

"I was sold on the Model UN program years ago," he said. "There are so many skills students
learn through it - public speaking, interpersonal skills, writing and parliamentary procedure. It's
such a valuable program."

Gray's high school students prepared and organized the event.