Introduction

Students in ESL 291 researched UWEC students’ knowledge of and attitudes toward Islam before and after direct instruction. The researchers created a survey for Professor DeGrave’s Geography III (Human Geography) students. They administered the survey at the beginning of the instructional unit on Religion, and again at the end. They hypothesized that Professor DeGrave’s Geography students would increase their knowledge of Islam as a result of the instruction and dialogue, and that attitudes also would become more positive.

Survey Process

- Identify survey population: GEOG 111, 291.
- Develop survey of knowledge and attitudes.
- Administer pre-survey electronically on April 4, 2011.
- Presentation in GEOG classes on April 11, 2011.
- Administer post-survey electronically on April 13, 2011.

Survey Subjects

Gender

Size of City

Religious affiliation

Year in school

Political affiliation

Knowledge Questions:

- K1: Geography of Islam:
  - Q11: Approximately what percent of the world’s population is Muslim? 34%, 22%, 19%, 12%.
  - Q12: Which of these countries is predominantly Muslim? Turkey, Uzbekistan, Indonesia and Malaysia, Pakistan and Afghanistan, Oman and Yemen, All of the above.
  - Q13: The following is a holy city according to Islam: Jerusalem, Mecca, Medina, All of the above.
- K2: General Knowledge:
  - Q14: Muslims eat all meat except: beef, poultry, pork, fish.
  - Q15: “Islam” and “Muslim” refer to these two things: person, religion, place of worship, a place of worship, a person, religion, a person-They are interchangeable.
- K3: People:
  - Q16: All Arabs are Muslim. T, F
  - Q17: The following is a holy city according to Islam: Jerusalem, Mecca, Medina, All of the above.
  - Q18: “Islam” and “Muslim” refer to these two things:
  - Q19: According to the “Foreign Policy” website, the fastest growing religion in the world is: Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam.
  - Q20: Among world religions, I believe Islam is: the first, second, third, fourth most common religion.

Attitude Questions:

- Q12: I have a friend or acquaintance who is Muslim. T
- Q13: Compared to other religions, I believe Islam is: more, less, neither more nor less violent, I don’t know.
- Q14: If I heard a mosque was being built in my neighborhood, I would feel: worried, happy, not believe it, want to learn more, I wouldn’t care.

Conclusion

The researchers found that direct instruction followed by an informal question-answer period increased students’ knowledge of Islam and contributed to more positive attitudes toward Islam.