

What does it mean to live on an island?

Framework for learning

Overview

The learning focuses on exploring how the physical, geographical and cultural environments of islands contribute to the identity of those who live on islands. It considers the challenges and opportunities faced that are unique to island living.

The activities provide students with an opportunity to develop an appreciation and greater depth of understanding of their place.

Students undertaking this learning will understand that there are unique experiences associated with living on an island and will explore the way that these experiences contribute to their sense of place.

The following focus questions could be used in conjunction with any of the units listed below.

- 1 What unique experiences are associated with living on an island?
- 2 In what ways do these unique experiences contribute to a sense of place?
- 3 How do islands change over time?

The learning is organised into 9 units:

1. Living on the edge
2. Island environments
3. Kitchen cultures
4. Island communication
5. Visitors - welcome and unwelcome
6. Stormy weather
7. Spirited island
8. Transport through time
9. People and culture

Stage / age of schooling

The learning is suited to students in the upper primary and lower secondary stages of schooling, or students aged 11 to 14 years.

Focus curriculum areas

Geography, History, Science, Economics, Literature, Music, Dance, Visual Arts, Multimedia

Living on the edge

Key concepts: island, identity, environment, development, protection, change

Other key terms: coastline, shoreline, sea level, flora, fauna, beachcomber, flotsam, jetsam

Key understandings as questions:

1. What is an island?
2. How can I care for my coastal environment?
3. Where do people live on my island?
4. What has changed about my island over time?
5. What would I keep and what would I change about my island?
6. In what ways can we use things found on the beach?

Island Environments

Key concepts: lifestyle, culture, environment, biodiversity, conservation, extinct, endangered

Other key terms: endemic, species, flora, fauna, invertebrate, vertebrate, marsupial, carnivore, wilderness

Key understandings as questions:

1. In what ways might my island be developed?
2. How can my island be protected?
3. What lives on my island? (What's endemic to my island?)
4. In what ways is my island environment unique?
5. How can endangered species be saved from extinction?
6. What is my ecological footprint?

Kitchen cultures

Key concepts: recipe, tradition, culture, health, produce, import.

Other key terms: cooking, meal, diet, restaurant, chef

Key understandings as questions:

1. What traditions are associated with food on my island?
2. What food is produced and eaten on my island?
3. How does food influence my island's culture?
4. How healthy is my island diet?
5. How has food and cooking changed over time on my island?

Island communication

Key concepts: language, native language, identity, communicate.

Other key terms: news, names, songs, slogan, image, emblem, symbol, body language, etiquette, manners

Key understandings as questions:

1. How do we communicate on our island?
2. In what ways do we find out about places beyond our shore?
3. In what ways can our island's identity be communicated to others?
4. How has language changed over time on my island?
5. In what ways have developments in communication assisted islanders?

Visitors – welcome and unwelcome

Key concepts: environment, ecosystem, endemic species, invasive species, introduced species, weeds, endangered, protection.

Other key terms: biological control, feral animals, alien, erosion, regeneration, ecological damage, pest management, quarantine, bounty, eradication, ship ballast, migration, refugee

Key understandings as questions:

1. How can we protect our island from invasive species?
2. What impact have invasive species had on my island's environment?
3. In what ways are invasive species like aliens?
4. In what ways are tourists like invasive species?
5. How can an island's people become environmental refugees?

Stormy weather

Key concepts: weather, global warming, sea level, climate change.

Other key terms: shipwreck, storm, tide, coast, population, ice age, hurricane, tsunami, Kyoto Protocol, greenhouse emissions

Key understandings as questions:

1. What is the weather like on my island and how has it changed over time?
2. How can the weather be predicted?
3. In what ways does the weather influence life on my island?
4. In what ways are climate change and rising sea level impacting on island populations?
5. What is global warming and why is it happening?
6. What can I do to help 'cool the globe'?

Spirited island

Key concepts: isolation, legend, myth, mystery, folklore, religion, tradition, missionary, survival

Other key terms: fiction, fantasy, war, castaway, culture, pirate.

Key understandings as questions:

1. In what ways do religious traditions influence the culture of island inhabitants?
2. What impact have missionaries had on island people?
3. What roles have myths and legends played in creating mystery about island life?
4. How would you survive if stranded on an isolated island?

Transport through time

Key concepts: travel, trade, air transport, sea transport, interdependence, communication, technology

Other key terms: lighthouse, isolation.

Key understandings as questions:

1. How can the availability of transport between islands create and sustain interdependence between different islands?
2. In what ways has your island changed as transport has changed and improved?
3. In what ways has improved technology in transport opened up trade opportunities for island businesses?
4. How has technology impacted on lighthouses over time?

People and culture

Key concepts: culture, connectedness, identity, characteristics, features, relationships, sense of place, paradise, celebration, festival, history.

Other key terms: sport, literature, music, dance, artists, artefact, gender roles, islomaniac

Key understandings as questions:

1. What characteristics and features give my island its distinctive identity?
2. How has the culture of my island changed and developed over time?
3. How is the culture of my island connected to that of other islands?
4. How is the culture of island people represented in celebrations and festivals?
5. What is my sense of place on my island?

Explanation: Activity organiser

The units of work and suggested activities are designed for the teacher to adapt for their students' ability level.

The units of work are based on an integrated approach to planning and implementing the curriculum, to provide a way of enhancing student learning and a means of organising the curriculum in a coherent, relevant and manageable way.

No one curriculum has been followed due to the diversity of approaches across global islands, but the units represent several learning areas. These units do not propose specific approaches to learning, though a view of learning is implied by the kinds of student tasks suggested.

There has been an effort to make these materials as inclusive as possible, although it is inevitable that people writing in one place with one set of experiences cannot fully reflect the complex reality of teaching and learning in different contexts across islands around the world.

Teachers and students are therefore encouraged to add activities and tasks to the units, to build an excellent resource of rich learning tasks and to consider appropriate assessment 'for' and 'of' learning.

There are numerous models of curriculum differentiation that can be applied creatively to produce programs that provide flexibility and choice, for the range of individual differences in the classroom. These models show how content, teaching and learning processes and products can be fine-tuned to meet the needs of all students.

For these units of work, the activities have been organised using the Maker and Williams models

The Maker and Williams models provide a framework to create programs designed to stimulate students' critical and creative thinking. The challenge is to use the models in a considered way to create exciting opportunities for students.

The Maker model

The Maker (1982) model is a very practical model of curriculum differentiation, which illustrates how content, process and product can be adjusted to meet the needs of students.

Maker also emphasises the importance of allowing students to create products that solve real-world problems. It is also important to provide students with the opportunity to present work to a variety of audiences for constructive appraisal.

Students will benefit from negotiating evaluation criteria and being involved in the process of evaluation itself.

Maker's model of differentiated curriculum suggests that curriculum needs to be differentiated in terms of:

1. **Learning environment:** The aim is to create a learning environment which encourages students to engage their abilities to the greatest extent possible, including taking risks and building knowledge and skills in what they perceive as a safe, flexible environment. It should be:
 - student-centred - focusing on the student's interests, input and ideas rather than those of the teacher
 - encouraging independence - tolerating and encouraging student initiative
 - open - permitting new people, materials, ideas and things to enter and non-academic and interdisciplinary connections to be made
 - accepting - encouraging acceptance of others' ideas and opinions before evaluating them
 - complex - including a rich variety of resources, media, ideas, methods and tasks,
 - highly mobile - encouraging movement in and out of groups, desk settings, classrooms, and schools.

2. **Content modification:** The aim is to remove the ceiling on what is learned, and use the students' abilities to build a richer, more diverse and efficiently organised knowledge base. This building can be facilitated by encouraging:
 - abstractness - with content shifting from facts, definitions and descriptions to concepts, relationships to key concepts, and generalisations
 - complexity - with content shifting to inter-relationships rather than considering factors separately
 - variety - with content expanding beyond material presented in the normal program
 - study of people - including the study of individuals or peoples, and how they have reacted to various opportunities and problems
 - study of methods of inquiry - including procedures used by experts working in their fields.

3. **Process modification:** The aim is to promote creativity and higher level cognitive skills, and to encourage productive use and management of the knowledge the students have mastered. This can be facilitated by encouraging:
 - higher levels of thinking - involving cognitive challenge using Bloom's Taxonomy (1984) logical problems, critical thinking and problem solving
 - creative thinking - involving imagination, intuitive approaches and brainstorming techniques
 - open-endedness - encouraging risk-taking and the response that is right for the student by stressing there is no one right answer
 - group interaction on a cooperative basis (depending on the task and its objectives)
 - variable pacing - allowing students to move through lower order thinking more rapidly but allowing more time for students to respond fully on higher order thinking tasks
 - variety of learning processes - accommodating different students' learning styles

- debriefing - encouraging students to be aware of and able to articulate their reasoning or conclusion to a problem or question, and
 - freedom of choice - involving students in selection, evaluation and choices of topic, method, product and environment choices.
4. **Product modification:** The aim is to facilitate opportunities for students to produce a product that reflects their potential. This can be encouraged by incorporating:
- real problems - relevant to the student and the activity
 - real audiences - utilising an 'audience' that is appropriate for the product, which could include another student or group of students, a teacher (not necessarily the class teacher), an assembly, a mentor, a community or specific interest group
 - real deadlines - encouraging time management skills and realistic planning,
 - transformations - involving original manipulation of information
 - appropriate evaluation - of the product and the process using criteria that are appropriate for such products.

The Williams model

The Williams model provides a range of strategies across three dimensions to create questions to help students develop skills for, and to stimulate creative and critical thinking. Williams defines eight factors, four cognitive and four affective, needed for divergent thinking. The four cognitive qualities are fluent thinking, flexible thinking, original thinking, and elaborative thinking. Risk-taking, complexity, curiosity and imagination are the four affective qualities. Williams also suggests the following 18 teaching approaches that will encourage creative thinking and that can be used across the disciplines:

1. **Paradox**
At first glance this is something that appears to be counter intuitive. Paradoxes can be used to evaluate ideas and challenge students to reason and find proof.
2. **Attribute Listing**
This involves the skill of analysis. Students can be asked to list the attributes of or list the properties of something.
3. **Analogy**
Students find the similarities between things and compare one thing to another. Use analogies to introduce new concepts.
4. **Discrepancy**
Exploration of deficiencies in a person's understanding. Students should be challenged to discuss what is not known or understood.
5. **Provocative question**
These are questions that require thoughtful consideration to clarify meaning or develop new knowledge. Many types of challenging questions can be posed to elicit higher order thinking using Bloom's taxonomy, e.g. questions that require analysis, synthesis and evaluation.
6. **Examples of change**
Demonstrate the dynamic nature of things, make modifications or alterations. This enables students to examine examples and processes of change.

7. **Examples of habit**
Teach about rigidity, fixations and habit. Use examples of habit and the results of habit-bound thinking.
8. **Organised random search**
Given a situation or body of knowledge ask students to search for other information to answer questions such as; what would you do or what would you have done? Justify your response.
9. **Skills of search**
This involves searching for ways that something has been done before or searching for the current status of something; For example, looking for cause and effect, analysing results, drawing conclusions.
10. **Tolerance for ambiguity**
In other words, an observation could mean one thing or it could mean something else. Pose open ended questions, provide situations that puzzle. This is a good technique that leads to self directed learning. Encourage tolerance for ambiguity with open-ended problems.
11. **Intuitive expression**
Be sensitive to inward hunches.
12. **Adjustment to development**
Learn from mistakes and failures. Show how failure, mistakes and accidents have led to the discovery of worthwhile things.
13. **Study creative process**
Analyse the traits and characteristics of eminently creative people through biographies.
14. **Evaluate situations**
Evaluate solutions and answers in terms of their consequences and implications: pose the question what if?
15. **Creative reading skills**
Students generate as many ideas as possible after reading a text — this can stimulate a student to develop new ideas.
16. **Creative listening skills**
This is the skill of generating ideas by listening: students listen to a book excerpt. They then write a poem capturing the essence of the story.
17. **Creative writing skills**
This is the skill of generating and communicating ideas through writing.
18. **Visualisation**
Provide opportunities for students to perceive or visualise situations in many contexts.

References

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