



“Journey around the World:” Prosocial and Global Education Curriculum for Elementary School Children

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The *Journey Around the World* is an elementary school curriculum that fosters prosocial and global competencies through oral and written language instruction. The goal of the *Journey* is to develop socioemotional skills which allow children to be open to cultural diversity, establish positive interpersonal relationships, work collaboratively with others, and take responsible social actions. The *Journey* curriculum strives to educate young people who have a moral compass and relate to others in a caring and authentic manner; understand other people; accept different views in a non-defensive and curious manner; and have knowledge and understanding of other cultures.

Curriculum Objectives

- ❖ develop children’s social understanding and perspective taking skills;
- ❖ promote prosocial values, feelings and behaviors;
- ❖ increase knowledge about cultural diversity and a sense of global citizenship;
- ❖ develop oral and written language skills.

Curriculum Features

- ❖ The *Journey* curriculum is designed in a thematic storytelling format where children take imaginary trips around the US and the world with four fictitious friends. Such a format engages children and allows them to identify with the positive qualities of the stories’ characters. The stories aid in the construction of prosocial scripts, which can guide children’s interpersonal behavior in various cultural contexts.
- ❖ The curriculum integrates global and prosocial competencies. At the core of these competencies is the ability to care about people and to act on behalf of them. In their imaginary journey, children encounter social situations, which require taking perspectives of others, resolving moral dilemmas, and showing empathy and compassion towards others in need.
- ❖ The *Journey* teaches prosocial and global competencies through language arts instruction. Children are engaged in language arts activities, which are meaningful and relevant for their cultural journey. These activities, in addition to teaching literacy skills, serve the purpose of fostering prosocial competencies.
- ❖ The curriculum integrates language arts activities with dramatic, collaborative, and craft activities to enrich cultural context and provide children with opportunities for action.

Curriculum Format

Journey around the World is a yearlong curriculum delivered by a regular education teacher. It is organized in 12 modules, each centered on a main theme. The modules have 63 lessons which consist of (1) stories which facilitate cultural learning, social understanding, empathy, and perspective taking skills; (2) strategies to promote global and prosocial competencies through language arts instruction; (3) cognitive tools (schemas, storytelling maps,

etc.) to promote internalization of cultural and prosocial scripts, storytelling and writing skills; and (4) dramatic, collaborative, and craft activities.

The curriculum provides detailed lesson plans with PowerPoint presentations.

Socio-Emotional Prosocial Competencies Taught in the *Journey* Curriculum

- Affective language
- Understanding of causes and effects of emotions
- Empathy and compassion
- Prosocial behaviors including instrumental help, donating/sharing, and comforting
- Perspective taking

Global Competencies Taught in the *Journey* Curriculum

- Curiosity and knowledge about different cultures
- Tolerance towards racial, linguistic, and cultural differences
- Awareness of one's own cultural perspectives and perspectives of others
- Effective cross-cultural communication skills
- Knowledge of global environmental and social justice problems

Examples of Written Language Activities:

- "Welcome friend!, "Thank you," "Comforting," "Invitation" cards;
- Gratitude and "What makes me happy" letters;
- Letters "About My Family" and "To My Family";
- Reflections on travel experiences;
- Articles for Classroom Newsletter;
- Using different representational systems (Native American petroglyphs, Chinese characters, Aboriginal Australian symbols, and pictures) to write stories.



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