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ACTION PLAN FOR TEACHING ABOUT ASIA

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Brown Academy
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Objectives: To provide authentic and quality instruction. To inspire my first graders to appreciate the Asian people and their culture in such a way that they will want to befriend them; and travel to their countries some day. For the students to have a basic knowledge-base of Japan that will be further fueled by middle and high school teachers so that they might consider choosing Asian studies as electives and majors in college.

Student Background:

Brown Academy is a zone-magnet school located near the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. It is a public school and a part of the Hamilton County Department of Education. The school has been a candidate for the International Baccalaureate Program since the 2007-2008 school year. Total school enrollment is approximately 350 students (Pre K – 5th grade). The population is

financially diverse. The majority of students are African American. (88%). The first grade department consists of four classrooms. The target instruction group will be a single first grade classroom of approximately 20 students.

Curriculum Plans:

This action plan will focus on teaching about the country of Japan through three pieces of literature. Part 1 will use the read-aloud method and the text of Grandfather's Journey by Allan Say (1993; Houghton-Mifflin) The literature focus around comprehension skills and making connections. The comprehension activities will be developed from suggestions incorporated in the resource entitled: Interactive Read-Alouds: Linking Standards, Fluency and Comprehension. (Hoyt; 2007, Heinemann) Students will be engaged in discussions with their "talking partner" throughout the story. Next the students will receive a basic overview of Japan. I will cover geographical location, learning about an archipelago, and Japan's national flag. The students will explore the area of San Francisco, California. Students will use basic addition an

subtraction skills to discover distances between Japan, San Francisco and Chattanooga. Finally, I will help the children to establish a cultural knowledge base for the study of Japan. We will look at the language, traditional dress, home life, the tea ceremony, Japanese foods (rice, \tea and chop sticks), and end with an opportunity to create a watercolor painting about a favorite Japanese theme, object or activity. Throughout the lessons the students will be directed to access the kid-friendly web-site <http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/>. I believe the children will find this site engaging and they may learn many valuable concepts without realizing it. I plan to make this information available to parents if they want to explore Japan further at home. The second and third parts of plan will be a little shorter than Part 1 because the students will have received a good instructional/cultural base in Part 1 of the curriculum plan. I will introduce the story entitled The Japanese Garden by Sally O'Neill (Rigby PM Plus). This book is intended to be used in small- group setting and lends itself to a guided reading lesson.

Since guided reading is a part of our system's balanced reading plan, it will fit nicely into an integrated curriculum plan of reading, science and social studies. This section of lessons will build on the prior knowledge base that was provided in Part 1 of this plan. Again, the settings for this story are Japan and California. In this story, Mr. Akira, travels back and forth between California and Japan on business. He shares the importance of the Japanese garden in the crowded city where he works. In turn, the children create their own Japanese garden in the backyard. The instructional concepts would be the importance of family and the value of the Japanese garden. I will rely upon the excellent information provided within a suggested web-site <http://learn.bowdoin.edu/japanesegardens/>. The children will learn the basic elements included in a Japanese garden by visiting the web-site and from my presentations. Next we will construct some of the elements of the garden in our classroom. We will attempt to grow plants and keep a goldfish alive. We will study

the koi (goldfish or carp) and create an art project in which we will make koi fish out of tissue paper and display them in the room.

The students will make a Japanese diorama garden using basic craft materials. At the end of this section we will have a sharing session with an audience (parents, another classroom of students etc.) I will encourage the students to share the botanical and cultural concepts they have learned about a Japanese garden. A small sushi-sampling meal will be planned if possible. In Part 3 the read-aloud story method will be used with the story Kamishibai Man by Allan Say (2005; Houghton-Mifflin). This story will be used as a “jumping off” place to teach the children about the kamishibai story-telling method. A basic discussion of the story will be incorporated with student “talking partners”. Additional questions will include the reason why the Kanishibai man told fewer and fewer stories (television) and the importance of traditions. (The grown-ups at the end of the story were some of the man’s listeners as children or had fond story-telling memories.)

The next section of this lesson will center around a famous

kamishibai story that is mentioned in the book. This story is called Momotaro, the Peach Boy. (<http://www.kamishibai.com>).

The story comes on large cards that can be used on a carpet area with the whole class. I chose this story because it is traditional and it also appropriate to many of my students. The boy in the story has to learn to use his talents wisely. I plan to create the effects of a kamishibai story by using a rolling story cart complete with wood blocks and a candy drawer (filled with Asian candy from World Market at Hamilton Place). For student participation and follow up, the class will collaborate to write a mini version of an original kamishibai story (complete with some type of cliffhanger) that can written as a script for the readers' theatre section of our classroom. The students will take turns performing the script during our daily literacy block .As our class in introduced to poetry this year I would like teach a section on Haiku poetry. I anticipate that this can easily be done during in our normal writing workshop format. We will be following the teaching suggestions of Lucy

Calkins and Stephanie Parsons in Poetry: Powerful Thoughts in Tiny Packages (2003; Heinmann). This text makes mention of haiku poetry as useful for young children. When we get to the poetry instruction portion of writing workshop (probably Spring '09) I will weave in haiku. I plan to rely upon the resources of The Poetry of Zen by Hamill & Seaton (Shambhala Publications; 2004) and Haiku Picturebook For Children by Keisuke Nishimoto (1999; Heian International). This book presents Haiku poetry in English and also shows the Japanese text next to it. The author also gives an interpretation of each poem which is great for this age-group. Samples of the children's haiku poetry will be a part of their writing portfolio. Original haiku work samples may not be appropriate for all first graders, but I will give them a chance to try it after many whole-group modeling experiences. A class Haiku Book will be assembled using class and original student pieces. As is the tradition with guide writing, we will have a class "Celebration". The authors (children in class) will be invited to read and/or display their work for others to hear. A "mystery"

Japanese food will be served. (This means that I will be determining this later, but will include some type of food.)

Throughout the year the students will have access to the classroom library collection of Chinese, Japanese and Korean books. These books are a combination of fiction and nonfiction titles and are a part of my personal collection. The books can be used for instructional- independent reading and research purposes.

While preparing this action plan/lesson plans for Asian Studies I found the following resources to be helpful for primary grades:

“Fiction about Japan in the Elementary Curriculum” by Mary Hammond Bernson; <http://spice.stanford.edu/docs/141> (She provides excellent information that relates to choosing accurate and appropriate literature.)

“Exploring East Asia through Stories”
<http://www.indiana.edu/~easc/storytelling/index.html> (A great list of books for China , Japan and Korea)

Kids Web Japan

<http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/> / (I believe this will turn out to be a popular educational tool for my first graders.)

Asia for Kids

<http://www.asiforkids.com> (I plan to use this site when it is time to order materials for my school.)

Asia for Educators

<http://afe.easia.columbia.edu> (This is one of the sites that I used as a reference. Teacher-background.)

www.enchantedlearning.com (a member site; has lots of maps and kid-friendly materials to meet the needs of primary students.)

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