



Michigan State University  
Fulbright-Hays Group Study Abroad 2009:  
Nepal in the Contemporary World



Lesson Plan  
from

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**Title:** Educational Equity: A lesson of what it is and why it is necessary, through the example of the Nepal educational system

**Subject Areas:** Social Studies/English

**Grade Levels:** second

**Length of Lesson:** four 45 to 60 minute Social Studies lessons with an optional 5th lesson and beyond. Four to five Language Arts lessons – see assessment section.

**Summary/Overview:**

Students will learn through discussion and experiences in public and private “schools”, the consequences that can occur when a government is not able to provide equitable, quality education to all its citizens.

Students will learn about education in Nepal, discuss the consequences of the system, and may develop and carry out an action plan to help a Nepalese public school. Students will develop writing skills and demonstrate knowledge by writing an essay about the topic.

*Note: These lessons relate well to the CDV, equality, and the topic of segregation of U.S. schools, whether you refer to those now if you have already taught equality/segregation, or refer to these lessons when you teach equality/segregation in the future.*

**Primary Objectives:**

- To facilitate higher level thinking skills regarding fairness and equality of educational opportunities and those who struggle with them in Nepal.
- Students will discover and understand reasons it is necessary for a country’s government to provide quality, equitable education for all students.
- Students will understand the differences between private and government action.
- Students will gain understanding of the importance of education to adult occupations and monetary compensation.

- Students will gain an improved appreciation for their own educational opportunities.
- Students will plan, draft and edit an essay on the state of Nepali schools and the consequences of inequitable educational opportunities for all citizens.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of the topic through individual essays.
- Students will identify needs of Nepal public schools. (optional)
- Students will create and carry out an action plan to help a public school. (optional)

### **Required Resources/Materials:**

- Background on Nepal's developing education system. (see attached information)
- Tissue paper cut into
- String cut into
- Response Surveys (see below)

### **Procedure:**

Note: These lessons should follow the teaching of Social Studies GLCE C.3.03, which teaches: It is the responsibility of U.S. government to provide free and equal education to all students.

### **Lesson 1**

Explain that Michigan's government has determined standards that each school must meet for its students. This is done so that when students graduate, they will have the necessary skills to get jobs that will help them earn enough money to pay for basic needs and wants, or so that they can attend college to get jobs that require college degree such as doctors. Veterinarians, nurses, teachers, lawyers, etc.

Ask what kinds of things students need to learn: reading, writing, math, science, etc. Ask, "Can a person be a secretary if he doesn't know how to write? Can a person be a carpenter if she doesn't know how to measure so she will know where to cut boards? Can a person be a mechanic if he can't follow the instructions to fix a car? Can a person go to college to be a doctor if she doesn't know how read?"

Introduce the small country of Nepal. It is about as big as our state of Tennessee! Explain that it is a country that only recently has become a democracy. That the country is still poor, but working very hard to get better in so many ways. One area their government is working very hard on is free, quality education for all children. Provide some background on gender gap and children needed for help with family income. Pick four children to be brothers and sisters. Tell the boys that they can go to school, but the girls must stay home and work. Ask how that makes them feel. Ask if this situation seems fair. (The children may very well not give the ideal answer that is our goal, as they probably don't yet view attending school as a particularly fun activity. That's OK. Just say you understand and will check with them again later. If they provide a more

acceptable answer or a mix of answers, tell them their thoughts are very interesting and you will check again later.

The fact is that the government doesn't have enough money for everything it needs to provide (you have already talked about libraries, roads, etc.) so it can't provide enough money to its public schools to have everything they need to do well. The public schools do not have enough books, supplies, or qualified teachers to teach what needs to be taught. What problems could this kind of education cause for students? Hopefully, they will make the connection that the children will not be able to get good jobs or have the skills they need for college when they graduate. How will parents feel about their children being in this situation? Is there anything that they can do about it if the government can't improve the schools?

Explain private schools. In our country, some private schools may be better than some public schools, but all public schools have standards. In Nepal, private schools are much better than public schools. Explain that some are very expensive and some are not so expensive, but they all cost parents extra money. Many people in Nepal are very poor and cannot afford any extra money private schools. Some do not have enough money for even basic needs. Some live in rural areas where there aren't private schools. In that case, who will attend private schools? Who will attend public schools? Predict what will happen to the students who attend different schools when they graduate?

## **Lesson 2 pre-work**

Arrangements must be made ahead of time for this lesson. Make a list that divides the class up heterogeneously, one group to be sent to a private school, the other to a public school.

Also, make arrangements for an adult class helper or aide to be available to take half the class out into the hall or other predetermined place that will serve as the site for the public school. That adult will teach "a lesson" to the public school students while you teach the private school students.

Have flower a Response Survey and making supplies ready for each child.

Note: You will carry out this lesson two times so that each group will have chance to experience both situations.

## **Lesson 2 – procedure with students**

Tell the students that today is the day that a new private school opens in the neighborhood. Some of the students' families' will have the money to send them to private school. Some parents will have to work extra hard to earn that money. Other students will go to the public school which is not able to provide as good an education. You may say to a couple girls that there is not enough money to send all the kids in the family to private school so their brother may go the private school, but they will attend the public school.

Have the helper take the public school children to their predetermined location. Say, "We are going to pretend that paper flowers are a very popular item to sell. They are used for decorating for parties, decorating cars for weddings, and decorating floats. People who know how to make paper flowers can work for a company and make lots of money." Explain that you can't teach them how to make these flowers because you don't have the material, but if you could, you would show them how to fold, tie and fluff the flowers. It sure would be a valuable skill to learn. "Too bad."

Then move onto the next lesson which is spelling. Say, "Today, we will write the letters in the air since we are out of paper in our public school." Call out spelling words and practice writing them in the air. "I hope you all are doing well!"

Meanwhile, the private school children will receive the same information about flowers and receive proper training. ++++++

The private and public students should be reunited in the classroom. Have flower making supplies and response sheet (upside-down) on each desk. The private school kids and public school kids should sit in their own sections or separate rows or tables. Tell them all that they are now graduated and they are applying for a job at the flower making factory where they can make enough money to pay for basic needs and some wants as well. To qualify for these good jobs, the applicant must be able to make a paper flower in **less than one** minute. Explain that their supplies are on the table. Tell students when to start and when to stop. You are likely to see quite a bit of frustration which you must respectfully ignore at this point. Simply say, "I understand. We will discuss that soon." Ask successful students to show their products. Congratulate those who will be hired for job. Pay each of them one small treat or trinket. Ask the children why they think those applicants were successful while others failed.

Say, "Before we talk about this as a group, I'd like to know some of your individual thoughts and feelings. I saw frustration and confusion in many of your faces. I also saw pride and happiness in the faces of others. Let's think about this situation. Is it fair? How does it make us feel? Let's write some of our ideas down on our response sheet and we'll discuss our ideas together later."

Complete Day 1 of the Response Surveys individually. Explain that you can't discuss the sheets today because you're out of time and that tomorrow you have a surprise for them. (switching groups)

It will brighten spirits to have the flower makers show the others what they missed!

### **Lesson 3 – procedure with students**

Divide the class, sending the opposite group out to the public school with the helper.

Remind the new group that they are now in public school. Explain that English is the most popular language in the world. It is spoken by the U.S. and other countries, and is the language used by business people around the world. Explain that in Nepal, all private school children learn English. All lessons are taught in English every day except one,

Nepali language class. In Nepal, only students who learn English will be able to go to college because all colleges are taught in English. People who go to college can become professors, nurses, lawyers, architects, etc. They can also get good paying jobs dealing with tourists who don't know Nepali, jobs such as hotel managers, tour guides, or waiters. They can even answer phones and talk to people across the ocean in English. Then explain that in the public schools, English isn't taught so those student won't have the same opportunities.

Explain to your children that they are pretending to be in Nepalese schools, but they don't speak Nepalese. The kids in the private school group are pretending to be in a Nepali school too. Since kids in Nepal speak Nepalese and learn English, the kids in our pretend school are going to speak English ( because they already do) and learn Nepalese. But your kids are in the public school so they don't get to learn Nepalese. "Too bad. It would be a useful skill to have."

Say, "But we can do this: Explain and do air writing spelling as in Lesson 2.

Private school group: Just as the helper did with her group, explain the importance of learning English, public vs private practices in Nepal, and our language reversal for pretending purposes.

Now they will learn four Nepali words. Act out the words in the same order each time you practice them to be sure the children are able to be successful when the classes reunite.

Yata aunos (yahtah ow-noess) = come here. Children should come toward you.

Basnos = (bahs-noess) sit down. Children should sit on the floor.

Uthnos = (ooth-noess) stand up. Children should stand up.

Uta janos (ootah zah-noess) = go there. Children should go back to their seats.

Reunite the classes. Remind them about the language reversals. Have thier response sheets on their desks. Say, "Good afternoon. I am the company owner and I am happy to see so many people applying for good paying jobs at my company. In order to work here, you have to know Nepali. So let's see how you do. First, address the public school section of the class. "I will speak to you in Nepali. I want you to do what I tell you to do." Give the commands with no gestures. Obviously, the children will not know what to do. Now address the private school section. Give the commands. The children will successfully demonstrate understanding. Congratulate them. Tell them they can go to college if they want. They can work for your company. Pay each of them one small treat or trinket. Tell the others that you are sorry, but they can go home because they don't have the skills you need at your company.

Again ask why some kids were successful and others were not. Since children have switched groups, some may have different feelings about the inequitable situation than they did during lesson 2. Have children write down their feelings and ideas on the Day 2 side of the Response Survey.

Ask how many people had different responses than yesterday. The same? Some changes and some that stayed the same?

## Lesson 4

Discuss the response sheets as a class. Discuss feelings students had when they were in the unsuccessful and successful groups. What led to success or failure? Is the situation fair? Which children are likely to be more successful the way things are happening now with poor public schools and better private schools in Nepal? How might parents feel about that? How do students feel about that? Why is education important? Ask the “brothers and sisters” you talked to in lesson one if they have changed their feelings at all? What will happen to the sisters if they don’t go to the private school with their brothers? Who has the advantage for the future? What responsibilities do private school children have whose parents are working extra hard to earn money to send them to school? Some of you changed your feelings about learning or fairness from one day to the next. Why do you think that happened?

Ask your students what they think about their educational opportunities in this country? What are their responsibilities? What might happen if they didn’t attend school?

## Lesson 5

Make a Plan

**Show children pictures of Nepal school.** Review some of the problems facing Nepal’s public schools. What would it be like at our school without enough paper, without computers, without a library, without learning the language we need to know to go to college? Would you like to help a school? What could we do?

Have children brainstorm. Examples: Send kids’ English dictionaries, a computer, supplies. Raise money with student council help. Become pen pals.

If you are interested in completing lesson 5 and carrying out your plan, please contact [janlee@armadaschools.org](mailto:janlee@armadaschools.org). I know of a rural school in Nepal that is striving to improve. I have direct contacts with the school and its benefactors and can help you be assured that your finds will be used as you specify.

### **Assessments:**

*The essay portion of this project serves both as lessons in the area of Language Arts, and the assessment portion of the Social Studies aspect. You may want to choose one or more of these essays to be used in the school newsletter or community newspaper to educate Michigan citizens, and/or to spread the word about your project or fundraiser for a Nepali public school.*

### **Procedure**

Facilitate the planning of an essay on the situation in Nepal’s educational system, the problems, and the ideal situation the system should enjoy. Use graphic organizers, response sheets, brainstorming, etc. as suggested in MI ELA strategies. Provide a rubric based on expectations from this experience.

Paragraph 1: Describe the education situation in Nepal. Paragraph 2: Tell about the problems that occur because of the situation. Paragraph 3: Explain the way you think education needs to be carried out in Nepal. Paragraph 4: This is an optional paragraph explaining the plan your students developed to help a public school in Nepal.

**Michigan Content Expectations Met:**

- SS.2-C1.0.1
- SS.2-C1.0.2
- SS.2-P3.3.1
- SS.2-P4.2.2
- W.GN.02.03
- W.PR.02.02
- W.PR.02.03
- W.PR.02.05
- W.PR.02.06
- W.PR.02.07
- W.DS.02.01

**Bibliography Unique to this lesson:**

**Response Survey** Day 1 name \_\_\_\_\_

- 1) Which school did you attend today?      public                  private
- 2) How did you feel when you heard that other kids were going to learn different things than you were going to learn?
- 3) How did you feel when you heard that you had to make a flower to get the job?  
Why did you feel that way?
- 4) Were you able to make a flower?      yes                  no
- 5) How did that make you feel?
- 6) Why did your flower turn out the way it did?
- 7) Do you think it was fair that some children we taught how to make the flowers and others were not?      yes                  no  
Explain your answer.

8) What could this teach you about good schools and bad schools?

**Response Survey** Day 1 name \_\_\_\_\_

1) Which school did you attend today? public private

2) How did you feel when you heard that other kids were going to learn different things than you were going to learn?

3) How did you feel when you heard that you had to know another language to get the job?

Why did you feel that way?

4) Were you able to understand the new language? yes no

5) How did that make you feel?

6) Why did understand/not understand the new language?

7) Do you think it was fair that some children we taught the new language and others were not? yes no  
Explain your answer.

8) What could this teach you about good schools and bad schools?