

Diversity, Cultural Understanding, and Global Awareness

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In my life, I have been fortunate enough to travel and experience many cultures and places. However, many of my students have not had this opportunity. Living in a small rural area, it is important to expose students to the many faces of the world. This starts with me. It is important for me to determine my feelings and beliefs on other cultures. Many times, these feelings reflect our personal beliefs to our students whether intentional or not. Therefore, I must ensure I have no bias on any cultures. I must evaluate all of my classroom materials to ensure they are culturally sensitive (2013).

Luckily, there are many resources online which can expose students to various cultures. A website called [Students Around the World](#) is a great resource and starting place for exposing students. This [website](#) gives options for choosing countries, schools, and playing games. Students can become with pen pals with other students around the world. During social studies, this is a great [website](#) to show students other countries. By exposing my students to other countries and cultures online, I am helping to develop their sense of cultural and global awareness. As we investigate other countries or other types of students, they develop a sense of excitement to know their are different people in the world. One of the best tools I have used in my class to expose my students is [Voki](#). [Voki](#) is a web 2.0 tool where students are able to use avatars to record their voices. My students will get a voice from a country they are unsure about, and we will investigate it. Simple tools like these make incorporating culture into any subject easier.

As a teacher, it is not only my job to teach children how to be good students and successful, it is important for me to teach them to be accepting of everyone regardless of their differences. The best way to do this is lead by example. I must first look at myself because they are learning from my actions. In addition to this, using resources at every opportunity to show them places and people that are different peak their curiosity and enhance their understanding for culture. Using technology such as virtual field trips or even Google, my students can travel and explore any place in the world. They can talk or become pen pals with students in the United States or across the world. It is my job to give students these opportunities as a way to prepare them for the future. As Lyn Hilt discussed, the world needs thinkers, innovators, collaborators, and communicators. It is my job to help my students get there.

Resources

Glencoe/ McGraw-Hill. (2013). *Managing a culturally diverse classroom*. Retrieved from <http://www.glencoe.com/sec/teachingtoday/weeklytips.phtml/230>

Hilt, L. (2011, October 26). [Web log message]. Retrieved from <http://plpnetwork.com/2011/10/26/the-case-for-cultivating-cultural-awareness/>