From one Alexandria to Another

One World Ambassador: Salma Mohamed

Learning Activity #2: Going to School Around the World

Focus Areas: Social Studies; Research and Writing; Geography

Grades: 6th-9th

Objective(s):
LW reflect on his/her school life.
LW consider a variety of factors that affect education and research these factors in countries around the world.
LW creatively represent a typical school day in another country.

Duration:
Approximately 4 (60 minute) periods with some homework assigned.

Preparation:
- Print and copy OWEd resources: Salma’s reflection “From One Alexandria to Another,” Previewing the Experience, Understanding the Experience, Reviewing the Experience, My School Life, Internet Pathfinder, Venn Diagram, Around the World in School, Performance Rubric
- Internet access to www.oneworldeducation.org
- Internet access for online student research
- Materials/Supplies: Any desired signs, maps or posters for gallery walk

Reflection Prompt: Salma writes, “My first class was Arabic. All the students in the fourth grade are in one classroom. There were about 40-50 students. Each desk consists of two seats, however, some desks had three students sitting behind it. The teacher comes into the classroom and all of the students stand.”

Procedure:
Step 1: Getting Started
Ask students to spend a few minutes thinking about their schools and their education. The *My School Life* Resource provides categories for students to consider. Encourage them to be thorough when filling out the first column of the worksheet. This step may be completed in class or as homework.

Once worksheets are complete, have students share in pairs. Ask volunteers to share areas that differed between students. What accounted for different answers?

Step 2: Reading with Purpose
After students have reflected on and shared about their own experiences in school, introduce Salma Mohommad and her One World Reflection. Explain that Salma’s experiences in school played an important role in her time in Egypt and taught her that school can be very different in other countries.

- Introduce this next part of the learning activity by viewing Salma’s Ambassador Profile at [www.oneworldeducation.org](http://www.oneworldeducation.org).
- Complete the pre-reading questions in the *Previewing the Experience* unit resource.
- Read Salma’s reflection *From One Alexandria to Another*. Have students read silently and then spend a few minutes discussing what they read in pairs or small groups.
- Complete the during-reading questions in the *Understanding the Experience* unit resource.

Step 3: Pre-search
Focus the lesson on the reflection prompt: “*My first class was Arabic. All the students in the fourth grade are in one classroom. There were about 40-50 students. Each desk consists of two seats, however, some desks had three students sitting behind it. The teacher comes into the classroom and all of the students stand.*”

Lead a discussion with students to help them consider the major differences in education around the world and how those differences might impact students.

1. If you could adjust any of your answers about your own education, which would you choose? Why?
2. Which of the categories on the worksheet do you think would most likely be different in another country? How so?
3. How does the school building itself affect a student’s education? What about the relationship between the teacher and the students?

Step 4: Researching Education
Inform students that they will be researching education in another country in order to discover how the average day for a student there might look. They should find as
much information for the second column on the *My School Life* worksheet as they can, in at least three of the categories. The Internet Pathfinder will be a good place to start their research, but students should be encouraged to use other resources, as well. Books from the library and other websites can offer detailed information about their particular country. Assign students to work in pairs. You may choose to assign pairs based on mutual interest in a particular country. The following list provides countries with relatively ample online information, though you may also allow students to self-select a country:

- Italy
- Japan
- Ghana
- Thailand
- Norway
- Indonesia

Online research to find answers to the worksheet may be done in 1 or 2 class periods or as homework, depending on the time and resources available to your class.

Once students have completed research, they should create Venn Diagrams (on their own or using the *Venn Diagram* Resource) comparing the information they have researched and their input about their own school.

**Step 5: Creative Presentations**

Explain that students will bring their research to life by portraying a typical school day in their assigned country. They should first craft a story of a school day that includes narrative descriptions of the categories on the *My School Life* worksheet. They can identify a particular student, class or teacher as the main character or narrator and tell the story of a complete school day.

Students should then choose one of the following formats to accompany their story:

- **Diorama:** Students recreate a typical classroom from their country to demonstrate building materials, school supplies, student population and lessons that are taught. The diorama should portray the setting of the narrative story.

- **Blog:** Students create a blog based on their narrative story. The blog should be written by a class in their assigned country to share their school with the rest of the world, complete with stories, schedules and pictures. Depending on available resources, this can be done on a real website such as [https://www.blogger.com](https://www.blogger.com) or simulated using computer printouts.

- **Play:** Students turn their narrative story into a play to portray a typical school day, including schedule, lessons with the teacher, extra-curricular activities and other interactions. The students should provide a script for their production, with dialogue and descriptions of setting.
Step 6: Presentation
Once students have researched education in their assigned countries and created presentations of a typical school, it is time to celebrate their work. Arrange a gallery walk in your classroom, with an area for each country. You may choose to identify the area with printed pictures, maps, student-created signs, etc. Each student should take a trip around the world, completing the Around the World in School Resource. In addition, invite other classes, school officials, and students to take a trip around the world, spending a day at school in each country!

Checking for Understanding:
There are opportunities for both formative and summative assessment throughout this learning activity. To assess student understanding:

- **Step 1**—Review student’s answers to the My School Life Resource. Assess students’ understanding of the categories and awareness of their own education.
- **Step 2**—Both pre-reading (Previewing the Experience) and during-reading (Understanding the Experience) questions are available in the Related OWEd Resources for this unit. Use them to gauge student’s prior knowledge or attitudes as well as their reading comprehension skills.
- **Step 3**—Gauge students’ responses for their level of understanding of the factors and conditions that affect education. Consider whether they are able to imagine differences and the affect they might have on a student’s education.
- **Step 4**—Review students’ responses from their research. Have they been thorough in seeking information in at least three categories? Are they able to glean information from online or print resources that applies to the categories? Are they able to compare the information in a meaningful way on the Venn Diagram?
- **Step 5**—Use the rubric provided to assess the writing and creative presentation skills demonstrated by student narrative and creations.
- **Step 6**—Review student responses to the Around the World in School Resource to assess their ability to compare and contrast information about different countries.
- Finally, use the Reviewing the Experience unit resource to assess change and growth in student understanding.

Global Action Activities:
- Consider collecting donations to provide opportunities for children to attend school, in your own community or in developing nations. Students can collect school supplies and donate them to a local school or classroom in need (http://www.adoptaclassroom.org/). With Room to Read, students can choose the country and type of project that they want to support with funds they
raise (http://www.roomtoread.org/involvement/adopt.html).

- The “Pennies for Peace” program of the Central Asia Institute provides a curriculum and multiple opportunities to become involved in education development in Afghanistan and Pakistan (http://www.penniesforpeace.org/home.html).

Extension Activities:
- Supplement this activity by watching films or documentaries that address schools and education issues around the world. See attached resource list for suggestions.
- Create an opportunity for students to become pen pals with students in another country so that they can discuss their respective educations and more. Formats for this include traditional letters, e-mails and Skype. Find resources and inspiration at websites like http://www.epals.com/ or http://www.classroom-connection.org/.
- Have your students create a blog to share their school life with the world. They can post information on issues that are important to them, cultural pieces and more. An example from Thailand can be found here: http://school.swp.in.th/
- Divide students into small groups and assign each a section of Jonathan Kozol’s Savage Inequalities. Each group should read its assigned section, discuss, and create a brief report on the major ideas that they read. Have groups share their reports with the entire class and discuss.

Related OWEd Resources:
- **Salma’s Reflection**: From One Alexandria to Another
- **Unit Resource 1**: Previewing the Experience
- **Unit Resource 2**: Understanding the Experience
- **Unit Resource 3**: Visualizing the Experience
- **Unit Resource 4**: Culture Cube
- **Unit Resource 5**: Reviewing the Experience
- **Going to School Around the World**: My School Life
- **Going to School Around the World**: Around the World in School
- **Going to School Around the World**: Internet Pathfinder
- **Going to School Around the World**: Performance Rubric
- **Going to School Around the World**: Venn Diagram
- **Going to School Around the World**: Films About Education