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# Curriculum

Module 5 **Understanding Cultures** Overview

Core Learning Outcomes Levels 4-5 Developed by: Joy Schultz Suitable for Upper Primary to Lower Secondary









Department of Education and the Arts

In partnership with:



Brisbane Catholic Education



Qld Catholic Education Commission





# **UNDERSTANDING CULTURES – MODULE 5 OVERVIEW**

## Rationale

The Brink Expedition brings attention to the Middle East as a Hot Spot representing long-standing cultural and religious antagonisms. The effects of these antagonisms and instability in some Muslim countries have resonated world wide through the threat of terrorist attacks. This module encourages students to actively investigate the role of religion in culture with an emphasis on developing deeper understandings of how cultural identities are constructed and how this is manifested in the cultural differences between Muslim countries. Students use this knowledge to critically analyse their own and media perceptions of Muslims and to actively participate in breaking down stereotypes and encourage mutual understanding. They also use an understanding of the historical basis of current events in the Middle East and Australia to consider ways that they can contribute to safe, peaceful and fair communities.

## The Brink Expedition

In an epic test of endurance and resolve, a small team of Queenslanders are racing against time cycling and sailing around the world in just 1000days, travelling through harsh and unforgiving terrain. The Brink Expedition began in May 2003 and is scheduled to finish in Sydney Harbour during 2006. Apart from the adventure of the Expedition, the team has been spurred on by a passionate determination to educate the world's next generation about the environment.

This module complements the actual journey of the Brink Expedition around the globe. Like the other Brink modules, "Understanding Cultures" focuses on one of the 'hot spots' visited by the team.

The team's progress across land and ocean is unpredictable, particularly because the members are determined to travel using natural sources of energy. So the Brink team cannot guarantee that they will arrive in a particular 'hot spot' at a specified time.

This introduces an element of uncertainty for you and your students. The Brink team hopes that you can work with this uncertainty. It could mean that your students will study this module before the team arrives in the Middle East for the "Understanding Cultures" 'hot spot'. It could mean that the team will have already left the Middle East before your students begin their study. Hopefully, however, your students will be studying the 'hotspot' while the team is there.

Whatever the case, you'll see that the module writers have suggested ways that your students can make links with the Brink Expedition – its aims, its history, its actual travel program and its achievements.

You might like also to use the 'uncertainty' positively – drawing attention to the fact that the uncertainty springs from the team's commitment to sustainable modes of travel, from the challenges of travelling through some difficult terrain and some tumultuous societies, and from the way the team members have seized unexpected opportunities for rich experiences. All of these have made a neat itinerary impossible!

## The Earth Charter

The Earth Charter provides the background and the decision making filter for the Brink Expedition. The values and principles of the Earth Charter, together with the Brink Expedition, constitute a relevant and multi-layered opportunity for students to challenge and form their own ideas of democratic process, social justice, ecological and economic sustainability and peace. In particular, this module promotes the possibility that greater intercultural awareness can provide a key to addressing questions of peaceful and sustainable futures that will not be over-shadowed by fear, war and terrorism.

# Keeping in touch with the Brink Team

Until 2006 you can keep in touch with the Brink Expedition Team through the Brink Expedition website at <a href="https://www.brinkx.org">www.brinkx.org</a>. Using the website, you and your students can read updates of the team's journal, visit the Web Forum or link with the Brink Schoolroom and register for "epals" or pen pals along the Brink route. The website also contains information about the places visited by the team. The team hope to arrive in Turkey/Iran/Central Asia by April 2005 to investigate the issue of Understanding Cultures in the Middle East, the Mediterranean and Central Asia.

# **Focus questions**

# Tune In and Explore:

- What perceptions do we have of Muslim people and their religion?
- Where did these perceptions come from?

## Look, Sort and Test:

- (a) What do we mean by "culture" and is there one Islamic culture?
- (b) How does an understanding of Middle East conflicts affect our perceptions of terrorism and asylum seekers from that region? Why could the Brink team not travel through parts of the Middle East? What challenges has Kendon faced in Muslim countries?
- (c) Why has the Australian government implemented a Border Protection Act and how does it reflect the beliefs and values of Australians?

#### Test and Act:

• In what ways can we challenge our own and others' perceptions of Islam and Muslims?

# Core learning outcomes

Studies of Society and Environment Levels 4 and 5 (Queensland SOSE syllabus).

# Tune In and Explore:

# What perceptions do we have of Muslim people and their religion? Where did these perceptions come from?

Culture and Identity 4.2:

Students design an ethical code of personal behaviour based on their perceptions of cultural groups (preliminary only)

Culture and Identity 5.1:

Students investigate aspects of diverse cultural groups and how others see those aspects. (preliminary only)

# Look, Sort and Test:

# (a) What do we mean by "culture" and is there one Islamic culture?

Culture and Identity 4.5:

Students express how material and non-material aspects of groups influence personal identities.

Place and Space 4.4:

Students use latitude, longitude, compass and scale references and thematic amps to make inferences about global patterns.

Culture and Identity 5.1:

Students investigate aspects of diverse cultural groups and how others see those aspects.

Culture and Identity 5.3:

Students share their sense of belonging to a group to analyse cultural aspects that construct their identities.

# (b) How does an understanding of Middle East conflicts affect our perceptions of terrorism and asylum seekers from that region?

Time continuity and change 4.2

Students illustrate the influence of global trends on the beliefs and values of different groups.

Time continuity and change 4.5

Students review and interpret heritages from diverse perspectives to create a preferred future scenario about a global issue.

Culture and Identity 5.1

Students investigate aspects of diverse cultural groups and how others see those aspects.

Culture and Identity 5.5

Students express how dominant and marginalised identities are constructed by media and other influences.

Place and Space 5.1

Students synthesise information from the perspectives of different groups to identify patterns that constitute a region.

# (c) Why has the Australian government implemented a Border Protection Act and how does it reflect the beliefs and values of Australians?

Culture and Identity 4.1

Students investigate how religions and spiritual beliefs contribute to Australia's diverse cultures.

Time continuity and change 4.2

Students illustrate the influence of global trends on the beliefs and values of different groups.

Systems resources and power 4.5

Students classify values that underpin campaigns and organisations associated with human or environmental rights.

Culture and Identity CI 5.1

Students investigate aspects of diverse cultural groups and how others see those aspects.

Culture and Identity 5.5

Students express how dominant and marginalised identities are constructed by media and other influences.

Time continuity and change 5.5

Students identify the values inherent in historical sources to reveal who benefits or is disadvantaged by particular heritages.

#### **Test and Act:**

# In what ways can we challenge our own and others' perceptions of Islam and Muslims?

Culture and Identity 4.2

Students design an ethical code of personal behaviour based on their perceptions of cultural groups

Time continuity and change 4.5

Students review and interpret heritages from diverse perspectives to create a preferred future scenario about a global issue.

Time continuity and change 5.4

Students explain the consequences of Australia's international relations on the development of a cohesive society.

Culture and Identity 5.2

Students devise practical and informed strategies that respond to the impact of particular perceptions of cultural groups held by a community.

Systems resources and power 5.3

Students use a structured decision making process to suggest participatory action regarding a significant current environmental, business, political or legal issue.

Systems resources and power 5.5

Students apply the value of social justice to suggest ways of improving access to democracy in Queensland or other Australian political settings.

# Introduction Follow the progress of the Brink Expedition Team as they travel around the world

This section is designed to be used as an introduction to the Brink Expedition. It can be used effectively in two different ways. Firstly, it can be used at the beginning of this unit to motivate adolescents who may not be interested in studying global issues. Young men embarking on an extreme adventure is likely to engage even the usually disinterested student. Secondly this section could be introduced during the unit as students uncover the impacts people are having on the health of the planet and its people. Then the expedition can be presented as an example of people working for positive change and students can discover, along with the team, the issues and ways to address them. If students have been following the team on earlier legs of their expedition you may want to skip all or some of this section.

There are three components to this section.

- 1. An introduction to the Brink website
- 2. A look at the logistics of planning the expedition
- 3. Using mapping skills to follow the progress of the expeditioners

Each component can be used with students working at various levels, with the complexity being adjusted accordingly. If teachers want to assess work in this section it is suggested that outcomes from the English syllabus (relating to text types – websites, email, journals and interview) be used in components one and two. In component three mapping activities can be designed and assessed using outcomes from the SOSE syllabus (Place & Space 2.4, 3.4, 4.4, 5.4).

Component	Suggested teaching and learning activities	Resource sheets
Introduction to the Brink website	A tour of the website	A website guide
	Reading their Journals	Journal reflections
	Posting questions on the Web Forum	
Planning an expedition	Planning for the adventure	
Mapping the journey	Following the journey in the classroom	A map of the route

## LINKS

Brink Expedition www.brinkx.org

# **Understanding Cultures**

The module is designed so that core learning outcomes from both levels 4 and 5 could be demonstrated. Where extra activities will be required for the demonstration of outcomes at either level, these will be signalled in the activities section of the module.

The module is designed around the TELSTAR model of social and environmental investigation. At the point where students are expected to carry out the major part of the investigation, there are three smaller consecutive investigations that will enable them to answer the Focus Questions. They are then asked to take some action on their findings and to reflect on their new understandings. The module will therefore follow the following sequence:

- The Tune In and Explore phases will tune students in to ideas about stereotyping and cultural difference, and they then explore their understandings about religion, the concept of culture, and current perceptions of Islam. Muslims and related current events in the Middle East and Australia.
- The Look, Sort and Test phases involve three investigations into
  - a. Islam the religion and cultures
  - b. The Middle East as a Hot Spot
  - c. Muslims in Australia
- A synthesising Test phase follows in order to consolidate understandings and to decide how to challenge inaccurate perceptions of Muslims.
- The Act phase involves developing and acting on plans for greater intercultural sensitivity.
- Reflection on own altered perceptions and new understandings.

PLEASE NOTE: Writing for two levels has resulted in this module becoming rather large. To enable teachers to deal with it more easily, the following points should be noted:

- While it looks large, most of the activities in <u>Tune In</u> and <u>Explore</u> are meant to take only a short amount of time.
- Similarly, the <u>second investigation in Look</u> (on the Middle East) appears large, but is mostly teacherdirected through short activities using explanatory maps and could be further shortened. The history of the region is so complex that the emphasis has been placed on students gaining some understanding of the reasons for asylum seekers leaving the region and reasons for Muslim terrorism rather than an in-depth historical analysis.
- The bulk of the module lies in the first and third Investigations, with an emphasis on understanding culture as a concept, focusing on perceptions of Islam and Muslims, especially in Australia.
- While there appears to be a large number of outcomes, assessment of students' demonstration of
  outcomes depends very much on what has gone before and what comes after this module. Some
  outcomes can be fully demonstrated using only the activities in the module, but others may simply
  involve gathering evidence for a future full demonstration or to provide another opportunity to show
  demonstration of previously used outcomes. This might apply to the Place and Space outcomes. It is
  considered that those outcomes that can be fully demonstrated include:
  - ❖ Level 4: CI 4.2, CI 4.5, TCC 4.5, SRP 4.5 and possible PS 4.4
  - Level 5: CI 5.1, CI 5.2, CI 5.3, SRP 5.3 and possibly PS 5.1

Possibilities for the full demonstration of other outcomes mentioned are left to the teacher's discretion.

• If teachers wish to shorten the module, it is suggested that they finish the <u>Test</u> Phase at the end of the first activity with the Cross Impact Matrix. This may involve having less evidence for the demonstration of TCC 4.5 at Level 4, and no evidence for SRP 5.3 and SRP 5.5 in Level 5. They could then simply undertake Harmony Day type activities as their method of undertaking a class plan of action to promote improved perceptions of Muslims in the community, and Level 4 students could still undertake the development of a personal code of ethics (CI 4.2).

# Teaching and learning sequence

Phase	Learning activities	Core Learning Outcomes Level 4	Core Learning Outcomes Level 5	Resource sheets
TUNE IN	<ul> <li>What if a Wesleyan came to live next door?</li> <li>Understanding difference</li> <li>Family cultural differences</li> </ul>	CI 4.2 (preliminary)	CI 5.1 (preliminary)	R 1: Variety is the Spice of Life R2: My Family Culture – preparing and clearing food
EXPLORE	<ul> <li>Exploring:</li> <li>A concept map of culture</li> <li>Current perceptions of Islam and Muslims</li> <li>What I want to know</li> <li>Seeing is Believing</li> <li>How ethnocentric am I?</li> <li>Learning outcomes for the module</li> <li>What can I contribute to the investigation?</li> </ul>			R3. Where do I stand? R4. Seeing is believing R5. How ethnocentric am I?
LOOK SORT TEST	Investigation 1: Islam – The religion and cultures  • Scavenger Hunt for basic information  • Mapping a journey  • A Model of Culture  • Jigsaw investigation  • Coming together at a Hajj in Mecca  Investigation 2: The Middle East as A	CI 4.5 PS 4.4	CI 5.1 CI 5.3	R6. Scavenger Hunt R7. A Model of Culture R8. Distinctively Australian
	<ul> <li>Hot Spot</li> <li>Middle of what? East of what?</li> <li>An historical cross roads</li> <li>A religious melting pot</li> <li>Global effects</li> <li>Why the Brink team could not visit parts of the Middle East</li> <li>What challenges have the Brink team faced as Kendon travelled through Muslim countries?</li> </ul>	TCC 4.2 TCC 4.5	CI 5.1 CI 5.5 PS 5.1	
	<ul> <li>Investigation 3: Muslims in Australia</li> <li>Statistical study (% in population)</li> <li>Historical study (e.g. Afghans)</li> <li>Background to recent events</li> <li>Current perceptions of Muslims in Australia</li> <li>Campaigns about detainees</li> </ul>	CI 4.1 TCC 4.2 SRP 4.5	CI 5.1 CI 5.5 TCC 5.5	
TEST	<ul> <li>Assessing the impact of perceptions of Muslims</li> <li>Using a decision-making process for a preferred future</li> <li>Developing a plan of action to challenge perceptions.</li> </ul>	TCC 4.5	CI 5.2 TCC 5.4 SRP 5.3 SRP 5.5	R9 Cross Impact Matrix
ACT	<ul><li>Putting an action plan into practice</li><li>Developing a personal ethical code</li></ul>	CI 4.2	CI 5.2	
REFLECT	<ul><li>Reflect on new knowledge and skills</li><li>Reflect on change in attitudes</li></ul>			

# **Bibliography**

The following resources are available for loan from:

The Global Learning Centre (Qld)

102 McDonald Road

Windsor 4030

Phone: 3857 6666 Fax: 3857 2173

Email: glc@uq.net.au website: www.uq.net.au/~zzglcent/

## **Perceptions and Cultural Awareness**

Otero, Dr.George, 2001. What Am I Looking At? Teachable moments on perception, cultural awareness and understanding. Hawker Brownlow Education.

#### Islam and Islamic cultures

The following are suitable for primary students:

Penney, Sue, 2001. Islam. World beliefs and Cultures series. Heinemann.

Eldash, Khaled and Khattab, Dalia, 2002. Boushra's Dya: from dawn to dusk in an Egyptian city. Frances Lincoln.

Ghazi, Suhaib Hamid, 1996. Ramadan. Holiday House, NY.

Matthews, Mary, 1996. Magid fasts for Ramadan. Clarion Books. (A story)

Ross, Mandy, 2002. Celebrations! Ramadan and Id-el-Fit. Heinemann.

Ganeri, Anita, 2001. Islamic Stories. Evans Brothers.

Fiesta series, 1999. Pakistan. Moondrake (Reed Educational). Also Egypt, Lebanon.

The following are suitable for secondary students:

An Oxfam Country Profile - series:

Johnson, Chris, 1998, Afghanista

Olsen, Neil, 1998, Albania

Frost, Nicola, 2002, Indonesia

Peters, Chris, 1996, Sudan

Mumtaz, K and Mitha, Y, 1996, Pakistan.

Caritas Australia, *Asia Our Neighbour: Bangladesh.* Catholic Education Commission NSW (Video, running time 36 minutes)

## The Middle East

The following video is for senior secondary students, but teachers may be able to use it as background information or select parts to use with students:

Video Education Australia, 2001. The Taliban Legacy. (Running time 36 minutes).

#### Muslims in Australia

Saeed, Abdullah, 2003. Islam in Australia. Allen and Unwin.

Video Education Australia, 2001. Muslims in Australia. (Running time 27 minutes).

Also able to be downloaded from the web:

Saeed, Abdulla, 2004. *Muslim Australians: Their beliefs, practices and institutions*. Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Australian Multicultural Foundation and the University of Melbourne. (A partnership under the Australian Government's *Living in Harmony* initiative). *Found on:* www.amf.net.au/PDF/religionCulturalDiversity/Resource Manual.pdf