



Social Studies 20/23
Grade 12

Preventing
Prejudice

Respecting
Diversity

Understanding Ethnocentrism by Analyzing Map Projections

Contributor

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Objective

This lesson helps students understand the roots of ethnocentrism, prejudice and discrimination by challenging them to examine and identify their perspectives through a study of various world map projections. This inquiry-based lesson offers a way to critically examine perceptions of ourselves and others by thinking about ways the we represent the world in maps. Students will think about the underlying assumptions that determine how people view and represent the world—an important step in understanding diversity.

 **Time** 65 to 80 minutes

Materials

- Overhead 1 Four Views of the World (see end of lesson for transparency master)
- Student Handout 1 (chart)
- World globe
- Mercator and Peters Projections readings
- Overhead 2 Anaïs Nin
- Poster showing the earth from the moon

Getting Started

Knowledge Now

Remove any world maps from the walls of your classroom.

Step 1

Give each student a blank sheet of paper. Ask students to visualize a world map. After visualizing for 30 to 45 seconds ask them to draw an outline map of the continents of the world from that mental image. Tell students not to show their map to anyone else. Ask students who finish quickly to label the continents and the oceans. Ask all students to draw in the equator and label the four directions. Some students may need some additional coaching, but try to minimize this. It is important to maintain privacy with this aspect of the activity. Tell students to put their maps away when they are finished.

Engaging Interest

Step 2

Project the Four Views of the World overhead and provide each student with Student Handout 1. Ask them to recall the outline map they just created.

Ask each person to determine which map they think most accurately represents the world. Rank choices from 1 to 4, with 1 being the most accurate and 4 the least accurate. Write choices titled My Ranking. Avoid suggesting criteria upon which answers will be based. Ask students to determine criteria (if they ask).

*Students will select criteria that reveal their assumptions about what it is that determines accuracy. The main point of the lesson is to become conscious of these criteria and examine what their choices reveal about who is important and who is not.

Learning Activities

Step 3

Organize the class into small groups and ask the same question—which map represents the world most accurately? Label the groups A, B, C and so on. This time tell the groups in ranking their choices. Write the group's choices in the second column of the chart.

Step 4

Draw a large grid on the whiteboard. Create four equal rows and label them View 1 to View 4. Draw a number of columns corresponding to the number of small groups. Ask one person from each group to write the group's choices in the group's column.

Add up the points for each view to determine the class rankings for each view. For example, if View 2 had the highest number; therefore, it would be the class's number one choice.

Debrief

While students are still in their groups, ask them to identify the criteria they used to rank the maps; in other words, what made one seem to be more accurate than an other? Students may say things like, "it's the way I always see it (or that's right)" "View 3 was upside down" "View 4 makes the continents look long and skinny" and so on.

Pick up on students thoughts to engage in a discussion that critically looks at their assumptions about what it is that determines accuracy. For example, if you said View 3 is upside down, what does that mean? In relation to what? Who determines what's up and what's down (in the universe)? Is it better to be up or down? Who decided to draw these maps in this particular way? What was their objective; to make navigation easier, to focus on a particular area or to reflect something that was important to him or her?

Assessment/Analysis

Ask someone draw in the equator on the transparency. Ask the following questions: what is the relative size of Greenland to South America? Which continents appear to be more important? Which map(s) distort size? Which distort shape? What does this mean?

Show students the globe and explain that all flat maps are distorted. Cartographers must make choices regarding how they will modify a flat map to create a two-dimensional representation from a three dimensional object—the earth. Explain and elaborate the origins of Mercator and Peters map projections. Ask what criteria were important to them in making their maps? If size is a criterion, who would be important in the Mercator projection?

We are going to examine the assumptions that underlie cartographers' choices about what they distort in making flat maps. Their choices may show what and who they think are important

Key Questions

By viewing the maps that we use, what can we learn about ourselves? How can map projections influence the way we think about others?

Explain the meaning of the term worldview. Challenge students to think about how their own worldviews may have influenced their selections.

Our worldview can limit (or enhance) the way we view others. What other images, icons or ads shape the way we think about ourselves and others? How can these images contribute to prejudice and stereotyping?

Discuss the concept of *ethnocentrism*. How do maps reflect this concept? How does the quotation by Anaïs Nin illustrate the idea of ethnocentrism? How does it relate to the activity on map projections?

Overhead “We don’t see things as they are, we see them as we are.”

Anaïs Nin

Post a picture of the world from the moon and consider playing the song From a Distance by Bette Midler to close the class. Provide lyrics for further reflection.

Application

Encourage students to explore worldviews of various cultures and study artifacts showing their representations of the world. Always think about what values and beliefs are reflected in a group’s representation of the world.

Social Studies 20/23 Learner Outcomes

Topic B Theme I Global Diversity (20)/Global Regionalism (23)

Knowledge (20/23)

- See diversity and disparity through a brief overview of world geography

Knowledge (23)

- Understand that perspectives on quality of life are influenced by various factors within a society, including beliefs and values

Skills (23)

- Identify points of view or perspectives from various sources
- Consider perspectives, make decisions and substantiate choices regarding global issues

Skills (20)

- Interpret and use information from maps, graphs, charts and tables

Attitudes (23/20)

- Develop an appreciation of the diversity that exists in the world

Safe and Caring Topics and Concepts

Respecting Diversity and Preventing Prejudice

Respecting different points of view builds community and helps to prevent or resolve conflict

Studying different cultures, religions and lifestyles in society and in the school

Teaching Strategies

Go to	Cooperative Learning	Inquiry Learning	Direct Instruction
www.sacsc.ca for <i>Strategies/Resources</i> for strategy descriptions		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cognitive Coaching/ Metacognitions	

Generalization and Transfer	Peer Teaching	Empathy/Affective Education	General Teaching Activities/Ideas

Supplementary Resources

- *Making a Difference*, Friendship Press, New York. 1989. (Adapted by Barb Maheu with permission)
- Maheu, Hein and Osborne. 1995. *Global Interconnections: a Resource for High School Social Studies Teachers*, Alberta Global Education Project, Edmonton.
- Song “From a Distance” by Bette Midler

Student Handout 1

Map Projections

View each of the maps in the four views that you are shown. You will rank the maps according to accuracy of their representations of the world. First rank the maps by yourself ranking them 1 for the most accurate and 4 for the least accurate.

	My ranking	Small group ranking	Class ranking
View 1			
View 2			
View 3			
View 4			

My notes

Four Views of the World

