Global Perspectives on Child Labor

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Exploring Child Labor through English Language Arts

Unit Summary

- After reading *Midnight is a Place* by Joan Aiken, set in Victorian England, students read selected non-fictional texts on the topic of child labor from the Victorian era to current times.

- They recognize their own and others’ perspectives about the issue to address unit essential questions:

  - *How does communication in various genres impact understanding of perspectives related to Child Labor?*

  - *How can we use language arts skills to effectively communicate a position on this issue?*
Learning/Assessment Events

Students:

- Analyze, synthesize, and appropriately cite sources of evidence collected to express their own and others’ perspectives about the issue.

- Post findings on a class blog and use Google docs to collaborate on the development of a script for a You Tube video they create on the topic to share findings and to advocate for a solution that considers multiple perspectives.

The link to the You Tube clip and a request for posting is sent to the Child Labor Coalition (stopchildlabor.org), the National US network that provides a forum and a unified voice on protecting working minors.
Exploring Child Labor through World Languages

Unit Summary

- Students investigate **Maquilas** in El Salvador and Honduras to raise awareness of child labor and gender discrimination issues in these clothing factories.

- They use their knowledge of language and culture to develop an argument based on evidence from a variety of sources that considers multiple perspectives in order to address the following essential questions:

  - How do language and cultural beliefs inform and shape employment practices in maquilas?

  - To what extent have trade agreements between the U.S. and Central American countries impacted the growth of maquilas and the violation of children’s and women’s rights?

  - How can child labor be reduced during times of global economic crisis?
Learning/Assessment Events

Students:

- Use a variety of domestic and international sources and media in Spanish to identify and weigh relevant evidence that may assist in addressing the problem.

- Develop a heightened understanding of cultural perspectives by linking historical and current practices in maquilas during a debate on the pros and cons of these factories in the global economy.

- Use linguistic and cultural knowledge to compose a letter that draws defensible conclusions about the issue to the International Labor Organization, a specialized agency of the UN, with copies to Honduran President Porfirio Lobo Sosa and to President Carlos Mauricio Funes Cartagena of El Salvador.
ELA and World Languages Units

- Are strongly aligned to the Common Core State Standards and address:
  - Balance of literature and informational texts; focus on text complexity
  - Emphasis on argument, informative/explanatory writing, and research
  - Development of speaking and listening skills
  - Literacy standards for history

- Are strongly aligned with the Global Competency Matrices for ELA and World Languages through their development of students’ capacities to understand and act on child labor, an issue of global significance.