

Teaching for geographic literacy: The case of MacArthur University Academy

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Abstract

This research describes how enrolling students in an afterschool geography club affects their perception of the discipline and their geographic literacy. The creation of the afterschool club at this school came out of the recognition of the need to increase students' exposure to geographical content. With increased exposure to geographic content, the results of this study showed the following improvements in students' geographic literacy: place recognition, application of geographic theory, establishment of connections between geographic facts and the students' daily lives, and awareness of other cultures. The emergence of such patterns confirms the benefits that can be derived from enhancing students' geographic literacy.

Introduction

Although geography is a fascinating discipline, for several years it has been marginalized in many schools' timetable. According to Knight (2007, p. 57), "geography encourages us to explore and understand the world around us; giving students the opportunity to encounter places and environments locally and globally." Several factors led to the development of the geography club discussed in this paper: recognition of the need for geographic awareness among a group of middle school students, opportunities to create an after school enrichment program for students, and an interest in offering students meaningful engagement as they learned new geographic skills. The primary purpose of this paper is to provide a rationale for developing the geography club, describe the process of creating the activities to align with state standards and school curriculum and report on outcomes of students' engagement and growth in geographical knowledge.

The geography club at MacArthur University Academy was established in the winter of 2007 as a part of collaborative work between the University of Michigan-Dearborn and MacArthur University Academy. The geography club meets twice per week for two four-week sessions and allows for a complete concentration on its curriculum without the temporal constraints of completing the curriculum for standardized testing and grade reporting. This allows the students to relax and enjoy this learning experience.

The University of Michigan-Dearborn School of Education has an ongoing partnership with MacArthur University Academy, a new school that opened in the fall of 2007. As a part of the partnership, the author offered to begin an afterschool program in geography. While conceptualizing the geography club, the only stipulation given to the

school was that the students who attend the program should come from upper elementary and middle school grades. The rationale for this age group was multifold. First, these students study geography as an independent discipline in their regular classes. This meant that the geography club could enhance the students' geography skills by complementing the regular geography classes. Older students would allow for a more focused concentration on global geography, and future geography within the context of Geographical Information Systems (GIS), and Google Earth, because many of these students are already exposed to these medias in informal settings.

The rationale for the after school geography club

The National Geographic Report on geographic literacy (Roper, ASW, 2002) focused on the geographic literacy survey of young adults and young Americans (18-24 years and 25-34 years). The report indicated that many of the Americans included in the survey had limited geographical knowledge and asserted the need to address geographic "illiteracy" among America children. The Roper, ASW (2002) report identified the participants' deficiencies in critical understanding of cultural diversity, place location, relative population size of the US, and geographical issues of countries not physically close to the United States of America. Many of these elements of geographic "illiteracy" found by the Roper, ASW reports were directly addressed by the curriculum used in the after school geography club at MacArthur. Therefore, the primary aim of the geography club was to enhance a group of middle school students' geographic literacy.

The global perspective

The first objective considered when designing the curriculum used in the after school geography club was the need to expose students to global interconnections. The global approach to teaching geography would expose students to the fact that their points

of physical existence (including home, communities, neighborhoods and nearby cities) interacted significantly with faraway places, and their understanding of this global interdependence was necessary in order to realize how events such as natural disasters or war in one place may impact another. “Faraway” places are frequently outside the students’ home states and often home countries, thus constituting the global sphere. Within the global approach to teaching geography, notions of how daily lives are increasingly impacted by events that occur thousands of miles away were explored in mapping and other activities. Arguably, many of the globally based forces discussed in the afterschool geography club were geopolitical, and geo-economic in nature. Such knowledge overtime will help the students as they navigate the world within which they live. Therefore, the global perspective approach to the after school geography club curriculum seeks to address what Carano & Berson (2007) see as the lack of awareness of many, about peoples and places outside the immediate physical locale of their daily lives.

Fundamental geographic skills

Geographical learning involves learning about the nature of environments, climates, natural resources, human, cultural, political and spatial contexts of places. These, in essence underscore the geographical skills students in today’s global society need if they are to function as effective global citizens. Therefore, as argued by Newcombe & Chiang (2007), geographical learning goes beyond encoding spatial layouts. Within this context, all discussions with students in the after school geography club are placed within the purview of map skills, cultural awareness, and values and attitudes. Components of this approach according to Hicks (2007, p. 180) include “teachers acknowledging the importance of the spatial dimensions and the need for

students to understand the local, national and global community.” In essence, the students’ geographic learning is relevant to the fundamental geographic skills, which are an outgrowth of the five themes in geography which were initially published in 1984 by the National Council for Geographic Education and the Association of American Geographers to facilitate and organize the teaching of geography in the K-12 classroom. According to Boehm & Petersen (1994, p. 211) the geography themes “lead students through levels of abstraction from simple to complex”.

Description of the curriculum used in the Geography Club

The curriculum used in the geography club comes from three specific sources. The first is the National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE) curriculum for geography clubs found on the NCGE websiteⁱ. The second source is the ArcGIS Desk Edition of Mapping our World (Malone et.al, 2005) and the third, the Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCEs) published by the Michigan Department of Education in 2007ⁱⁱ. All of these guided the implementation of the activities planned for the geography club which were an extension to the regular geography/social studies classes. For 6th and 7th grades, the social studies GLCEs focus on geography themes for the Western hemisphere and the Eastern hemisphere. The students are exposed to individual countries from each hemisphere for which they study the geography, government, society, economy and relevant issues. The GLCEs that were focused on the Geography Club were G1(The world is spatial terms) and G2 (Places and regions)ⁱⁱⁱ.

During these geography club sessions primarily electronic maps were used and these were substituted to a limited extent by paper maps only when necessary. Maps are a critical part of the activities in the geography club. When students use geographic maps

in addition to text, they recall more text information than if they studied the text alone (Vekiri, 2002). Maps, according to Safford (2007) bring a sense of place, they are interdisciplinary tools, and the use of maps provides students with practice in using technology driven information which underscores the after school geography club. It is important to note that using the maps available in Google Earth allow students to learn from maps which are always current (Stoppa, 2006), while studying geography which allows them to "recognize and apply spatial relationships as analytical tools" (Macken, 2003, p. 63). The map making activities in the geography club are all designed to motivate learning by making them more interesting for the students (Safford, 2007, p. 36).

The Michigan standards for social studies do accommodate the inclusion of technology such as GIS into the normal classroom sequence. However, to learn and competently use this technology, students need extended practice. Therefore, another aim of the after school geography club was providing students with as many GIS lessons as possible. It is important to note that using the maps available in Google Earth allow students to learn from maps which are always current (Stoppa, 2006), while studying geography allows them to "recognize and apply spatial relationships as analytical tools" (Macken, 2003, p. 63). Maps make the world's geographic information easily accessible and useful." Thus in the geography club, exposure to GIS technology is infused into the physical and human components of the countries the students are studying using Google Earth and Google Maps. In combination, all aspects of the curriculum used in the after school geography club will ultimately help to sharpen the students' geo-spatial skills.

Methods

In total, twenty-eight students participated in the geography club. The initial geography club ran for four weeks and the second session ran for another four weeks. The students who participated in the geography club were primarily from middle and low income families, approximately 90% of whom reside in Southfield, Michigan. The group consisted of sixteen boys and ten girls. All of the students attended the geography club for eight weeks, despite the fact that they knew that their attendance was voluntary. The students' ages ranged from eleven years to fourteen years with 80% of the students being within six months of their thirteenth birthday.

The students' progress was documented using a series of scaffold activities which acted as an assessment tool. These were used to evaluate how the students synthesized the information they gained in these geography club sessions and how their geographic literacy changed over the eight weeks of participation. Therefore, an evaluation of the students' performance in these activities provided a basis for reporting on the changes which occurred in their geographic literacy. Additionally, data was also collected from the students' journals. The students were asked to make short journal entries at the end of each geography club session. Their journal entries documented what they thought they had learned, how they felt about it, the difficulties they experienced completing the day's activities and some of the topics they were interested in learning about in the afterschool geography club. At the end of geography club sessions, the students submitted their completed activities and their journal entry for that session. The work produced by the students were evaluated at the end of each geography club session to determine the extent to which the students understood the materials they were exposed to, also the work produced by the students was compared with the work produced in the previous session

to determine the extent to which each student progressed. Finally, data was collected from the group interview conducted with the students during the last geography club meeting. During this interview the students were given a list of questions which they were required to answer in writing and then, they were interviewed as a group at which time they discussed the same questions. The interview included the following questions:

- i. What do you like learning about in geography classes?
- ii. Would you want to take more geography classes in the future and why?
- iii. Why did you join the geography club and why did you continue to attend club sessions?
- iv. What are some of the things you have learned about in the geography club?
- v. How were you able to use the knowledge you gained in the geography club in your regular geography class?
- vi. How competent/good do you feel about using the computer to make maps in geography?
- vii. Would you want to learn more about geography and do you think you observe and ask more questions about your environment now, compared to when you first started to participate in the geography club? How do you know?

This group interview was tape recorded, transcribed and coded to correspond with the themes that emerged from the student's discussions. The interview questions were meant to ascertain two sets of information; the first is how the students' awareness in geography has progressed over time. Secondly, the interview questions were meant to encourage the students to reflect on their experience in the after school geography club and on how their knowledge in geography changed during the eight weeks of meetings.

The students' reflections during the whole group interview were important because it allowed them to evaluate their learning and the importance they attached to geography. Given that the research asserts that exposing students to specific geographical knowledge in an afterschool program that removes the stress of test reporting should enhance students' geography literacy, the data collected was analyzed in the following ways.

The approach taken by Gearhart & Wolf (1994, p. 68) was adopted for the analysis of the student's written work and journal entries. Firstly, the "text-of genre" which is the technical vocabulary of geography was assessed comparatively to see how this had changed in each student during the eight weeks. Secondly, the journal entries and discussions during each geography club sessions were used as a basis for determining the students' approach to and their interpretation of the materials they were presented with. Finally, by responding to the comments and concerns the students wrote about in their journal. The results of these analyses constitute the research findings.

The Initial activity

It is a Tuesday afternoon and the first Geography Club meeting. The students stare intently at their computer screens. They are zooming into and out of images of their communities in Google Earth and Google Maps. They have just typed in their home addresses and are attempting to find the location of their homes. Many of the students initially had difficulties finding where they live in Google Map. Thus, they were instructed to examine the satellite images for a more identifiable visual of their communities. Many of them were fascinated with the images and soon they are looking at their homes, their friends' homes and other places of interest to them. Most of these places were located in their communities, for example their play ground, shopping malls

and the homes of friends and relatives. This process expanded their geographical knowledge of places that are familiar to them. The initial activity introduced students to the notions of large scale and small scale maps and the relevance of this knowledge to their explorations with Google Maps.

Expanding on the initial activity

In the subsequent club meetings, the students spent five minutes observing the electronic maps of their communities, and made notes of significant features and characteristics. They were then asked to move away from the computers and on a sheet of paper, create mental maps that traced the route they take from home to school daily. This activity was more challenging and evaluated the students' perceptual organization of the physical space assumed to be familiar to them. The activity corresponds with the views of Slater (1990) who notes that scaffolding the teaching of the geographic skills of observation, speculation, analysis and evaluation should enhance learning in the discipline.

In the subsequent geography club meeting, the activity was further scaffold[ed] and students were asked to use compass direction and geographical descriptors to refine their descriptions of the route they take from home to school. The rationale for this activity was to encourage students to construct content. According to Milne (2006, 11.2), having the students create their own maps from their readings and other activities encourage them to “construct content rather than just consuming it”. On the other hand, asking them to use geographical descriptors allowed the students to contextualize this activity within the discipline and provide information on how aware they were of the fundamental theme ‘location’. According to Boehm & Petersen (1994) the fundamental

themes in geography allow students to make sense of a seemingly fragmented world. In combination, all these activities provided the basis for a qualitative examination of their geographical knowledge.

The closing activity

The closing activity was an ongoing scaffold series of exercises. These activities tested the skills the students should have learned during the previous weeks of the after school geography club. The activities were designed to evaluate growth in the students' geographical knowledge so overall presentation was somewhat different than the initial activities. The first exercise in the closing activity began with the students reading a short story from a graphic novel (*Exploring Our World*). The graphic story was about a location in Latin America. A graphic novel was chosen because often social studies books make for dull reading and according to Macken (2003, p. 63), picture books are an ideal tool for teaching children strategies for reading and providing information. After reading the story the students were asked to make an assumption about where the country was located and create a map of that country. Their maps were expected to use symbols to represent elements of the following; topography, vegetation, people, and culture. These maps would be based primarily on the information they inferred from the graphic story that they read and any prior knowledge they may have had on the country they assumed the story was about. After they created their maps, they were allowed to use Google Earth to compare the maps they created with the actual topographic map of the country in which the story was located. They then discussed how similar and different the two sets of maps were and the reasons they had for the assumptions they made about the country on which they drew the map.

The closing activity involved the students working independently on a community map in Google Earth with the assistance of the GIS tools. In this activity, the students were told to use Google Earth and to use the GIS tools present in this internet resource to create a map of a local community with which they were familiar. The students were told that their maps had to have at least 3 layers, with five places identified on the map, these places were to be labeled and represented in the map key. The five places had to come from the following categories; residence, education, recreation, entertainment, religion, services, health, and shopping. Their maps also needed to have the route from a residence to three categories of places they labeled and identified on their maps. This activity was almost identical to their initial activity, with an increased level of difficulty. With the exception of telling students what should be present on their maps, they were given very little instructions and assistance as they worked through the activity which required them to create geographic reality. According to Bruckner (2006, p. 198), the students “produce and reproduce their cultural commodity as geographic reality.” Thus, the students begin to acquire a comprehensive spatial perspective, which in itself is a form of literacy training.

Results and Discussion

Analysis of the initial mapping activities

In the activity that required the students to create mental maps of their daily route from home to schools required them to rely on their memory, and their performance in this activity revealed their perceptions of the route from home to school. According to Friedman, Kerkman & Brown (2002), the home location influences an individual’s subjective representations of geographical space. This physical proximity hypothesis for

Newcombe & Chiang (2007) predicts that an increase in distance from one's home results in more biased geographical knowledge and representation of physical space. As the students created their maps from memory, each representation became less detailed as the students moved away from their home and school locations. For some students, their maps were also more detailed in select locations and places. The more detailed locations represent places where the students spend considerable amounts of their time and sometimes these places were not on the route they take from home to school, but were simply added because the students said these places were important to them.

This general pattern observed in the maps produced by the students represents a distorted proximity. Places that they were more familiar with and places that they enjoyed visiting were almost always placed closer to their home location. This pattern persisted even after the students observed the Google map images and were assured that these places were in fact physically further away from their homes. In subsequent discussions, the students voiced the perception that because they had positive emotions about these places and more often than not they felt some excitement about visiting these places, the journey seemed shorter and by extension, they seemed closer to home.

When the students compared the images they created with what is represented on the electronic maps, electronic satellite images and the actual landscape, they were able to put into perspective their perceptions of the landscape and features that exist in actuality. This, according to Walford (2006), is the students using their imagination to unlock geographic literacies. The students were able to fairly successfully describe the route taken to school. However, their verbal descriptions did not immediately transfer to their mental maps. The activity was further modified to evaluate how accurately the

students were able to trace the route taken from home to school on the computer and apply geographical descriptors to their maps. Most of the students struggled with this activity.

Analysis of the activity about foreign children at play

Another activity the students completed in the Geography Club required them to analyze images of children at play in a foreign country, in this instance, Indonesia. They were directed to observe several electronic images of children in this country. To complete this observation, they are shown the Google Earth (GIS) icon for zooming into and out of their images; the students practice zooming into and out of their images, similar to how they would zoom into and out of their maps. The zooming process allows students to view various features with greater or lesser details depending on their need. This process also allows the students to contextualize various aspects of the images. Bar-Gal & Bar-Gal (2008, p. 44) talked about the story Alice in Wonderland, and how in a crisis Alice tested her geographical knowledge as a means of affirming her identity. These writers used these discussions to suggest that an individual's identity is tied to spatial awareness. This implies that how the geography club students perceive graphic and literal images can be place within the context of their spatial awareness. Therefore, having students examine images of children within their age range in a different country and cultural setting is aimed at ensuring that they develop and express spatial awareness and affirm their own identity within the context of what children who are similar to them do while at play. After completing the observation process, the students were asked to present narratives reporting on their observations. These narratives required inferences. Their inferences were drawn from questions they had about the lives of these children in

general and the representations in the images they were observing. The following are some of the questions the MacArthur students asked as they worked through this activity.

“Why are these children playing in a park that does not have swings or slides? What games are they playing? Why is one child playing alone in the creek? Is the water clean... is it safe? Are the children sitting on the patio bored? Where are their toys... their shoes?”

The students then placed the answers to the questions they asked within the context of their own lives and leisure activities, and then they made assumptions about life in Indonesia. Several of the students asked *“why am I learning about this in a geography class?”* *“I thought geography was about maps and finding places on maps?”* While location is the fundamental assumption of geography (Sunal & Haas, 2002, p. 297) there is the misconception that geographers are the caretakers of locational knowledge. The students were expressing this old sentiment that underestimates the scope of this discipline. Boehm & Petersen (1994, p. 211) note that *“geography is often taught as a listing of locations on a map, this approach generally ignores the rich robust, and elegant geography of the present”*. As the students continued their activity by mulling over the images of Indonesian children at play, they began to realize that geography was not limited to maps, naming country capitals and locating places. The students’ realization corresponds with Newcombe & Chiang (2007, p. 895) who noted that *“geographic learning offers an important real-world context on the human aspects of cultures, political systems and economic activities.”* In this and other activities, the students examined real-world images within the context of their perception of the spatial context of places.

Analysis of the closing activity

The students worked on the closing activity with much enthusiasm, and all the students who completed the activity did so with complete accuracy. This would not have happened six to seven weeks prior, when the geography club was first started. The students were at ease with the use of GIS technology and applied their knowledge of GIS to information they were learning in their regular class, this was evident in their discussions. As they worked on their maps they talked about places in their communities that they were including on their maps, they noted that they only recently noticed the location of many of these places. The group discussed how they felt as they worked through the activity and how they gauged their learning.

Observation of the students as they completed the various aspects of the closing activities showed that they had acquired several geographic skills. When prompted, the students talked about how they were able to add places to their maps that they only recently observed. This revealed that the students were actively observing more of their environment, and they were applying their observations to their in-school learning. In essence, the students' approach to and performance on this closing activity revealed that they had sharpened several geographical skills. During the closing discussions, the students talked about how different and similar they thought a local community map of some of the countries that they have studied would be. These aspects of the discussions revealed that the students are beginning to acquire a more global perspective in their geographical thinking. This was encouraged when the students were asked to talk about what factors they thought would be responsible for the similarities and differences in communities that are located in different countries around the world.

While completing one component of the closing activity the students analyzed the landscape and environment described in a graphic story to determine in which country the story is set. The discussions with the students revealed that for the most part, they used the vegetation present in the graphic story to make assumptions about where they thought the country might be located. Most of the students had accurately guessed that the story was about a country in Latin America, and based on the development of the story, many of the students assumed that it was either Mexico or Venezuela. There was one student who thought that the story was about a location in Puerto Rico. Their discussions also revealed that they used context and environmental clues from the stories such as the animals, the artifacts and discussions about archeological digs to make assumptions about the cultural elements that might be related to this country. These assumptions were evident on the maps that the students created. They were able to accurately identify the countries' climate, topography and vegetation simply from the inferences made in the graphic story they read. Also, many of their assumptions about the people's ways of life and some cultural components of the people in these countries were accurate. The students' morale was lifted when they realized that they were able to make several accurate geographical assumptions about countries on which they had little or no prior knowledge. This also encouraged them to do further investigation on the countries they were discussing by using online tools such as Encarta Encyclopedia.

The geographic literacy of the Geography Club students

The use of the concept "literacy" in most academic contexts implies the acquisition and mastery of certain intellectual and essential skills. According to Berson & Berson (2006, p. 144) "digital literacy fosters the knowledge and skills for global

citizenship by linking everyday individual actions with the consequences for oneself and others.” Vankan (2003) added that modern society assumes active citizenship, which requires individuals to assimilate information from multiple sources, determine its veracity and make judgments. The inclusion of technology that exposes students to global perspectives allows for this digital literacy and encourages students to make decisions based on informed judgments and values. The ability to encode and decode geographical messages within a range of competences is a basic definition for geographic literacy. According to Csikszentmihalyi (1990, p. 119) “literacy presupposes the existence of a shared symbol system that mediates information between the individual's mind and external events.” These shared symbols which according to Waetjen (1993) are entities that refer to any other entities that may be material or abstract. In the context of the geography club, geographic literacy also involved the students’ skills in critical and creative thinking, civic competence, global and local awareness. It also included skills of application and syntheses, as well as the ability to take text book knowledge of geography and apply it to individual circumstances.

In sharpening student’s geographic literacy, consideration was also given to students’ awareness of different perspectives, as well as their basic understanding of the physical and cultural layout of the world. Carano & Berson (2007) talk about the deficiencies in students’ awareness of other cultures, therefore geographic literacy within the context of the geography club provided students with a working knowledge of different places and regions. These also facilitated an awareness of and respect for global cultural diversity and an understanding of the physical processes that shaped the world as we know it.

The students' discussions in the group interview

The students were asked to reflect on their learning in geography during the eight weeks. The purpose of such activities was to evaluate the geographic knowledge and skills the students may have acquired. In their reflections, the students talked about what they enjoyed and did not enjoy about learning geography. They talked about why they enjoyed using certain strategies and the impact it has had on their learning. An evaluation of the students' reflections indicated that they remembered specific topics such as absolute and relative location. They were able to make the associations between what they learned in their regular class and what they were doing in geography club. *"I feel good because when we go to our regular geography class they may be asking questions that we could answer and the other class members that do not attend the geography club do not know the answer, it feels good to learn the subject here in geography club first."*...6th grade female. Many of the students also used several geographical concepts when working on GIS maps, conducting research on the countries they were mapping as well as the predictions they made about the cultural structure and the future of the countries they were studying.

Despite the fact that the students have been exposed to years of social studies classes in which geography topics are discussed, this research was curious about their perceptions of geography and how this factors into their performance. For the most part, students had a positive view of what geography is. Their comments suggested that the students were becoming autonomous learners, for instance they used examples of factors that influence where people go for holiday as a context for everyday life (Vankan, 2003).

This demonstrated that they were transferring their learning, and applying it to situations outside of their classroom. These are some of the comments made by the students.

“I like geography because it tells you about the world and when you travel it gives you an insight on what you are to expect about where you are traveling to”... 7th grade female

“This gets you prepared for different parts of the world that you may travel to, in terms of what clothes to wear and activities you may be able to do”...7th grade female

Several of the students went further to add that they liked learning about other countries because it exposed them to different cultural settings. This, according to the students facilitated their understanding about why people from some of these countries made certain decisions. They made reference to the images of Indonesian children playing that they had examined in one of the activities. They then talked about the factors that resulted in the children having to play under the conditions represented in the images. The students talked about the economic and social condition of the country and how, if some of the children in the images had a choice, why they thought that child would rather living in America or example. They showed an appreciation for the struggles of other people and there were points in the discussions when they demonstrated a deep comprehension of the holistic pictures of some of these countries and a reflection on their own circumstances. The discussions in the geography club challenged students’ attitudes about themselves and others, while they addressed certain preconceptions, ignorance and stereotypes about people. Nairn (2005, p. 297) agrees that such discussions may encourage some students to “critically analyze their own experiences and how these impact their understandings of the other”.

These discussions developed in a constructivist mode. They were the product of tasks which the students found challenging and as the debriefing of the activities took

place, the students were allowed to freely express their thoughts and opinions without concerns about the extent to which their answers were correct or incorrect. These debriefing discussions allowed the students to recognize types of problems and select and apply appropriate strategies for reasoning patterns. Despite the fact that many of the students involved in the geography club did not perceive themselves as privileged, they shared a clear understanding for the advantages they had when compared to some children in less developed countries. Such acknowledgements according to Hopwood (2008, p. 591) allow for an “open-mindedness, respect for human rights, commitment to sustainable development, and a willingness to be involved”.

“Honestly, you do not even need to ask if we like this, because you can tell that everybody like this because they are still here. This is a voluntary club...we do not have to come but we come here every Tuesday and Thursday because we are learning so much about the world and our own country and we are learning about so many different aspects of geography, so we want to come to learn”...7 grade female

Conclusion

The after school Geography Club was a place where the students gathered each week to learn about geography in a relaxed informal environment. The Geography Club gave the students’ added time for learning in this discipline, while it reinforced many of the topics the students were supposed to be exposed to in their regular social studies curriculum. Has the students’ knowledge of geography changed? Yes it has. Did the students begin to explore the global perspective in geography? Yes they have. The students were able to transfer the information they learned in the geography club not only to their regular geography classes but to their daily lives. The students’ geographical knowledge has begun to inform their practical engagement with the world, thereby

making geography relevant to their lives outside of the school setting. In the after school geography club there was partial facilitation of all aspects of the global perspective based on Carano & Berson's (2007, p. 67) eight dimensions. In addition, the geography programs that the students in this school are exposed to align with Carano & Berson (2007) suggestion that an educator should teach students about diverse perspectives. Given these, this program was successful in achieving its desired goals.

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ⁱNational Council for Geographic Education Curriculum for Geography Club http://www.ncge.org/files/public/geography_club_overview.pdf

ⁱⁱ Grade Level Content Expectations on the Michigan Department of Education Website http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/SSGLCE_218368_7.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ This is a list of the specific GLCEs that were used in the Geography Club.

G1 The World in Spatial Terms

Use geographic representations to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.

K – G1.0.1 Recognize that maps and globes represent places.

K – G1.0.2 Use environmental directions or positional words (up/down, in/out, above/below) to identify significant locations in the classroom.

7 – G1.1.1 Explain and use a variety of maps, globes, and web based geography technology to study the world and local scales.

7 – G1.1.2 Draw an accurate sketch map from memory of the Eastern Hemisphere showing the major regions (Africa, Asia, Europe, Australia/Oceania, Antarctica)****The students focused on specific countries of the Eastern hemisphere

7 – G1.2.5 Use information from modern technology such as Geographic Information System (GIS), to locate information and process maps and data to analyze spatial patterns of specific countries in the Eastern Hemisphere to answer geographic questions.

7 – G1.2.6 Apply the skills of geographic inquiry (asking geographic questions, acquiring geographic information, organizing geographic information, analyzing geographic information, and answering geographic questions) to analyze a problem or issue of importance to specific communities and countries.

7 – G1.3.1 Use the fundamental themes of geography (location, place, human environment interaction, movement, region) to describe regions or places on earth.

G2 Places and Regions

Understand how regions are created from common physical and human characteristics.

K – G2.0.1 Identify and describe places in the immediate environment (e.g., classroom, home, playground).

7 – G2.1.1 Describe the landform features and the climate of the region (within the Western or Eastern Hemispheres) under study.

7 – G2.1.2 Use information from GIS, to compare and contrast the surface features and vegetation of specific countries in the hemispheres.