



Brink

expedition

www.brinkX.org

*Survive the race
against time!*



Curriculum

Module 5

Understanding Cultures

Overview

Suitable for Upper Primary to Lower Secondary

Core Learning Outcomes Levels 4-5

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Department of Education
and the Arts



Association of Independent
Schools of Qld



Brisbane Catholic
Education



Qld Catholic
Education Commission



Earth
Charter

In partnership with:



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 www.brinkx.org. 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 maps 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.

Module outline

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 Reading their Journals Posting questions on the Web Forum	A website guide Journal reflections
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

Teaching and learning sequence

Phase	Learning activities	Core Learning Outcomes Level 4	Core Learning Outcomes Level 5	Resource sheets
TUNE IN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What if a Wesleyan came to live next door? • Understanding difference • Family cultural differences 	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	Exploring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A concept map of culture • Current perceptions of Islam and Muslims • What I want to know • Seeing is Believing • How ethnocentric am I? • Learning outcomes for the module • What can I contribute to the investigation? 			R3. Where do I stand? R4. Seeing is believing R5. How ethnocentric am I?
LOOK SORT TEST	Investigation 1: Islam – The religion and cultures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Hot Spot <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle of what? East of what? • An historical cross roads • A religious melting pot • Global effects • Why the Brink team could not visit parts of the Middle East • What challenges have the Brink team faced as Kendon travelled through Muslim countries? Investigation 3: Muslims in Australia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistical study (% in population) • Historical study (e.g. Afghans) • Background to recent events • Current perceptions of Muslims in Australia • Campaigns about detainees 	CI 4.5 PS 4.4	CI 5.1 CI 5.3	R6. Scavenger Hunt R7. A Model of Culture R8. Distinctively Australian
TEST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing the impact of perceptions of Muslims • Using a decision-making process for a preferred future • Developing a plan of action to challenge perceptions. 	TCC 4.5	CI 5.2 TCC 5.4 SRP 5.3 SRP 5.5	R9 Cross Impact Matrix
ACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting an action plan into practice • Developing a personal ethical code 	CI 4.2	CI 5.2	
REFLECT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on new knowledge and skills • Reflect on change in attitudes 			

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@ug.net.au website: www.ug.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