***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. | ***Identify the OACS. Then develop an annotated bibliography: Identify 3 Resources for each of the world religions(incl. young adolescent literature): Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Judaism***  **Standards**  History 2: Early civilizations (India, Egypt, China and Mesopotamia) with unique governments, economic systems, social structures, religions, technologies and agricultural practices and products flourished as a result of favorable geographic characteristics. The cultural practices and products of these early civilizations can be used to help understand the Eastern Hemisphere today.  Geography 5: Regions can be determined, classified and compared using various criteria (e.g., landform, climate, population, cultural, economic).  Geography 7: Political, environmental, social and economic factors cause people, products and ideas to move from place to place in the Eastern Hemisphere in the past and today.  Geography 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).  **Resources**  **Buddhism:**  1. Adolescent Literature: In this book, preteen Isabelle moves to Korea with her family and uses her new-found knowledge of Buddhism to solve a mystery on the military base. The reader experiences the culture shock of Isabelle's unhappy move to Korea, her attempts to navigate in Seoul (both physically and spiritually), and the effect upon her minister stepfather when she declares herself a Buddhist. Her stepfather's reaction points out similarities between Buddhism and Christianity. Meanwhile, the mystery Isabelle is compelled to solve keeps the plot moving.  Farley, C (1980). *Ms. isabelle cornell, herself.* Athenium.  2. Booth, J. (2012). *Buddhism for kids*. Retrieved from <http://buddhismforkids.org/>  3. Martin, P. (2012). *Buddhism for kids*. Retrieved from http://ancienthistory.mrdonn.org/Buddhism.html  **Christianity:**  1. Adolescent Literature: Christian boarding school students witness the persecution of a teacher who believes she has communicated with Jesus.  Kerr, M. (1987). *Is that you miss blue?* Harper Prism.  2. Carr, K. (2012). *Christianity for kids*. Retrieved from http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/religion/christians/christianity.htm  3. *Religion facts*. (2007). Retrieved from http://www.religionfacts.com/christianity/holidays.htm  **Hinduism:**  1. Adolescent Literature: A girl from India who lives in America goes back to India to explore her culture and religion.  Rana, I. (2000). *The roller birds of rampur.* Henry Holt & Co.  2. Barrow, M. (2012). *Hinduism*. Retrieved from http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/homework/religion/hinduism.htm  3. Ahmed, W. (2010). *Religions*. Retrieved from http://www.makemegenius.com/cool\_facts.php?mId=52  **Islam:**  1. Adolescent Literature: Sixteen-year-old Amal makes the decision to start wearing the hijab full-time and everyone has a reaction. Her parents, her teachers, her friends, people on the street. But she stands by her decision to embrace her faith and all that it is, even if it does make her a little different from everyone else.  Abdel-Fattah, R. (2008). *Does my head look big in this?* Scholastic Paperbacks.  2. Carr, K. (2012). *Islam*. Retrieved from http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/islam/religion/index.htm  3. Islamreligion.com. (2011). *The religion of islam*. Retrieved from http://www.islamreligion.com/  **Judaism:**  1. Adolescent Literature: The friendship of two young Jewish boys is severely tested as they grow into young men because of their families' different interpretations of Judaism.  Potak, C. (2005). *The chosen one*. Recorded Books.  2. BBC. (2012). *Schools-religion*. Retrieved from http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/religion/judaism/passover.shtml  3. United Religions Initiative. (2012). *Judaism*. Retrieved from http://www.uri.org/kids/world\_juda.htm | ***Write a short description highlighting key points of each religion***  **Buddhism:** Buddhism began from the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama who reached the title of Budha in 535 BCE from reaching Enlightenment. He taught the belief that the Middle Way was the path to Enlightenment. His teachings were recorded in the Tripitaka. Buddhists believe people go through the cycles of birth, life and death, believing in reincarnation. After a lot of cycles a person has the ability to reach Nirvana if he or she releases desire. Buddhists do not believe in a certain type of God, the need for a savior, prayer, or eternal life after death. However, this generalization is not true for all Buddhists as there are many specific regional rituals.  **Christianity:** Christianity focuses on the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth as presented in the New Testament of the Bible. Christians believe that Jesus is the son of God and is their savior. They believe he suffered, died, and was resurrected to make it possible for salvation from sin. Christians believe Jesus will come again to judge the living and the dead and to grant his followers everlasting life in Heaven. It began as a Jewish sect in the eastern Mediterranean.  **Hinduism:** The origins of Hinduism can be traced back to the Indus Valley civilization sometime between 4000 and 2500 BCE. The basis of belief is the belief in the unity of everything, Brahman. Followers believe that the purpose of life is to realize that humans are a part of God to be able to leave this plane of existence to rejoin hm. This is made possible by going through the cycles of life. Reincarnation to be reborn at a higher level is determined by a person’s accumulation of good and bad deeds. Only people of the highest caste are able to perform the Hindu religious rituals.  **Islam:** Islam was created in 622 CE by Muhammad the Prophet in Makkah. It is the youngest of the world’s religions. Islamic people of faith believe their religion to be the same faith taught by the prophets, Abraham, David, Moses, and Jesus. They believe Muhammad purified the faith and removed ideas that were in error. The two sacred texts are the Qur’an and the Hadith. The duties of Muslims are known as the Five Pillars of Islam. They believe in one God and a Satan. They do not believe Jesus was executed on the cross.  **Judaism:** People of the Jewish faith believe in one creator who should be worshipped as the absolute ruler. They believe he monitors people’s behaviors and rewards good deeds. The Torah was revealed to Moses by God. They believe God can communicate with them through prophets. A savior is not required to save them from original sin. They believe a Messiah will arrive in the future and take them to Israel where there will be a resurrection of the dead and the Jerusalem Temple destroyed in 70 CE will be rebuilt. |
| ***Station 2 (15 points)***   * A. 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***  A. 1. Before guiding students in discussion about religion it is important to help them realize that learning about religion is legal and appropriate.  2. “Articulating the distinction between religious studies and a devotional approach to religion at the outset of a lesson or unit will clarify educational goals and minimize confusion and anxiety.”  B. 1. “Teachers should present religion content in the context of approved curriculum.”  2. “Teachers should not discourage students’ free expression of their religious beliefs or ideas  C. 1. “Teachers should never try to coerce students to accept or reject any particular religious tradition, belief, or practice, as well as non- belief or atheism.”  2. Literacy of religion can be strengthened from professional development opportunities so teachers are more knowledgeable of many religions and will not be biased in the classroom. | ***How can incorporate this into your teaching of world religions? Provide at least 1 example for each competency***  A. In guiding my students in discussing religion, I can be sure that I am helping them to not make generalizations while discussing and to think about how their judgments/statements will affect others.  B. I can be sure that I am using best practices related to teaching about religion as a teacher. I have to be sure that I demonstrating to students that religions affects culture just as culture affects religion. I can also be sure that I am showing that religion is dynamic and changing.  C. To be able to present multiple religious perspectives fairly I must become more knowledgeable of other religions through researching. A religious studies course would be helpful to more easily understand the similarities and differences between the world religions. |
| ***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 think I would be most likely to implement a mix of historical and traditions-based approaches while still incorporating discussions about religion if necessary when reading certain novels in the classroom that included religious details, symbols, messages, etc.  I want my students to be aware of and understand all of the different religions that students in our classroom and in society in general might practice so they can more fully gain a sense of acceptance and understanding of people's differences.  I think the most beneficial way for students to learn about religions is for them to ask questions and to compare and contrast similarities and differences.  ***What do you understand by the competencies in Station 3?***  I understand the importance in teaching religion from a secular academic approach rather than devotional because of legal reasons and to be an effective teacher of religion. I cannot present my students with biased views. To be able to address religious disagreements in the classroom requires classroom management techniques. Students have to know they are expected to be respectful of one another at all times. It is necessary to facilitate student discussions so I can interfere at any point there is a conflict. By first discussing with students the learning goals and objectives for learning about religion and that it is legal and necessary, students will better understand why we are talking about religion and will be more likely to participate in class. | ***How will you implement your approach/understanding of competencies into practice? Provide at least 2-3 specific examples.***  1. I can help my students to develop a classroom environment of tolerance and respect by clearly communicating the goals of learning about world religions and how this is related to the standards, history, culture, geography, etc. and can explain that the goal is to develop an understanding for everyone about different religions.  2. By guiding my students in identifying the diversities represented in a tradition such as Christianity that they are familiar, they can see that a lot of variety exists within each religion. Generalizations about specific people based on their religious affiliation cannot be made.  3. Students have to feel safe and know that religious thoughts or ideas are not being pressed on them but instead are being taught to make students aware of religions for academic purposes. |
| ***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 further made me realize that I know very little about religions outside my own and that I would benefit from researching and discovering more information about many world religions. I have never thought about teaching about religions because I know that it is controversial but now better understand that it is legal and is necessary. Some grade level standards even require it. In order for student to be tolerant of others and to prevent prejudices, students have to be given opportunities to discuss religious differences and to learn about them. It is vital students do not make generalizations about people based on their religion. I better understand the difference and importance in teaching with an academic stance rather than a devotional one. The idea that religions are always changing and are extremely diverse is important to teach to students. | ***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.***  -Students can research evidence of conflicts that have arisen because of religious illiteracy such as anti-Semitism and the association of Muslims with terrorism.  -Throughout the year when discussing religions and historical events, students can explore how historical circumstances shaped the of a tradition or worldview to understand that religions are complex webs of practices.  -Students can each be assigned a different religion to research the many different varieties of viewpoints and beliefs that can exist within one religion. |
| ***Total: 60 points*** |  |  |