Teaching about World Cultures

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Describe the way people in your family dress. What is distinctly American about it?
How is it different or the same as how people in your family dressed in 1800?
What are the images others have of Americans?
Avoid the exotic!

“Traditional” vs. “Modern”
Small ethnic groups are not representative!
Is a given cultural expression contemporary or historical?
Use visuals carefully and be critical

Western dress, not just “traditional”
Cities, not just villages
Middle class, elites, and professionals, not just “ primitives”
Choose your voices!

Read literature and news from your world area. Classroom visitors from specific countries.
Be wary of simple approaches

If working on war, think about resources
If working on ethnicity, think about economic and political power
Quel prix pour ces diamants?

Non au commerce des armes et des matières premières avec des pays qui violent les droits humains. Amnesty International

www.amnesty.asso.fr
Connect issues to the U.S.

- Violence, poverty, etc. are here also
- Include international heroes to teach about commitment to justice and democracy
Always remember your heritage students!

- Racism against our students is often promoted by unsophisticated “cultural knowledge”
- Even “positive” racial stereotypes can be harmful to heritage students
- Muslim students carry such a burden since 9/11