

Making a Difference Through Giving

Lesson Video: Grades 3-5

Overview

Teacher: Darlene Jones-Inge
Grades: 4 and 5
School: Patrick O’Hearn Elementary School
Location: Dorchester, Massachusetts

NCSS Standards-Based Themes: Global Connections; Civic Ideals and Practices

Content Standards: Civics

Video Summary

How do you teach students to become effective citizens? How can young children make positive contributions to their community? Darlene Jones-Inge challenges her fourth- and fifth-grade students to think of realistic solutions to some of the problems facing their school, community, country, and the world.

Ms. Jones-Inge begins with a class discussion about issues students have been following in the news. The class focuses on the health risks caused by a hole in the ozone layer above a city in southern Chile. Students brainstorm ways to help the people who live in that city—from the relatively straightforward (sending sunblock to Chile) to the more complex (asking the Chilean government to provide free healthcare to its citizens). Students then choose five ideas from the list, come up with ways to implement them, and make posters to present to the class. From this exercise, students learn to distinguish between realistic and unrealistic goals, recognize the importance of reaching a consensus, and most of all, identify their role as global citizens.

Standards

Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies defines what students should know and be able to do in social studies at each educational level. This lesson correlates to the following standards for elementary school students:

IX. Global Connections

Explore causes, consequences, and possible solutions to persistent, contemporary, and emerging global issues, such as pollution and endangered species.

Standards, cont'd.

X. Civic Ideals and Practices

Identify key ideals of the United States' democratic republican form of government, such as individual human dignity, liberty, justice, equality, and the rule of law, and discuss their application in specific situations; identify examples of rights and responsibilities of citizens; locate, access, organize, and apply information about an issue of public concern from multiple points of view; identify and practice selected forms of civic discussion and participation consistent with the ideals of citizens in a democratic republic; explain actions citizens can take to influence public policy decisions; recognize that a variety of formal and informal actions influence and shape public policy; recognize and interpret how the "common good" can be strengthened through various forms of citizen action.

Content Standards: Civics

About the Class

Classroom Profile

"Social studies encompasses so many parts of our school's curriculum, such as math, science, and literature. It allows students to explore aspects of both academic and human life, and it develops great humanitarians." —Darlene Jones-Inge

Darlene Jones-Inge teaches fourth-grade social studies at the Patrick O'Hearn Elementary School in Dorchester, Massachusetts. A close-knit community bordering downtown Boston, Dorchester is home to a diverse ethnic and socioeconomic population. The school population reflects the community: 50 percent is African American; 20 percent is Caucasian; and 20 percent are recent immigrants from Ireland, Africa, Cape Verde, Haiti, and Vietnam. O'Hearn Elementary is also a full-inclusive school. Students with physical and cognitive disabilities participate in regular classes, and the school's parent outreach program offers childcare during parent-teacher meetings. Parent involvement and student retention are both high.

Throughout the year, Ms. Jones-Inge's students studied the culture and history of different world regions, including China, Africa, Egypt, Greece, and the United States; and focused on the connections, similarities, and differences among cultures. Ms. Jones-Inge also emphasized applying social studies themes and ideas to the real world. Through field trips, students interacted with contemporary cultures whose origins connect back to regions the students studied. In each unit, students learned related vocabulary words, examined relevant current event articles, and studied geographical features of the area.

Part of the United States unit, the lesson shown in "Making a Difference Through Giving" focused on students' roles as global citizens. This lesson built on students' earlier study of other cultures and incorporated the yearlong theme of community service. Other community service activities throughout the year included planting trees in the schoolyard and visiting local nursing homes.

By this time in the year, Ms. Jones-Inge expected them to be able to work in groups, brainstorm for creative solutions, and think about what it means to be a global citizen. By designing achievable community service projects, Ms. Inge-Jones also wanted students to realize the satisfaction of completing realistic, long-term goals.

Year at a Glance
Mesopotamia
World Regions
Holidays
United States
Civil Rights
Women's History
Five Themes of Geography

About the Class, cont'd.

Following the lesson, the students explored connections between themselves and other aspects of American history. For example, while studying women's history, they researched women who made a difference in their own lives and in world history. The year ended with a comprehensive unit on the five themes of geography.

Lesson Background

Read this information to better understand the lesson shown in the video.

Content: The Ozone Layer

Ozone (O₃) is form of oxygen made up of three atoms instead of two. About 90 percent of the ozone in Earth's atmosphere is located in a layer about 10 miles above Earth's surface, in the upper stratosphere. This layer is called the ozone layer. The ozone layer absorbs most of the ultraviolet radiation (UV rays) emitted by the sun, preventing dangerous amounts from reaching Earth.

In the mid-1970s, scientists determined that human activity, especially ultra-fast air travel and the use of aerosol spray cans, refrigerants, pesticides, and firefighting halogens, was beginning to affect the ozone layer. In 1982, scientists concluded that the ozone layer was getting thinner with each passing year. In 1995, a hole 4 million square miles in size was discovered in the ozone layer above Antarctica. By the year 2000, the hole had grown to 11.4 million square miles, an area more than three times the size of the United States.

The depletion of the ozone layer causes more radiation to reach the Earth, and extended exposure to UV rays has been linked with, among other problems, skin cancer, cataracts, and a weakened immune system.

NASA's research confirms that the hole in the ozone layer, which used to cover just the area over Antarctica, has recently expanded to include the populated regions at the southern tip of Chile. In the city of Punta Arenas, for example, daytime ultraviolet radiation levels are calculated to be 40 percent higher than normal. Most adults wear sunglasses and sunblock, while children and those of pale complexion are advised not to stay in the sun for longer than seven minutes at a time.

In 1987, more than 160 nations signed the Montreal Protocol, an agreement to phase out the production and consumption of ozone-depleting substances in order to protect the ozone layer. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, if the Montreal Protocol is followed, the ozone layer will return to normal by 2050.

Teaching Strategy: Exploring Current Issues

Students often become aware of current issues through the media, but their exposure generally is at a superficial level. There are several strategies you can use to engage young children in current events locally and globally. First, have students connect what they pick up in the news to their own lives as an effective strategy for engaging young children in current events locally and globally. Second, have students explore the effects of an event or issue on other people's lives. Or third, present the issue as a problem for students to solve, as Ms. Jones-Inge has done. By expanding on the information they receive from the news, students develop their research skills. By working in groups to plan for realistic and useful courses of action, students learn and practice civil discussion, explore democratic principles such as individual rights, human dignity, and fairness, and demonstrate their ability to make a difference.

Watching the Video

As you reflect on these questions, write down your responses or discuss them as a group.

Before You Watch

Respond to the following questions:

- How do you introduce current issues in your curriculum? How do you choose which current issues to cover?
- What are some ways to promote a sense of civic responsibility in young students?
- Why is it important for students to study and discuss current issues?
- What factors do you consider in teaching young students about controversial issues?
- How do the study of controversial issues and community service link with citizenship education in social studies?

Watch the Video

As you watch “Making a Difference Through Giving,” take notes on Ms. Jones-Inge’s instructional strategies, particularly how she urges children to make a realistic contribution to the world. Write down what you find interesting, surprising, or especially important about the teaching and learning in this lesson.

Reflecting on the Video

Review your notes, then respond to the following questions:

- What struck you about the classroom climate, background, preparation, strategies, and materials used in this lesson?
- What strategies did Ms. Jones-Inge use to engage students in abstract world issues?
- What evidence do you see that Ms. Jones-Inge respects all students’ opinions?
- What might have been taught in prior lessons to prepare students to address controversial issues? What lessons might follow?

Watching the Video, cont'd.

Looking Closer

Here's an opportunity to take a closer look at interesting aspects of Ms. Jones-Inge's lesson.



Identifying Issues: Video Segment

Go to this segment in the video by matching the image (to the left) on your TV screen. You'll find this segment approximately three minutes into the video. Watch for about six minutes.

Ms. Jones-Inge's students have been discussing issues they read about in newspapers. As the lesson begins, they describe the problems people in Punta Arenas, Chile, have with overexposure to the sun. Then students discuss local, national, and global problems that they can help solve.

- What makes depletion of the ozone layer an especially interesting issue for students in Ms. Jones-Inge's class to discuss?
- How does Ms. Jones-Inge work with students to explore this issue?
- How does Ms. Jones-Inge help students identify local, national, and global problems that they might solve?



Choosing Realistic Goals for Action: Video Segment

Go to this segment in the video by matching the image (to the left) on your TV screen. You'll find this segment approximately 16 minutes into the video. Watch for about five minutes.

The students have voted to determine the groups that will be formed. They are working together to identify some realistic "gifts" they can offer to their community, nation, and world.

- What examples show that the students are aware of global issues?
- Are the "gifts" realistic ones for fourth-grade students to give? Why or why not?

Connecting to Your Teaching

Reflecting on Your Practice

As you reflect on these questions, write down your responses or discuss them as a group.

- How do you help students see the relationship between current issues in social studies and their rights and responsibilities as citizens?
- How do you encourage students to conduct research about current issues and plan and implement community service projects?
- What are the benefits of participating in such projects? What are some pitfalls?
- What are some important considerations when teaching students about the needs of people in other countries?

Taking It Back to Your Classroom

- Identify a controversial issue in your curriculum or a problem in your community that students could participate in solving. Ask students to research and discuss the issue, consider the issue from different points of view, and then plan a course of action. Ask students to think of criteria they can use to evaluate their success at each phase.
- One way to help students understand an issue is to ask them to write a news article about it. After students have written their articles, have them explore an Internet site that posts student news.
- Ask students to nominate people from the community or people they have read about in the news for a "People Who Make a Difference" bulletin board.

Resources

Print Resources for Students

Bronson, Marsha, and Joseph G. Oberle. *Amnesty International*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Silver Burdett Press, 1994.

Donald, Rhonda Lucas. *The Ozone Layer*. True Books: Environment. Chicago, Ill.: Children's Press, 2002.

Milord, Susan. *Hands Around the World: 365 Creative Ways To Build Cultural Awareness and Global Respect*. Kids Can. Milwaukee, Wis.: Gareth Stevens, 1999.

Resources, cont'd.

Print Resources for Teachers

Amnesty International. *Our World, Our Rights: Teaching About Rights and Responsibilities in the Elementary School*. New York: Amnesty International, 2001.

Beal, Candy, and Peter H. Martorella. *Social Studies for Elementary School Classrooms: Preparing Children To Be Global Citizens*. 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2001.

Evans, Ronald W., and David Warren Saxe, eds. *Handbook on Teaching Social Issues*. National Council for the Social Studies Bulletin 93. Washington, D.C., 1996.

McBee, Robin Haskell. "Can Controversial Topics Be Taught in the Early Grades? The Answer Is Yes!" *Social Education* 60, no.1 (1995).

Web Resources for Students

CitizenLink: <http://www.montageplus.co.uk/commonlink/home.html>

Through this site students can explore the meaning of global citizenship through games, articles, and lesson plans.

Scholastic Online: <http://teacher.scholastic.com>

This extension of the Scholastic children's book publishing company offers activities, news, and kid-friendly articles about current issues around the world.

TIME for Kids: <http://www.timeforkids.com/TFK/news>

TIME for Kids is an interactive site dedicated to making current events fun and accessible to kids.

Weekly Reader Galaxy: <http://www.weeklyreader.com>

Written for kids K-12, this companion Web site to the popular elementary school magazine Weekly Reader features news, books, and games.

Web Resources for Teachers

Cool Planet for Teachers: <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet/teachers/globalciti>

Oxfam's Cool Planet site offers curriculum guides, articles, and teaching resources on global citizenship and education.

The Ozone Hole Tour: <http://www.atm.ch.cam.ac.uk/tour>

The University of Cambridge presents an extensive look into the history of the ozone, in the form of a step-by-step "tour" that teachers can take with their students.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: <http://www.epa.gov/ozone>

The Ozone Depletion section at the EPA Web site includes articles, glossaries, and a resource center devoted to the subject of the ozone layer.