Making life easier for teachers during challenging times

2020
How can integrating MMUN into our curriculum or programs benefit teachers and students during this time when learning hours and curriculum spread are affected?

**Academic Skills**

Preparing students as delegates for an MMUN conference includes academic skills required in all our curriculums. The great difference is that learning these skills has real a purpose, a real impact. To become an Ambassador at an MMUN Conference means you have developed in depth:

1. research skills in the history and geography of the country the students will represent;
2. knowledge of world affairs and issues on two global topics
3. public speaking to accurately present your country’s position and perspective on solutions to global issues
4. debating and negotiation skills to listen and provide a solution that encompasses the positions and interests of all the countries in the committee. In committee sessions delegates listen and develop respect for different points of view; they learn the value of dialogue over force to resolve conflicts. Resolution of differences can be accomplished through discussion, negotiation, and collaboration.
5. written communication in a variety of formats are learned and applied to persuade countries on the solutions documented in position papers and then collaborate with others to join solutions in a formal resolution.

Athletic and musical students practice and prepare for months for a game or a recital. MMUN preparation has a similar purpose to develop into a competent Ambassador of a country.
Social and Emotional Development

Socio-Emotional is an important aspect of development (Durlak, J. 2011). Engaging students as delegates for an MMUN conference includes social and emotional development:

1. Tolerance and appreciation for other cultures is realized as students study the country and the culture they will represent. They step into the life of an Ambassador, learning that the people of another country may look different, have different cultural events, but that they also share the same fundamental needs, and that the way those needs are met depends on geography, climate and culture. Humans are more alike than different (Magen-Nagar, N. & Shonfeld, M. 2018). MMUN provides a chance for delegates to actively acknowledge and celebrate diversity among nations and peoples.

2. Interactions with students of different cultures and countries occurs in the virtual conferences in the plenary room as well as in the smaller breakout rooms that focus on sharing ideas to craft working papers. The cultural and celebration virtual events also engage delegates to interact.

3. Empathy for others is a natural impact as delegates understand the needs and interests of others less fortunate than themselves.

4. The importance of interdependence between individuals, environments, and local, regional, national, and global leadership is fostered by having delegates fully comprehend the multifaceted nature of current world problems.

5. Leadership skills are enhanced as delegates see that others listen to their ideas, enabling them to find their own voices. That realization combined with the development of empathy empowers delegates to understand their responsibility to take leadership action.
Creativity

1. Delegates collaborate in an international, virtual platform to create new, innovative solutions to real, current problems. By listening to other ideas and sharing their own, they realize that creativity is often sparked in an environment of respect, support and encouragement.
2. Real-world applications of classroom material provide the framework for the meaningful acquisition of academic skills.
3. Critical thinking is required to design new solutions to current problems. By sharing a common focus of problem-solving, students realize they have the ability to think creatively and critically to find solutions. They develop a “can do” mindset.

How can virtual MMUN preparation and a virtual MMUN Conference overcome the low learning effects of technology?

Educational research, such as the Hattie Effect, has shown that there are other strategies that mitigate the low to minimal effects of technology which have been quantified as producing an average to a whole year’s worth of learning (Hattie, 2010). Collaboration and Engagement are two of the strategies that teachers employ to significantly increase learning (Gillies, 2014; Scheurell, 2010; Nagel, 2007; Hattie, 2009). These are trademark MMUN features. Please be sure to watch the short video on the MMUN Virtual Conference held in May.
How will the activities in MMUN help teachers in their micro-teaching?

In other words - how can MMUN help us?

The challenge is to take the benefits of MMUN to extend beyond online or on-site conferences into our classrooms - into student learning.

Participating in an MMUN conference can be a transformational experience as students realize this voice and their ability to solve problems; the natural outcome is often a sense of responsibility to take action. MMUN has developed lesson plans for teachers to take the momentum post conference into projects that can benefit their school or communities. What is critical is for students to individually or in small groups identify the problem by understanding what breaks their heart, what talents they have to help that problem and then marry the two in a project (Scales, 2006). They can be called “passion projects” or “service learning projects” for example, where the topics studied inspire them to act, and where teachers guide them through implementation via a simplified project management approach.

References:


