



**Terry Judson:** 9th & 10th Grade Global Studies; Queens, NY

Unit: Religion

Project: Powerpoint Presentations

Project Outline

Project Description

Teacher Reflections

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## GLOBAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

### *Background:*

"The NY State Global Studies curriculum is a two year curriculum, the first year being from pre-history, Neanderthal man, up to the Renaissance, roughly, in Europe, late 1400's through 1600's. It picks up again the next year, with the Age of Exploration, up to today. This is Year One, and we've had a lot of major units--Early Man; the Neolithic Revolution, meaning the invention of farming; the domestication of animals and all the effects it had. We had an Ancient Civilizations project, which was our first Powerpoint project. First, we did a mini-unit on Egypt, as an example, and then students studied other ancient civilizations. We focused on ancient Greece, particularly focusing on the birth of Democracy. Another big unit was comparing the Qin and Han Dynasties of ancient China, with ancient Rome, because they existed about the same time. This is my attempt to make the curriculum less Eurocentric, by comparing what happened in different parts of the world. And in a lot of ways, those empires were similar. They both rose and fell about the same time, which is interesting, among other similarities. And now comes the Religion unit."

### *The Importance of the Religion Unit:*

"The World's Religions Unit is interesting because it is something I need to teach, because of the Regents, but something I would want to teach anyway. Often these coincide. Sometimes they don't, meaning, the Regents curriculum is a mile wide and an inch deep, and I don't see how there's any way anyone could teach all those subjects. But very often, like with the Religion Unit, it's something I would want to teach, and it's certainly a major topic on the Regents. And given the nature of today's world, we need more and more to understand each others' religions."

### *The Importance of Powerpoint Projects:*

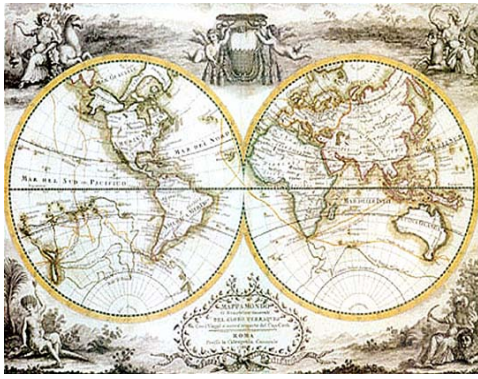
"Powerpoint is interesting, in that it's an example of one of the many skills that we're trying to teach, *in addition* to the content. The content's very important, but so are public speaking, essay writing, group skills, and now also technology skills, so it's an opportunity to teach them some of these important technology skills. In the fall, it was my first powerpoint project, when we did the ancient civilization project, and it went very well--the slides were beautiful, and I liked the way they had to write what they were going to say, you know, write down their speech, about the slide, that provided some accountability, and I expect that this time it will be even better. Someone once told me, that if it's worth doing once, it's worth doing three times. You've invested time and energy in that learning curve, and so now, let's use that skill and develop it. You don't swing the bat once."

"I think they like it because it is a real-life skill, and also I think they like it because it is new and different, and they like being on the computer. They like hunting for images--there's not so much reading involved. That's another thing, speaking of images. I loved how the powerpoint, in the internet research, and including the book research, because we have a cart of books, provided this plethora of images for the students to soak in. Especially for ESL students, and really for any student, they really should be immersed as much as possible, in the sea of images, particularly for social studies, but probably for every class. Because if you think about *our* knowledge, our knowledge is based upon lots of reading that we've done, but our knowledge is also, over the years, we've been exposed to all these images and they're built up: all the TV we've watched, all the news we've watched, all the movies we've watched, the books in elementary school. That makes this collection of images in our mind that we refer to.

As compared to these lines of text that may or may not have meaning for our students. So that is a nice thing about using trade books that have a lot of images, and textbooks, and the internet, with ESL students."

See a short video of Mr. Judson's further reflections on the use of





Powerpoint with high school students, with a focus on his reactions to his students' Powerpoint projects.