***Teaching about World Religions using the AAR Pedagogical Competencies***

***“Scavenger Hunt”***

The objective of this modified “Scavenger Hunt” is to familiarize you with the World Religions identified in the OACS, understand the key issues and challenges faced with teaching about this content in public schools, and identifying appropriate resources, best practices and skills to effectively teach about World religions. We will use the Pedagogical Competencies outlined in the AAR document

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| ***Pedagogical Competencies*** | ***Explore/Research/Reflect*** | ***Application*** |
| ***Station 1 (20 points)***   * Identify the OACS that focus on World Religions * Be able to find and recognize appropriate resources about religion when needed, on the Internet or in more traditional media. | ***Geography: Statement #8.***  Modern cultural practices and products show the influence of tradition and diffusion, including the impact of major world religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism).  ***Buddhism***  **Web Resources:**  <http://www.buddhanet.net/>  <http://www.pbs.org/edens/thailand/buddhism.htm>  **Adolescent Literature:**  *I am Buddhist*  Quinn, D. P. (1996). I am Buddhist. New York: PowerKids Press.  ***Hinduism***  **Web Resources:**  <http://www.religioustolerance.org/hinduism.htm/>  <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism/>  **Adolescent Literature:**  *The Adventures of Bindi Girl: Diving into the Heart of India*  Reese, Erin. (2012). The Adventures of Bindi Girl: Diving into the Heart of India. New York: Travel and Soul Media.  ***Islam***  **Web Resources:**  <http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/carolrb/islam/geography.html>  <http://www.understanding-islam.com/>  **Adolescent Literature:**  *Ten Things I Hate About Me*  Abdel-Fattah, R. (2009). Ten things I hate about me. New York: Orchard Books.  ***Christianity***  **Web Resources:**  <http://www.religionfacts.com/christianity/index.htm>  <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/>  **Adolescent Literature:**  ***The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe***  Lewis, C. S., & Baynes, P. (1994). The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe. New York: HarperCollins.  ***Judaism***  **Web Resources:**  www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Facts.../About+the+Jewish+Religion.htm  <http://www.religionfacts.com/judaism/beliefs.htm>  **Adolescent Literature:**  ***The Diary of Anne Frank***  Goodrich, F., Hackett, A., & Frank, A. (1956). The Diary of Anne Frank. New York: Random House. | ***Write a short description highlighting key points of each religion***  *Buddhism* follows the three major truths: 1. Life is suffering (aging, disease, death)  2. Suffering is caused by craving and aversion.  3. Suffering can be overcome and happiness can be obtained.  4. Noble 8-fold Path – being moral.  Buddhism is similar to Hinduism. The moral code of Buddhism – not to take life of anything living; not to take anything not freely given; abstain from sexual misconduct and sensual overindulgence; refrain from untrue speech; avoidance of intoxication. Buddha is the symbol of peace and mindfulness of which is respected but not worshipped.  Hinduism is similar to Buddhism and is the belief of reincarnation determined by the law of Karma and the idea that salvation is freedom from a cycle of repeated birth and death (samsara).  *Islam* means peace, submission, and obedience. Islam believes that there is only one God and Muhammad is the prophet of God. A person that follows Islam is Muslim. In Islam the emphasis is on practice rather than belief. The minimum practice is the “Five Pillars of Islam” revealed in the Qur’an:  1. Expression of the belief that there is no God but God and Muhammad is his messenger (shahada).  2. Giving alms to the poor (zakat).  3. Prayer five times a day (salat)  4. Observance of fast during Ramadan (saum)  5. Pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj)  *Christianity* is a religious belief that follows Jesus Christ, the Messiah and Son of God. Jesus was crucified and rose from the dead to forgive the sins of Christians. God is the almighty creator of heaven and earth and judges humans to determine life after death. Christianity is celebrated on December 25th (Christmas – birth of Jesus) and during springtime (Easter – rising from the dead).  *Judaism* believes that God is the almighty creator of heaven and earth and are waiting for the first coming of the Messiah to forgive the sins of humans. Judaism believes that Jesus was a prophet (not the Messiah) like Moses, Abraham, and Isaac. Judaism is celebrated throughout Passover that represents Moses freeing Jews from slavery Egypt. |
| ***Station 2 (15 points)***   * Develop skills in leading students in discussion regarding their religious beliefs and practices, as well as the beliefs and practices of others. * Be aware of examples of best practices in teaching about religion. * Develop the ability to present multiple religious perspectives in a fair or neutral way. | ***Highlight at least 2 key points from the reading that addresses each of these competencies***  1.) It is important to foster a climate of tolerance, respect, and honesty by encouraging students to  • Move away from making generalizations toward more qualified statements—from, for example, “All Christians are intolerant” to “I have heard that Christians are intolerant—is this true?”  • Examine how their judgments may impact others  • Explore ideas and ask questions without fear.  2.) Make it clear to the students that not everyone in the class is expected to agree. But students should understand that the goal is developing awareness and understanding; and accurate representations of traditions reduce the misunderstandings arising from false generalizations, bigotry, or valorization of a particular religious or non-religious worldview. | ***How can incorporate this into your teaching of world religions? Provide at least 1 example for each competency***   1. Set expectations early through modeling and discussion before religion in introduced. This can be incorporated through setting high expectations and utilizing these expectations in all aspects of the classroom and not just during religion. Make it clear to the students that the content is the purpose of religion lessons – not for students to be persuaded to choose a religion. No one religion is deemed better than another. 2. Focus on the traditions of the religions, artifacts, history, and factual information instead of opinions. It is important to collect unbiased materials that do not display one religion in a bad light that could create an unfair or uncomfortable environment. |
| ***Station 3 (15 points)***   * Understand the difference between the secular academic and devotional approaches to religion, and consistently use the secular academic approach. * Be able to address in a constructive way religious disagreements and conflicts that arise in the classroom. * Be aware of, and manage effectively, religious diversity in the classroom. * Create an environment of respect and tolerance—a safe environment in which students feel free to talk about religion. | ***The AAR guidelines outlines 4 Approaches to teaching religion (see pages 10-11). Which approach do you think you will follow? Why?***  I would use a blend of all four approaches because I think it provides a well-rounded approach to why religion is important to respect and understand without judgment. The historical approach is a good approach because students gain a solid understanding of the background of religion and how it came to be today. The literary approach brings religion into a more modern and easier way for the students to make connections to religion through a story and gain further understanding in a less formal way. The students may find the historical approach dry and boring but the background knowledge helps them further understand what they are reading with the literary approach. I think the traditional approach is important because it shares the rich culture of the different religions and focuses on giving the religion an identity. Students will be able to connect similarities and differences in the life of the religions. The cultural approach will be more challenging for me because it allows students to analyze the religions and relate to the religion from a personal level. It will help students understand that religion is political, personal, and reflects upon individual beliefs that should not be judged and should be respected.  ***What do you understand by the competencies in Station 3?***  What I understand is that lack of understanding and knowledge about religion is what causes bias and judgment. In the classroom it is important for students to be respectful and learn that religions evolved from each other and it is a very personal and private connection for an individual. No one religion is the “right” religion. Many factors determine why a person chooses the religion and beliefs the follow (family, politics, region, personal beliefs). Students should focus on the facts that are being learned about religion versus personal opinions. | ***How will you implement your approach/understanding of competencies into practice? Provide at least 2-3 specific examples.***   1. I will utilize timelines so that students can see how religions started at the same point and then broke off and evolved through time. Students will be able to see that all of the religions believe in morals and doing right. Timelines will help students see how religion has had a connection to historical events that have occurred through time (i.e Holocaust). 2. I will utilize trade books and adolescent literature to help students connect to different religions. *The Diary of Anne Frank* is a heart-wrenching story about a Jewish girl living through the Holocaust. This book walks the reader through why bias and judgment of people based on religion is a unfair and leads to tragedy. 3. I will utilize artifacts and showing the beautiful traditions that each religion embraces. Students can interact with various foods, clothing, traditions that are embraced at various times of the year. Students will know that it is ok to embrace different religions and it is not a personal belief but an acceptance of others’ beliefs. |
| ***Station 4 : Final Reflection***  ***10 points*** | ***Reflect on the AAR document –what impact did these guidelines have on your professional development and pedagogy?***  This document was very helpful in opening my eyes on the importance of setting the standard in my classroom of respect and acceptance of others. I work in a very diverse school in which this is a very important part of our every day life and I think it is critical for students to be educated outside of their bubble of life and learn about other cultures, beliefs and religions. This document helped me understand the various ways religion is taught and made me think about how I would approach teaching religion in my classroom. I think religion is a very interesting subject and after reading this document I am looking forward to teaching it versus being scared of it. Thank you for sharing this information with me. | ***How will you take all of the information you have gained from AAR and your research and make it comprehensible to your 6th graders? This is your “snapshot of practice” - provide at least 1 specific example of practice.***  Since religion is a personal experience that is seen through the eyes of my students - I will have my 6th graders create a *Comic Life* poster of a religion that they research and read about. The poster will incorporate the history, an important event, traditions, and beliefs that give a summary of what the basis of the religion is. I also think it would be good for them to develop a *Wordle* that embraces the key words that go along with the religion. These are visuals that help create a picture of how they view religion in a respectful and artistic way utilizing technology for motivation to be inspired. |
| ***Total: 60 points*** |  |  |