

Action Plan for East Asia Studies in Elementary Art Education

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Our school is in the southern part of the county. The City, which is the capital of the state, and county merged together to form one entity which takes care of education, police, fire, emergency services, and government services to name a some of its responsibilities.

Under the No Child Left Behind Act the school district as a whole did not pass for several years in a row and as a result the State has taken over the school district. Our school has passes each year and is in good standing. However, we now have to use the State Standards of Learning. The East Asia program I have designed fits well with the State Standards. I like them better than the standards developed by our school district.

The school population is around 819 children from diverse ethnic backgrounds. It is an urban school in a growing part of the county. We have kindergarten through fifth grade. The fifth grade is in our school due to over population at the middle school where the students would go. The fifth graders are treated like would be in the middle school in that the students get to select the special areas they would like to take. Every nine weeks the fifth grade students choose between art, music, and physical education. Also, year long programs in the special areas are band, guitar and Tae Kwon Do.

Another special program at our school is SMART. It was started in the Physical Education Department and has broadened out to include art and music. Kindergarten and first grade students are the only classes to participate in this program. The classes come to art and music for 30 minutes. The kindergarten and first grade classes rotate between Physical education, art and music in this program. In reality the children are in my class for about 20 minutes after the transition from music to art or art to music and then getting ready to leave art to go back to their classrooms.

For the reasons mentioned above; the kindergarteners, first graders, and fifth graders are not included in my East Asia art lessons. The fourth graders have started getting ready for their art assessment which is given two months after school starts. When it is over and all materials are turned in the students will begin their East Asia studies. They may not get through the entire list of art projects but they will on many of them.

To document what my students are doing in my classes, I photograph them as they work. Selected children will be photographed from start to finish with an art project. Many times several children to an entire class are photographed. Pictures will be put in the school's year book and on the art web page on the school's web site.

Currently I am working on my National Board Certification. This action plan will be very helpful as I work on several of the Entries I need to work on for completion of my certification. Photographs and maybe a video of a class activity will be incorporated into this East Asian art program.

I use Thinking Maps with the lessons before the actual art making begins. Thinking Maps help students organize information and improve recall and learning. Thinking Maps were introduced to our school last year. The Maps were used by our English Language Learners (ELL) teachers. The entire faculty received training to use Thinking Maps in our classrooms.

When each project is completed each class will have a class critique. This is a time for each student to reflect on their art work. It gives the class the opportunity to see everyone's work in the class as well. Also, suggestions can be made by the students about their how to make their art project better and how to improve classmate's work as well.

The second and third graders will work on many of the same projects. The list I have for both grades is long and I hope will give the students a good taste of the arts from China and Japan. I also will introduce them to Korea it's history and art.

Some of the art projects include; Chinese calligraphy which both grades will work on throughout the school year. When the students become proficient with calligraphy, using markers and ink with a brush, they will start to incorporate it into art projects. One art project the students will practice is to choose one Chinese character from a selected list. When the students become comfortable with their skills they will paint the character with ink and a bamboo brush. The finished painting will be mounted on a proportionately bigger piece of wall paper and hung in the hall after a class critique. The students will use a calligraphy book I made to help learn Chinese characters. I chose characters that are easy to make and there are some that are more complex.

My students will work with Origami. They will have a book that I compiled to help the children learn how to make different folds and to make delightful objects. They will practice origami off and on through the school year. One object made in with origami will be mounted

on paper then on wallpaper. The wallpaper is be bigger and will create a colorful border around the paper. This is the alternative to using fabric to hang their pictures. Mounting art in this fashion is reminiscent of the Chinese and Japanese scrolls; paper mounted on fabric. The class critique will follow when the children are finished. Their work will be displayed in the halls of the school.

The children will learn sumi-e, Chinese brush painting and look at examples of Chinese and Japanese painting. They will paint landscapes, plants and flowers using Chinese sumi-e painting. This form of painting will require students as well as the teacher to hold the paint brush differently from what we are use to. Students will practice their brush painting techniques before painting a picture. When the paintings are finished the each class will have a class critique. Then the paintings will be displayed in the halls.

One project that the children will do is to incorporate calligraphy and sumi-e painting on fans. The fan shapes will look like open fans with the ribs removed. Students will draw on the fans with ink of an out-door scene. Then write Chinese characters that describe the picture. When the fans are finished they will be mounted on paper and displayed in the halls after a class critique.

My students enjoy printing because it seems like magic to see their image appear after their plate was inked up and printed on white paper. We are going to use rubber fish to make Japanese fish prints called Gyotaku. This will be exciting to use half of a rubber fish to make a print. In this style of printing my students will create compositions using two colors of tempera paint and the rubber fish. The print can have multiple fish on the paper to make a school of fish.

Another form of printing is using a plate, foam tray. Printing can be done two ways. One is to incise or draw on the foam then print. Or the students can draw their design and press the foam down around the shapes then print. This is how we do Japanese wood block printing without the wood..

Another medium that my students look foreword to each year is clay. We will look at animal sculptures from China and Japan and the Terra Cotta Army from China. I found temple dogs from a local store's garden department. We can look close up at the designs on the sculptures and touch them as part of learning about the sculptures. The students will make clay animals using the temple dogs as examples. The resulting clay sculptures will be quite different

from the originals. The finished clay sculptures will be put on display in the library and in a display case after a class critique.

My students will also celebrate Chinese New Year. In January we will make dragon puppets and have dragon parades in the school halls. Also, we will make signs using calligraphy to wish all a happy new year. One sign will be placed on each classroom door in the school as well as the office door.

The students will make kimonos using cut paper. We will study Japanese kimonos before starting the project. They will have to design the kimono then using a variety of papers cut and glue, each student will make the front of the garment only. The finished projects will be displayed in the halls for the rest of the school to see after a class critique.

Another cut paper project is kites. After looking at Chinese and Japanese kits and studying the history of kites and looking at shapes and designs students will make their kites out of cut paper. They will be hung around inside the school. They will not fly so we will not take them out and try to put them in the air.

Japan and China both have unique theaters. Japan had the Kabuki or Noh and China has the Chinese Opera. We will study both theaters especially the masks used in performances. Using paint on stiff paper, my students will invent a mask that might be used in one of the two theaters. After class critique the masks will be hung in the halls for display.

My students will explore Chinese tangrams as an avenue for a work of art. We will study the history and using the tans to solve the puzzles to make the pictures. Students will choose one picture they like and make the shape by tracing around the shapes to create the picture on black paper and glue it to a sheet of white paper and display the art in the halls after a class critique. I will compile a book of pictures for my students to solve.

The final project my students will explore is the Zen Garden. We will study Zen and its art. Using the lids of shoe boxes, sand, polished pebbles and combs my students will make their own Zen Garden. The configuration of the garden may change several times before being put on display in the Library or in a display case.

The art project list is long and varied. My students will be kept busy this year with history of the projects and working on art projects inspired by artists in China and Japan. I feel that they as well as myself will have fun learning and making art this year.