***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 ONLS (specifically focusing on 6th grade social studies content), 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. Complete the Scavenger Hunt first (simply type responses in the boxes, or use other preferred format but you must address all components) and then you will participate in a Group Discussion (GD).

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| ***Pedagogical Competencies*** | ***Explore/Research/Reflect*** | ***Application*** |
| ***Station 1 (20 points)***   * Identify the ONLS 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. | Strand: Geography  Topic: Human Systems  Content 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:**  "Buddha & Buddhism for Kids - Who Was the Buddha? - Ancient Civilizations for Kids and Teachers." *Buddha & Buddhism for Kids - Who Was the Buddha? - Ancient Civilizations for Kids and Teachers*. N.p., n.d. Web. 19 July 2016.  This website offers a brief overview of Buddhism. Discusses who Buddha was, the Eightfold Path, and the Four Noble Truths. It also has links listed to learn more details. Puts everything in kid friendly language  *Buddhism*. Schlessinger Media, 2003. DVD. This DVD  This 50-minute video shows the history of Buddhism.  George, Charles. *What Makes Me a Buddhist?* San Diego, CA: Kidhaven, 2004. Print.  This book explains origin, core beliefs, important rituals, customs, holidays, and challenges of Buddhism. It provides full color pictures.  **Hinduism:**  George, Charles. *What Makes Me a Hindu?* San Diego, CA: KidHaven, 2004. Print.  This book explains origin, core beliefs, important rituals, customs, holidays, and challenges of Hinduism. It provides full color pictures.  "Information on Hinduism for Kids." *Information on Hinduism for Kids*. N.p., n.d. Web. 19 July 2016.  This website offers information about Hinduism. Provides facts such as origin, sacred text, and founder. It also explains the symbol of Hinduism and where the name Hindu comes from. Along with this information the site also tells how Hinduism is different from other religions and what Hindus believe. Listed on this site is also the different paths to achieve Moksha and the different gods that Hindus worship.  Krishnaswami, Uma, and Shiraaz Bhabha. *The Closet Ghosts*. San Francisco: Children's Book, 2006. Print.  This is a picture book that could be used to introduce Hinduism. It is about a little girl who seeks help from a Hindu monkey god to help her fit in when she moves to a new place.  **Islam:**  Clark, Charles. *Islam*. San Diego, CA: Lucent, 2002. Print.  Tells readers about the history, beliefs. Practices, politics and challenges of Islam.  "Islam (Muslim) for Kids." *Islam (Muslim) for Kids*. N.p., n.d. Web. 19 July 2016.  This website explains information about Islam. It gives its place of origin, the sacred text, holy places, festivals, and who the founder was. It also tells what they believe, what the Five Pillars of Islam are, when they pray, and who Muhammad is.  Penney, Sue. *Islam*. Chicago, IL: Heinemann Library, 2000. Print.  This book tells readers about the early history of Islam, the Mosque, family occasions, celebrations, the life of Muhammad, and worshiping in the home and the mosque.  **Christianity**:  Barnes, Trevor. *Christianity: Worship, Festivals and Ceremonies from around the World*. London: Kingfisher, 2005. Print.  This book provides readers with facts about different festivals that are celebrated around the world within the religion. It also tells about the different divisions among Christianity.  "Information on Christianityby Mandy Barrow." *Christianity for Kids*. N.p., n.d. Web. 19 July 2016.  This site gives information about Christianity. It explains its place of origin, sacred text, sacred building, major festivals, and different branches of the religion. It also explains what Christians believe, where they worship, and lists the 10 Commandments. The site also tells how Christianity is different from other religions and breaks down the different branches within the religion.  Wilkinson, Philip. *Christianity*. New York: DK Pub., 2003. Print.  This book is part of the Eyewitness series. It gives readers facts about Christianity by discussing how it started to its role in the 21st century. It is a visual encyclopedia.  **Judaism:**  Charing, Douglas. *Judaism*. New York, NY: DK, 2003. Print.  This is an Eyewitness book and is a visual encyclopedia. It gives facts about Judaism by explaining where it began and what it is today.  "Judaism for Children." *Judaism for Children*. N.p., n.d. Web. 19 July 2016.  This site shows where Judaism’s place of origin, lists the main branches, tells what the sacred text is, and the type of place they worship. It also explains the most important day of the week, lists the symbol, and so much more.  Woog, Adam. *What Makes Me a Jew?* San Diego, CA: KidHaven, 2004. Print.  This book answers: how did the religion begin, what they believe, how the faith is practiced, what holidays are celebrated, and what foods they eat as well as so much more. | ***Buddhism:*** This is the main religion in many Asian countries. It began in India and is around 2,500 years old. They focus on finding Nirvana. The sacred text is the Tripitka. Buddhism is different from other religions because it does not focus on the relationship between humans and God. Some symbols of Buddhism are the wheel of life, the lotus flower, and Buddha. The path to Enlightenment is based on the Eight-Fold Path, or how Buddhists should live their lives. They celebrate Wesak.  **Hinduism:** It originated in Northern India around 4,000 years ago. It began in India and is practiced by about 80% of India’s peoples. The sacred texts are the Vedas and the Upanishads. Hinduism is different from other religions because there is no founder and it does not have a single teacher. Hinduism is also more of what you do instead of what you believe. They believe in one God, Brahman and believe in reincarnation. Hinduism believes there are four goals to the human life: Moksha, Dharma, Artha, and Karma. The three basic practices of Hinduism are worship, cremation, and compliance with the rules of the caste system. They celebrate Divali.  **Islam**: Islam is the second most popular religion in the world. It originated in Saudi Arabia. People who follow Islam are called Muslims. They believe in one God, Allah. The sacred text is The Qur’an and the worship in a Mosque. The founder if this religion is Muhammad and the religion is based on his ministry. Muslims have 6 beliefs. They are the belief in one God, belief in angels, belief in holy books, belief in Prophets, belief in the Day of Judgement, and the belief in Predestination. Muslims also believe that they need to fulfill the five Pillars of Islam, which are Shahadah (declaration of faith), Salah (prayer), Zakat (giving to charity), Saum (fasting during Ramadan), and Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca). They celebrate Ramadan.  **Christianity:** The largest world religion. It is based on the teachings of Jesus Christ and is 2,000 years old. Christianity originated in Israel. The sacred text is the Bible. Christians believe that there is only one God and that God made the world. Some symbols of Christianity are the dove, the fish symbol, and the cross. Christianity is similar to other religions. It shares some beliefs and practices of Judaism and Islam (belief in only one God). Christians celebrate Easter and Christmas.  **Judaism:** It was established over 4,000 years ago and is the oldest world religion. It also has the smallest amount of followers. It originated in Israel and the sacred texts are the Torah, Nevi’im, and Ketuvim. Jews believe in a single God. Both Moses and Abraham are important to Judaism. Some symbols of Judaism are the Star of David, the Menorah, and the Mezuzah. In this religion, once you reach the age of 12, you become an adult and complete a special ceremony (bar mitzvah-boys or bat mitzvah-girls). People of this religion also celebrate Passover, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Hanukkah, Tisha B’av, Tu B’Shevat, and Yom Hashoah. |
| ***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***  One key point from the reading that addresses these competencies is that as a teacher, you not only have to be religiously literate, but have to teach your students to become religiously literate. Once someone has become religiously literate, they will be able to step outside of their own personal experience to talk about religions. They will not use their own opinions, positive or negative, to form an understanding of the religion. As a teacher, you need to teach awareness rather than acceptance, as stated in the reading. By using this, you are allowing students to develop an understanding of the material without them feeling like they have to believe in everything that is being taught. By telling students that they just need to be aware of the religion and the beliefs it will allow them to become more informed about the world. They will not shut down because they feel like the teacher is forcing the religion on them while the intention is really just to inform about other practices around the world. | ***How can incorporate this into your teaching of world religions? Provide at least 1 example for each competency***  I can incorporate the first competency of leading students in discussions about religions by first setting expectations. The first of which would be that not everyone has to agree, but that we need to be respectful and tolerant of others. Not everyone is the same and others should not be judged for what they believe.  To be aware of best practices of teaching about religion, I would just stay up to date on the topic.  To incorporate teaching about multiple religions in a neutral and fair way I would remain religiously literate. I would not offer personal opinions and just stick to teaching facts. By doing this, it would allow students to see the religion for what it represents not others opinions on the topic. |
| ***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 use the Historical Approach. It will allow students to gain knowledge about the content we are studying by connecting it to the culture and religion that is practiced in an area. However, I believe I would take this teaching a bit further by allowing students to compare where the religions started to what they look like today. The reading stated that teachers only teach what it was like when it was founded and do not include how it changed over time. By extending the teaching it allows students to see how it not only changed but how it influenced those who practice it today. I also think this will eliminate the personal connections to one religion and allow for just the facts to be taught.  ***What do you understand by the competencies in Station 3?***  Things that I understand in station 3 are that you have to teach students how to be sensitive to other people beliefs and religious practices. Just like any activity, students need to have respect for others. This means that students need to feel safe in sharing their own experience in a religion and know that they will not be judged for their opinions. | ***How will you implement your approach/understanding of competencies into practice? Provide at least 2-3 specific examples.***  One way that I will implement this approach into my teaching is by having students create Venn diagrams of each religion. They will not only create them based on how the religions compare to one another but how the religion started out and what it looks like today. They will begin to see how the religions transformed, what was kept the same, and what changed. It will also allow students to see not only how other religions are different but what they have in common. I also think it would be interesting to include debate. I think a way to do this would be to divide students into groups and have them learn about a specific religion. Then, they would debate and explain why their religion influenced the world more than others. This has to be done very carefully so that feelings are not hurt. I also think I would implement the historical approach into my teaching by just having students find similarities and differences in a religion by completing research. After students learn how it started, they would complete projects and determine how and why it changed and transformed into the religions we have today. |
| ***Station 4 : Final Reflection***  ***10 points*** | ***Reflect on the AAR document –what impact did these guidelines have on your professional development, pedagogy and thinking about teaching social studies?***  I honestly never really thought about teaching religion during social studies. I knew that it was a part of the content, but it always scared me a little. I always thought that it was a very thin line to tread. That there was always going to be someone who was offended because of the content. After reading and gaining more knowledge, my opinion has changed greatly. I now feel more comfortable in my understanding of what to do and what not to do. | ***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 really liked a lot of the sites I found. I feel that by using these sites, students can gain knowledge of how the religions started. However as stated, I think one activity that I will use will be to extend the thinking of what appears in the text and incorporating how the religions look today and how the world is impacted because of the changes. I will take all of the information that I learned in the article and the research I did to move myself into becoming religiously literate. I will do this by continuing to learn about how to do this. |
| ***Total: 60 points*** |  |  |