

**Link to my Digital Learning Center:** <https://mikaelasdigitallearningcenter.wordpress.com/>

### **Topic and Objective**

The topic that I selected for my digital learning center is cultural diversity and it is intended to be used in a grade four classroom. I chose this topic because I feel that it is an important topic, especially in Canada, where cultural diversity is rapidly expanding. In this digital learning center, the students will have the chance to reflect on their own culture and share them with their peers. In addition, the students will also have the opportunity to learn about the cultures of others through read-alouds and by having access to the work of their peers. I have also included an additional activity that discusses discrimination, which I believe ties into the topic of cultures and is important for students to be aware of. Overall, I believe that having this digital learning center accessible to students is one of many ways of creating a culturally responsive classroom. Ensuring that the classroom is culturally responsive is important because it allows the students to see themselves represented in the space – helping them feel welcome, safe, and included. This is emphasized in the *Social Studies for Social Justice* textbook as it states, “With the awareness that intolerant beliefs are among the root causes of injustice in society, teachers must work to ensure that all cultures have a place at the table.” (Wade, 2007, p. 13).

Furthermore, the objective of this digital learning center is to help students understand the importance of celebrating and embracing how each of us are special and unique. This will be done through self-reflection of one’s own culture, as well as exploring the cultures of fictional characters through literature and the cultures of their peers. Aspects of these will include family traditions, clothing, food, pets, languages, music, etcetera. With that, another objective of this digital learning center is to dive deeper into culture. In ECS 200 and ECE 325, we discussed the cultural iceberg model. This model demonstrates how there is surface level culture and deep culture. Depending on the students’ level, this may be a difficult concept to grasp. However, this digital learning center allows for students to begin exploring deep culture by engaging with topics that go beyond surface level culture – this is especially evident in Activity #1, where the video discusses beliefs and values. In addition, often times, schools only take the time to learn, acknowledge, and celebrate cultural diversity during “multicultural week”. However, by having this digital learning center accessible any time allows the students to understand that cultural diversity is everywhere, all the time and that there does not need to be a special time or day to celebrate it. Moreover, the additional activity I have included (activity #5) will help students learn about and reflect on the impacts that cultural discrimination has on individuals. The *Social Studies for Social Justice* textbook states, “We must move beyond ‘celebrating diversity’ or ‘promoting tolerance’ to helping our students understand how some differences lead to power, privilege, and wealth while others are subjected to inequities and discrimination.” (Wade, 2007, p. 13) With that, it is just as important for students to be aware that cultural injustice exists in our society as it is for them to learn about the importance of celebrating diversity.

### **Overall Explanation**

This digital learning center is intended to be used to extend the students’ knowledge on cultural diversity. With that, prior to inviting the students to engage with it, we will have lessons

on cultural diversity and discrimination. Having this prior knowledge, will ensure that once the students get the chance to engage with learning center, they will already be familiar with what culture and discrimination are, as well as the terms found throughout the website, such as traditions and beliefs. This is because the purpose of this learning center is to dive deeper and explore their own traditions and the traditions of others, the impacts and meaning of discrimination, as well as make connections to their prior knowledge.

In terms of the website itself, the students must be familiar with specific applications that they will be engaging with, such as PlayPosit, Padlet, Google Slides, Google Docs, Google Forms, Microsoft Word, and Paint or any other drawing application. Guided lessons and experiences using these applications will be implemented before having access to the digital learning center. In addition, I would also do a walkthrough of the learning center itself with the students. This will develop some familiarity for when they engage with the center independently. I would do this by presenting the website to the students on a SmartBoard or projector and briefly explain each activity, as well as how to navigate through the website. After, the learning center will be accessible for students to engage with on the classroom computers when they have free time, during indoor recesses, or even at home.

Below are the reasons why I chose to create each activity:

### ***Activity #1***

The reason why I designed the first activity is to briefly review what culture means. I chose the video of the two young girls exploring and defining their culture because it goes beyond surface level culture by exploring their family beliefs and values – such as education, respecting the elderly, and nature. I chose to create a PlayPosit for this activity, as it gave me the option to ask the students comprehension and open-ended reflection questions to help them better understand and engage with the content of the video. When implementing this activity with the students, I would have a class account so that the students' responses are sent directly to me.

### ***Activity #2***

The second activity focuses on family traditions. I believe that family traditions are an important piece of culture, as even people who have similar cultures have different traditions. I chose to create a Padlet for this activity as it allows the students to upload a photograph and write a little story to go with it. One of the benefits of this activity is that the students have access to view their peers' Padlet posts. With that, not only will they get the opportunity to share about their own traditions, but they will also have the chance to view and learn about the traditions of their peers.

### ***Activity #3***

The third activity includes an eBook called *The World's Family* by Miranda Paul. The book is about what makes up a person's culture by exploring the cultures of several individuals and explains that we are all what makes up the world's family. The activity that I created to go along with it is to collaboratively create our own classroom family "book". I chose this activity because it allows the students to reflect on their own culture and to explore the different cultures within our

own classroom community. I believe that it demonstrates the importance of embracing our differences and recognizing that it is our differences that make our classroom and the world special.

#### ***Activity #4***

The fourth activity includes a read aloud of the book *Same, Same but Different* by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw. The book explores the cultures of two boys who live in different parts of the world. Throughout the book, the author explores ways in which the boys are the same, but different. I selected this book as it allows the students to discover that people from different countries or cultures may do things differently. The activity I created that goes along with the book is to research a country and find two things that they do the same, but different. I chose this activity because it allows the students to go beyond their own classroom by exploring cultures from other parts of the world.

#### ***Activity #5***

Although we were only required to do four activities, I included an additional one because I believe it is important for students to realize that cultural injustice exists and one way that this occurs in society is through discrimination. For this activity, I provided the students with a short video that explains and provides some examples of discrimination. Once the students finish the video, they are asked to complete the Google Form, in which I have created a couple scenarios for them to think about and answer, as well as some reflection questions that encourages them to think deeply about discrimination.

#### **Evidence of Learning**

There are a few different ways in which I will know if the learner has learned what I intended for them to learn – each activity has its own. For the first activity, as previously stated, the students will each have a PlayPosit account that will be connected to a classroom account. With that, the students' responses will be directly sent to myself for assessment. The second activity will be assessed on the photograph and explanation they post on the Padlet. Since it is personal, they will simply be assessed on their participation. The third activity will be assessed on creativity and whether they completed each component that was asked of them – these include their name, three things about their culture that is important to them, and pictures (personal photos or clipart). The fourth activity will be assessed based off of their final poster. Similar to the third activity, they will be assessed on their creativity and the two similarities/differences they describe. Finally, the fifth activity will be assessed based on the answers the students provide on the Google Form, which will be sent directly to my email address.

In addition, I provided an “All Done?” link at the end of the menu bar. On this page, I provided a link to a Google Doc in which the students are invited to write their name and share what they learned, ask questions they may have, or share any ideas for future activities that can be added to this learning center. This page acts as an online “exit slip” or form of formative assessment that tells me what the students have learned or things that they still wonder about that we can work on together.

Reference:

Wade, R. C. (2007). *Social studies for social justice: teaching strategies for the elementary classroom*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.