***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***  **• OACS:**  6.8 – 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**  White, B. *A Five Minute Introduction.* BDEA/BuddhaNet, 1993. Web. 25 July 2013. <http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/5minbud.htm>  - This site gives a basic overview of Buddhism including the history of Buddhism, who Buddha was, and the practices included in Buddhism.  *Basics of Buddhism.* PBS. Web. 25 July 2013. <http://www.pbs.org/edens/thailand/buddhism.htm>  - A PBS documentary on the basics of Buddhism. The documentary goes over the founder of Buddhism who was Siddhartha Gautama, the noble truths, the cycle of rebirth, and the concept of karma.  Maquire, Jack.  *Essential Buddhism: A Complete Guide to Beliefs and Practices.* New York, NY: Pocket Books, 2001. Print.  - A book that shows a personal insight into becoming a Buddhist. It gives an overview of the Buddhist Religion and then continues with giving advice on how to infuse Buddhism with your daily life.  **• Christianity**  Keating, Joseph. "Christianity." The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 3. New York, NY: Robert Appleton Company, 1908. Web. 26 July 2013 <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03712a.htm>.  - This site gives a historic overview of Christianity, how God designed Christianity, shows the essentials of being a Christian, and discusses why someone should be a Christian.  *Christianity.* Religion Facts, 2013. Web. 26 July 2013. <http://www.religionfacts.com/christianity/index.htm>.  - A very large site that gives a brief introduction to Christianity. It goes over the different beliefs, the denominations, practices and much more information all about Christianity. The site also puts the information in very plain language so even young students would easily read it.  Richards, L.O. *The KJV Kid’s Study Bible.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zonderkidz, 1994. Print.  - A picture bible that modifies the King James Version of the Bible to make it more enjoyable and readable to a younger audience. It also gives context clues, chapter overviews, and follows up with questions to major concepts that were covered in the reading.  **• Hinduism**  *Hinduism.* Patheos , 2013. Web. 26 July 2013. <http://www.patheos.com/Library/Hinduism.html>  - General overview of Hinduism including origin, history, texts, and how it influenced history. The site goes in depth on the religious beliefs and practices that a follower of Hinduism must follow.  Barrow, M. *Information on Hinduism.* Woodlands Junior School Kent. Web. 27 July 2013. <http://resources.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/homework/religion/hinduism.htm>  - A homework help site that breaks down the most important information about Hindu in to small manageable parts. Goes over the larger gods, explains why there are so many gods, discusses basic practices, and also discusses how Hinduism is different from other faiths.  Cole, W.O and Kanithar, V.P. *Hinduism.* Chicago, IL: McGraw-Hill, 2003. Print.  - This text goes over all the beliefs, customs, sacred places, and sacred texts of the Hindu faith. It also covers how a person should practice their faith on daily basis by showing how Hinduism is practiced in the world today. This text is basically a beginners guide to understanding the Hindu faith and practices.  **• Islam**  Barrow, M. *Information on Islam.* Woodlands Junior School Kent. Web. 27 July 2013. http://resources.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/homework/religion/islam.htm  - I know I have use this site before, but it is an excellent site that I plan on using later. This site goes into the history of Islam, what they believe and how Islam is practiced. The author also conveys how important it is to respect other religions by stating peace be upon him after the use of the founders name that is Muhammad (peace be upon him). This is not only has the information needed to cover the topic, but also shows respect in the way that the religions are covered.  Begum, S. and Rahman, M. *Islamkids.org,* 2007. Web. 27 July 2013. http://www.islamkids.org/contents.html  - An excellent site that covers the basics of Islam in 5 teaching modules geared towards young children. The site covers the faith, prophets, life, and practices. It also discusses the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his importance to the religion.  Hagg, S. S. *Stories of the Prophets in the Holy Qu’ran.* Somerset, NJ: Tughra Books, 2008. Print.  - A very interesting text that goes over all the prophets of the Islam faith in a very kid friendly format. The text also has lots of drawings depicting the prophets and goes in depth with how the prophets helped the religion of Islam. The book also discusses why it is important to practice Islam and how to practice Islam correctly.  **• Judaism**  *My Jewish Learning.* My Jewish Learning .Com. Web. 27 July 2013. <http://www.myjewishlearning.com>  - A very detailed site that discusses the culture, beliefs, practices and history of Judaism. I really like the fact that this site offers a wide variety of information including favorite recipes, clothing, and a timeline of important events. This large amount of information helps the religion to be more tangible for the students because it allows them to find something they find interesting.  Rich, T. *Judaism 101.* 2011. Web. 27 July 2013. <http://www.jewfaq.org/author.htm>  - Another large website that discusses the ideas, places, practice, and history of Judaism. This site offers straight forward information over the basic facts of Judaism including the origin, how it relates to other religions, and the Torah.  Gross, J. *Celebrate: A Book of Jewish Holidays.* New York, NY: Penguin Group Inc, 1992. Print.  - A children’s book that discusses the importance and practice of Jewish Holidays. The text goes in depth over each holiday offering a basic understanding on how and why they are celebrated. | ***Write a short description highlighting key points of each religion***  **• Buddhism**  - Buddhism is practice of one’s faith over belief. Buddhism is more of an experience that he passed on from one person to the next than a study of sacred text. All Buddhists believe in ending suffering, karma, seeking personal enlightenment, practice through mediation, and the cycle of rebirth. The also all share the same admiration for the figure of Buddha. It was founded in 520 BCE and was started in India.  **• Christianity**  - Christianity was founded around 33 CE. by Jesus of Nazareth in Palestine. Christianity is the belief in God the father, and Jesus his son. It focuses on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ and studies his teaching found in the sacred text the Bible. Sunday is considered sacred by all denominations of Christianity especially Easter which celebrates the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.  **• Hinduism**  - Hinduism started in India around 1500 BCE and doesn’t have a particular founder but does still incorporate a belief in God or Gods. Instead it a wide variety of religious beliefs that have developed in India over time. All Hindus believe in reincarnation, Karma, the practice of meditation, and the observation of sacred festivals including Diwali and Holi. They also share the belief of the authority of the sacred text Vedas, and the priests called Brahmans.  **• Islam**  - Was founded in 622 CE by the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. They believe in the one true God, Allah, and that he had many prophets that conveyed his message to his people but most importantly Muhammad (pbuh). They also follow the teachings of the sacred book the Qur’an and the six articles of faith. They also have daily prayer five times a day, and always pray facing the direction of Mecca. The followers of Islam must also make pilgrimages to their holy city of Mecca within their lifetime.  **• Judaism**  - The religion of Judaism was founded around 2,500 BCE by Abraham in Mesopotamia. They believe in one God and the afterlife. They follow the scared texts the Torah and Talmud. They also do not have a particular requirements for being a follower, but instead adhere to The 13 Articles of Faith In their daily lives. Followers must also keep their bodies clean by only consuming and using Kosher items that have been blessed by their religious leaders called Rabbis. They also celebrate sacred holidays including Hanukkah, Yom Kipper, and Pesach. |
| ***Station 2 (15 points)***   1. Develop skills in leading students in discussion regarding their religious beliefs and practices, as well as the beliefs and practices of others.      1. Be aware of examples of best practices in teaching about religion. 2. 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.***  1a. (pg. 9) The Historical Approach that looks at the origin of a religions and its development with focus on the political and cultural influences.  1b. (pg. 12) Talking about religion can create issues that cause some discussions to feel like an attack. To counter act this a teacher must foster a climate of tolerance, respect, and honesty by having the students to stick to facts and not generalizations. Also by allowing for the exploration of religious ideas without fear of judgments by other.  2a. (pg. 13) Middle School Social Studies. Mrs. Q used real life examples to create journals in which they were allowed to use multiple forms of answers to express themselves in their work.  2b. (pg. 14) Middle School Social Studies. Mr. H looks at real life correlations between geography and population in an area. He then has the students prepare a debate. He also has them look at local areas to draw correlations between Hindu beliefs and the natural landscape.  3a. (pg. 4) The religious study approach introduces students to a wide variety of religions and looks at how those religions interact with politics, economies, other religious sects, and cultural life over the years.  3b. (pg. 10) The Cultural Studies Approach. This approach ties all the approaches together to allow the teacher and student to focus on how religions are embedded in culture and cannot be understood in isolation from it’s own dynamic changes over time. | ***How can incorporate this into your teaching of world religions? Provide at least 1 example for each competency***  1. I would create a classroom environment that would allow my students the freedom to express their views in a factual way without fear of retaliation from their peers. I would also create an environment in which the students would learn a factual basis for each religion and be allowed to draw their own conclusions with their own beliefs.  2. I will use best practices to create a lesson that will use real life locations in my area and use them correlate it to different religion. For instance, the National Shrine in Carey, Ohio of the Catholic faith. The class could learn the history of the Shrine and compare and contrast the pilgrimage that takes place yearly to other pilgrimages taken by other religion.  3. I would continue to use the historical, literary, and traditional approaches in my classroom. I would also begin to use the cultural approach to tie all of the concepts together to be able to create a more immersive curriculum and religious understanding for my students. Allowing them to make their own correlations on the facts of each religion in comparison to their own. |
| ***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 will use all of the approaches in my teaching. I have always tried to follow Gardener’s Multiple Intelligences theory that states that all students learn in different ways and with certain strengths. As such, I will need to use all of the approaches to be able to reach all of my students. However, I will probably start a lesson with either the historical or literary approach since these approaches tend to allow for a basic understanding of the material. I would then move on the traditions-based approach to scaffold the information of the religion. Finally using the Cultural studies approach to look at how the religion is tied to the culture and how the religion impacted other religions.  ***What do you understand by the competencies in Station 3?***  I understand that teaching religion in a classroom is like walking a tightrope. As a teacher you must maintain a balance between understanding the religion and respecting the religion. A teacher must keep this balance not only in the material, but also with the students in order for the material to be conveyed in a factual manner. | ***How will you implement your approach/understanding of competencies into practice? Provide at least 2-3 specific examples.***  - As stated previously, I will use the different approaches in unison and individually in order to really teach everything there is to know about the different religions. I will do this by starting with the traditional approach to build a base knowledge and then add to the base information by use of the other approaches. Finishing with the cultural approach to look for correlations between religions and cultures.  - I would have the students create a chart in order to compare and contrast the different religions origins, beliefs, rituals, and holidays. This would allow the students a quick glance guide to reference for later work, and to see how their faith fits with the other world religions.  - Create class rules and procedures with the help of the students that would allow every student to feel comfortable sharing ideas and personal beliefs in the classroom in all subjects. |
| ***Station 4 : Final Reflection***  ***(10 points)*** | ***Reflect on the AAR document –what impact did these guidelines have on your professional development and pedagogy?***  These guidelines reinforced my own professional beliefs and also gave me areas in which I can grow. I already taught all difficult material in a manner that allows for a factual understanding of the material free of bias, and personal beliefs. I believe this is important, because teachers are to inspire their students to be their own person not a copy of someone else. Also while covering these topics I have always had my students prepped to be like an outside observer or scientist that only would focus on the facts at hand. This allows for the students to feel safe when covering these topics and more comfortable talking about them.  I also found that I don’t use all of the approaches to cover difficult material. This lack of use allows for holes in the teaching and misunderstandings about the concepts I am trying to convey. By following a linear approach to using the four approaches I should be able to shorten the gaps and to create a more fluid experience in the curriculum. | ***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 use all the information that I have gained from this reading to create a curriculum that gives the student not only a basic knowledge of the information, but also shows how the information correlates to the student’s life and world.  Mr. Clark’s sixth grade class is studying Judaism. His class started by studying the origins of Judaism, the belief in one god, and the writing of the holy texts. The class then relates the beliefs and teaching of Judaism to the beliefs of Christianity and Islam. The class uses online resources to look for similarities in key figures, places, beliefs, and writings. The class correlates this information into a concept map and discusses the findings. After which the students write about their feelings on the findings, and if there was any correlation between their faith and the findings in their religion journal. |
| ***Total: 60 points*** |  |  |