

Teaching Elementary Social Studies and Global Learning

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Brief overview and Purposes of the Module

This module is to incorporate global learning into an undergraduate/graduate elementary social studies course. It aims to let students take a reflective and critical look at different perspectives and approaches in social studies from a global perspective. The module also provides an opportunity to explore various learning and teaching experiences of inter/national issues in social studies such as diverse cultural contexts, economics, and community. In addition, students are encouraged to reflect these matters by starting from their own personal experiences. Thus, this module attempts not only to rethink and examine the important aspects of global learning. It also helps students implement the ideas of global education to instructional strategies and practices for meaningful social studies teaching and learning in elementary classrooms.

This module has five major objectives:

1. Reflecting diversity and global education from students own points of view,
2. Understanding diversity in American as well as global contexts,
3. Connecting diversity to economic concepts to teach,
4. Being aware of socio-economic issues in the world, and
5. Knowing different levels and perceptions of poverty in global community.

Connections to Global Learning Outcomes

The five objectives [O] above are closely related to my initial learning outcomes:

- 1) Understanding one's own culture and self in a global context [O.1]
- 2) Demonstrating knowledge of different cultures [O.2]
- 3) Adapting behaviors with and being willing to learn from others who are different from others [O.2 & 4]
- 4) Using the cultural framework to think critically and solve problems (teaching elementary social studies) [O.3 & 4]
- 5) Interpreting issues and situations from more than one cultural perspective [O.1 & 5]

Procedures & Assessment

1st Lesson Unit [2-3 class sessions]

Diversity in American Society

❖ Procedures: Main ideas

- Discuss 1) students' own experience of diversity and 2) the reasons for and the importance of teaching diversity in social studies.
- Provide current American society's diversity facts and demographic information of teachers [= lecture].
- Facilitate their reflections on how they would like to teach and deal with diversity issues in elementary classrooms [= writing assignment].
- Provide multicultural awareness on children's developmental stages [= lecture]
- Invite guest speakers (e.g., ESOL personnel) or panel discussion with parents or teachers of different cultural backgrounds.
- Discuss what they thought about the talk or panel discussion [= writing assignment].

❖ Assessments of Global Learning Outcomes:

This lesson unit will assess the Global Learning Outcome #1, Understanding one's own culture and self in a global context and #3, Adapting behaviors with and being willing to learn from others who are different from others.

2nd Lesson Unit [2-3 class sessions]

Meaning of Diversity in Global Community: Economics

❖ Procedures: Main ideas

- Introduce global contexts of diversity by;
 - Discussing their own idea and experience of "being global" and
 - Having a question, "What does Global mean?" to them.
- Discuss class readings from "Globalization Myths" from the book, *Rethinking Globalization* [= quiz]
- Review a synopsis (see below) of the economic concepts, "wants and needs," which is about an elementary classroom lesson idea [= small group work].

Brief Synopsis

Define the terms, "wants and needs" with children. Discuss the two terms by sharing what they purchased (with their parents) last week. Encourage them to provide their own examples and stories. Write the list of their responses on the board and ask which can be their want or need.

Share a current event (e.g., Japanese tsunami or flood in New York) or story of natural disaster and encourage them to imagine those people in such a situation. Ask the students to look at their list and choose the items that would be "needs" for those people.

- Have them brainstorm to develop this idea relating it to globalization or global education [= writing assignment].
- Share their ideas.
- Wrap up with a reflection on the role of each individual who lives in the same country as well as global community and how to teach it in elementary classrooms.

❖ Assessments of Global Learning Outcomes:

This lesson unit will assess the Global Learning Outcome #1, Understanding one's own culture and self in a global context and #4, Using the cultural framework to think critically and solve problems (teaching elementary social studies).

3rd Lesson Unit [2-3 class sessions]

Poverty and Global Community

❖ Procedures: Main ideas

- Discuss their reading, "The Global Economy: Colonialism without Colonies," of the book, *Rethinking Globalization*. [= quiz]
- Compare the poverty among different countries by showing statistical information [= lecture].
- Debate a question, "Should we help the other countries who are in world poverty in spite of the fact that American society also has several poverty issues?"

- Bring the topic of the role of community up again and discuss what ways people do and how they can relate it to their teaching elementary classrooms.
- Encourage them to rethink why teaching global issues of poverty or inequality is un/necessary in elementary classroom and rationalize their arguments in writing with supporting evidence (with academic references). [= writing assignment]
- Offer a group assignment of “Stanley Project”: Each group (or class) will develop particular ideas to explore how different cultures and countries try to resolve this problem and how they help each other by creating a Stanley project so they can adapt this when they actually teach later. They will create this by examining the standards of the State of Ohio and NCSS. [= a small group assignment]

❖ Assessments of Global Learning Outcomes:

This lesson unit will assess the Global Learning Outcome #2, Demonstrating knowledge of different cultures, #4, Using the cultural framework to think critically and solve problems (teaching elementary social studies), and #5, Interpreting issues and situations from more than one cultural perspective.

Resources

Bigelow, B. & Peterson, B. (eds.) (2002). *Rethinking globalization*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

www.flatstanley.com

www.globaled.org/curriculum/tomcollins.html

www.unicef.org/