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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. | **The OACS that focuses on World Religions (Grade 6)**  Theme: Regions and People of the Eastern Hemisphere  Strand: Geography  Topic: Human Systems  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 for each religion**  **Buddhism**   * Koja, K. (2003). *Buddha boy*. New York: Frances Foster Books. – This book is about a boy’s struggle to befriend a new student who gets picked on and bullied for being different and practicing Buddhism. * <http://www.pbs.org/edens/thailand/buddhism.htm> - This site gives a brief, though good, history of the foundation of Buddhism, the Four Noble Truths, and other beliefs of Buddhism. * <http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/5minbud.htm> - This site has over 20 FAQ type questions for people to learn about the many different aspects of Buddhism.   **Hinduism**   * Gilmore, R. (1994). *Lights for gita*. (1st ed.). Gardiner, Me.: Tilbury House. – This is a story of a young girl from India who recently moved to the US with her family. Her favorite festival is coming up and she is nervous about how her family will celebrate in their new home. * <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism/> - This site is chocked full with information on the Hindu religion. Anything from history to holy days can be found in these links. * <http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Hinduism.aspx#2> – This encyclopedia entry about Hinduism has pages of facts about the religion.   **Islam**   * Sharif, M. (2011). *Bestest Ramadan ever.* (1st ed.). Woodbury, MN: Flux. – This book tells the story of a young Muslim girl and her life growing up in the United States. * <http://www.islam-guide.com/> - Several chapters on the documents of Islam, the benefits of Islam, and other general information on the religion. * <http://library.thinkquest.org/28505/islam/centr.htm> - This is a list of ‘The Five Pillars of Faith’ for the Muslim people.   **Christianity**   * Byrd, S. (2011). *Red velvet*. Quaystrokes. – This book is about a young teen named Quinn whose mother is going through cancer treatments. Quinn finds her mother’s teen-years journal and wants to help her mother fulfill some of her dreams from years past. * <http://www.allaboutreligion.org/history-of-christianity.htm> - A good summary on the history of Christianity. * <http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Christianity.aspx> - A great, yet lengthy, encyclopedia entry about the background and development of Christianity.   **Judaism**   * Voorhoeve, A. (2012). *My family for the war*. New York: Dial Books. – A young Jewish girl escapes Nazi Germany at the beginning of WWII and finds refuge with a family in England. She hopes to be reconnected with her birth family someday. * <http://www.jewfaq.org/index.shtml> - A wonderful site totally dedicated to helping people learn about the Jewish religion. * <http://www.academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Judaism> - This would be an excellent source to use when teaching students about Judaism. It is written in a language that will be easily understood. | ***Write a short description highlighting key points of each religion***  **Buddhism**  Buddhism was founded by the son of a warrior-king who felt there was more to life and wondered the world looking for understanding. Buddhist do not recognize one or more gods, but spend their time meditating and trying to find a personal calm and understanding of the world. They do follow The Four Noble Truths that sum up all of what Buddha believed.  **Hinduism**  Hinduism originated in India, however there are billions of followers all over the world today. Hinduism is comprised of religious, philosophical, and cultural ideas. In Hinduism, they believe in one supreme Absolute who they call Brahman, however there are some that worship spirits and other everyday things such as trees, animals, and planets. They follow the Vedic scriptures.  **Islam**  Muslims follow the teachings in the Qur’an. They believe the readings in the Qur’an were given to Muhammad from God for the people. They also believe in one God and consider people like Abraham, Moses, and Jesus prophets. Muslims pray 5 times a day and are required (if able to and able to afford it) to make a pilgrimage at least once in their lives to the ‘Holy Land,’ which is in the city of Mecca.  **Christianity**  Christians believe that Jesus died on the cross and was raised, body and soul, into heaven to save people from their sins. The life of Jesus can be found in the four Gospels in the Bible, which were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Christians believe in one God. Christianity can be found all over the world and there are many different denominations. Christians follow the Ten Commandments as laws provided by God to lead a good life.  **Judaism**  Judaism is one of the oldest religions known. Jewish people believe in one God. The Jewish religion can be found all over the world with people following it at different degrees: Orthodox, Reform, and Conservative. There are many holidays in Jewish tradition. Many of the holidays call for celebrations, prayer, or fasting. During World War II, many Jewish people went into hiding, were put into concentration camps, or killed because of their religion. |
| ***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. I feel that “…it is imperative to foster a climate of tolerance, respect, and honesty…” and “Not everyone in the class is expected to agree,” are two statements that will help a teacher to lead discussions about religious beliefs and practices. As long as a teacher makes it clear to the class that everyone is entitled to worship as they please and there is no one religion that is superior to another, there should be some good and understanding discussions. 2. It is important for teachers to be educated about teaching religion based on the subjects that they are teaching—social studies, language arts, or a religious studies course. As a future social studies teacher I think it is important for me to know:   “1. Familiarity with the basic outlooks, experiences, and practices of the widespread living religious traditions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—and of indigenous regional religions (religions of the Americas, Africa, Asia and the Pacific), with special attention to the diversity of expressions and practices within as well as between religions and regions. 2. An understanding of how specific religions function in particular social/historical contexts. 3. An understanding of how religions affect and are affected by their cultural contexts and thus how religions are internally diverse and dynamic.”   1. The section on “Appropriate Attitudes/Postures” gives many good points for teachers to follow that will help them to present religious material in a fair and neutral way. By not coercing students to believe in a certain way, allowing students to speak freely about their religion, and making sure that all students are open and supportive of their classmates, we can make this topic easier to teach. | ***How can you incorporate this into your teaching of world religions? Provide at least 1 example for each competency***   1. When having a discussion about religion with the class, the teacher should start with the questioning or maybe have a set list of questions to talk about in their group. By doing this, we can set the tone of the discussion so that students know what is expected of them and they will hopefully have an open mind to what everyone has to share. 2. When it comes to best practices, I feel that keeping things student centered is best. This allows for the students to take ownership of their learning and to feel that they are helping their classmates to learn by sharing their perspectives and experiences with different religions. As teachers, however, we need to make sure that what the students are sharing is accurate and truthful—not hearsay or their feelings. 3. I think a good way to present information on several different religions at once would be to create a table. The teacher can create a table with specific, equal information for students to input about all of the religions being studied. This not only gives the students an excellent study source, but also allows them to see, all in one place, similarities and differences between different religions. This information could then be used for discussions or a writing assignment. |
| ***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 that I would follow the Historical Approach to teaching world religions. There are so many standards in 6th grade social studies that are based in history, I think this would be a natural flow for the teacher as well as the students. I also think that it would be easier for myself to not incorporate my own beliefs into teaching in this manner. This would allow me to share the historical perspective of the religion with the class and also share with them facts of the religion today. I think that it is important for students to know where a religion came from in order to have a full understanding of where it is today.  ***What do you understand by the competencies in Station 3?***   1. The difference between academic and devotional approaches would mean to not actually practice the religion in class. You should not pray/worship/etc. to any particular deity. Teaching only about the religion is what we are expected to do. 2. I think if there are disagreements or conflicts about religion in the classroom, we could (hopefully!) turn it into a teachable moment. It would be important for the students to know that all religions beliefs are OK and that we are all able to have our own opinions and differences. I would try to turn it around and have them find a similarity in their disagreement. 3. I would like to make my classroom an environment where all students feel secure in who they are and what they believe. I will do this early in the year by letting everyone know that it is OK to be different. We will find ways to embrace our differences and help each other to understand what may be confusing about another culture or faith. | ***How will you implement your approach/understanding of competencies into practice? Provide at least 2-3 specific examples.***   1. I think one neat way to practice these competencies would be to have a question and answer panel. I would try to find leaders of particular religions to come in and have a question/answer session with the students. These people are experts in their field and would be able to answer the students’ questions easily. 2. I would have students do research on the different religions that they are studying. I really feel that if they have a better understanding of the history, then they would be able to better understand the current status of the religion. I would then have them share their findings with the rest of the class and share what they thought was really interesting. 3. After students do research on different religions, I would have them partner with someone who researched a religion other than theirs. They would then have to make a table showing similarities and differences. This is also important for students to see that even though we are different in our beliefs, sometimes there are likenesses that make us the same. |
| ***Station 4 : Final Reflection***  ***10 points*** | ***Reflect on the AAR document –what impact did these guidelines have on your professional development and pedagogy?***  Making a switch this year from being a Catholic school teacher for 9 years to a city public school, I really needed to see this AAR document! It was very helpful and insightful as to how I will address religious ideas with my students in the future. I have never been one to ‘push’ my beliefs on others and feel that we are all free to worship and believe as we want. I hope that I am able to make all student feel comfortable in my classroom, whatever their beliefs, and help them to feel comfortable enough to share about their beliefs without the fear of being ridiculed or made fun of. | ***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.***  I will be sure to do all of the research I need to ahead of time so that I can answer my students’ questions to the best of my ability. As I mentioned in Station 3, I would love to have a panel of experts in each field of religion come into the classroom for a question and answer session. What better way to learn about a religion than from an expert! I also feel that these people would be able to answer the students’ questions from an academic approach. They can also relate to students that even though they are all experts in their own religion, they do have some similarities and are all able to coexist in one community. |