Pre K - K Program: Let’s Make a Map of Far East Asia! -Chigirie-

Explanation of the activity

- School: Early Childhood Education Center (Webster Groves, St. Louis)
- Date: February 11, 18, and 23 (3 Days)
- Participants and its number: 2-5 years old children (200) and teachers (25) and their parents
- Program List (Fall 2009 - Spring 2010)

Goals

1. To know there is a country called Japan and what it looks like
2. To let them experience how to collaborate and cooperate together to make one project

Schedule

- Preparation: 1) Draw a draft of the map, 2) Tear colored paper into pieces
- Day 1: Greeting and explain about what we are going to do. Start gluing the torn paper on the white map.
- Day 2: Continue gluing the torn paper on the white map and make it look nice. Put the pieces all together so that the map will be completed.
- Day 3: Heritage Night (Showing the big map in front of the children and their parents)

Background and Coordinator’s analysis of the impact of the activity

I received a phone call from Dr. Wuch, who is the program manager of the Early Childhood Education Center in Webster Groves to make a presentation and prepare an activity for pre school students. This was a tough request for me. The idea of Harie came to me when I remembered that I had done it when I was in 5th grade in Japan. The process was very simple: tear the paper and glue it! I thought even 2 year old kids can do that, too. And, it worked. Even though they might not have understood what they were doing, I hope they would remember the picture of the big map and later I hope they will recognize it as the country called Japan. I was very honored to introduced myself in front of their parents with the big map on Heritage Night. I was also glad to hear a lot of good feedback from the teachers at school. They told me that they learned a lot from me and the technique of the Harie was great.

Comments from my supervisor

This was a wonderful activity. It was age appropriate in that pre-school children love to tear things up (like the paper), have fun gluing things and working together to produce something they can show their parents. The hands-on activity kept their interest and provided a visual way for them to learn about Japan while being fun for them. The teachers and parents were so impressed at her creativity and ability to work so well with children of such a young age. The presentation she made about Japan on Heritage Night was wonderful. Kana not only is a patient, kind and gifted teacher, but she also is very creative.
Japanese Language and Culture Activities at Webster University

Explanation of the activity

- Date: September 2009 - May 2010
- Place: Webster University, St. Louis, Missouri
- Participants and its number: University students (60 or more), High school students (about 30)
- Program List (Fall 2009 - Spring 2010)
  - Japanese Individualized Learning Experience Course (Tutoring)
  - Japanese Speech Meet on April 3
  - Japanese Language Table
  - Japanese Culture Course
  - Webster University students visiting Webster Groves High School
  - Japanese Cultural Night (Event hosted by Japanese Student Association on April 2)

Goals

1. To help students to learn Japanese by practicing together
2. To deepen their knowledge and understanding of Japanese culture and language

Detailed Program:

**Japanese Individualized Learning Experience Course (Tutoring) and Speech Meet**

Met with 4 students individually once or more a week and tutored them depending on their level. Took them to the “Japanese Speech Meet 2010” which is held annually at the University of Missouri, St. Louis (UMSL). The participants used to be only students from UMSL or Washington University who have a Japanese major, while Webster University does not. The students who I brought from Webster University did a great job. (1 got the second prize and 2 got the third prize) Since a lot of Webster University students do not have confidence in their Japanese skills, I hope they achieved much more confidence in their Japanese proficiency.

**Japanese Language Table**

Set up a place where students who are taking Japanese language classes could meet and talk to Japanese students. Met with about 20 students once a week for an hour or more. This language table was held by one graduate assistant, Azusa Kojima. I helped her out with suggesting some ideas of how to best organize this table. We decided what topic we were going to discuss at the language table and what kind of events students would like to experience together. We had a “takoyaki party” and two film nights for the event.

**Japanese Culture Course and Visiting Webster Groves High School**

Met with about 20 students two times a week for about an hour and a half during the spring semester 2010. We discussed how Japanese people think in a different way compared to how Americans think. We watched two Japanese films and discussed the bushido spirit and death. We also studied each period startings from Jomon all the way to Heisei. We studied the geographical regions, too. After all of our discussion, I took 8 college students to Webster Groves High School. They talked to the high school students about what they are interested in Japan and all of them did a great job. I got a wonderful feedback from the students and the teachers from Webster Groves High School. It was a great time for high school students to meet with college students. The very end of the semester, I brought two Japanese guest speakers who presented Japanese dancing and Japanese Food. After the presentation, all of the college students wrote letters to the guest speakers.

**Japanese Cultural Night**

On Friday, April 2, 2010, All of the Japanese students at Webster University and I hosted the Japanese Cultural Night on campus. We planned and prepared for this event since February. The theme was the “Japanese Four Seasons, Shiki”.

We made 4 presentations related to the 4 seasons and prepared seasonal food with seasonal games. The night was full with people staying from the beginning till the end of the event. I can say it was a successful event because there were not only Japanese, but some students, who are interested in Japan, volunteering to help us out. It was a good event.
Coordinator’s analysis of the impact of the activity

During my first year of JOI, I enjoyed meeting and talking with college students the most. They are all interested in and eager to learn the culture and the language of Japan. Sometimes, they knew more than I did. I thought it was going to be very difficult for me to tell something at an academic level. However, I spent a lot of time networking with people in the Japan Society and that helped me a lot. Each person has his or her own history and they are all full of knowledge and experience. It was a good idea to bring two of them to speak for the college students. We learned a lot from them and the two guest speakers from the Japan Society greatly enjoyed meeting with young college students which made them energetic. After I finished tutoring my 4 students, two of them passed the internship program to go and work in Japan, and one is going to Osaka for two years as an exchange student. I am lucky to meet with and have such wonderful students. I am very proud of them.

Comments from the Webster students

- I loved the video and Kana Morishita’s stories! I have a new appreciation for a different culture other than my own because of Kana Morishita.
- This course really helped me to understand the culture of Japan. That much more than before, and the instructor accomplished my goal in explaining it quite well.
- Morishita sensei went out of her way to answer any questions that we had, including doing her own research on some subjects.
- Friendly! Helpful! I! Will! Miss! You! Etc…

Comments from my supervisor

Kana’s impact on the students at Webster University in such a short time has been impressive. The university administration, faculty and students all have a great appreciation for her work, her enthusiasm, and her willingness to work so hard to promote Japanese language and culture courses on our campus. Her students were so well prepared that they were able to compete and win in language competitions our students have never before participated in. Kana was very helpful in preparing our students who were going to participate in an internship in Japan and study at Kansai University in Osaka. The Japanese Festival was a huge success and her hard work and leadership in it was very evident throughout the semester. Even though Kana had not previously taught university students she was able to quickly adapt to this level of teaching and was extremely good at it. Webster University is quite lucky to have her on its campus.

Japanese Language Table  College students visit high school

Japanese Cultural Night  Japanese Speech Meet  Card from Webster students
K-12 School Activity: 9 Day Program about Japan

Explanation of the activity

• School: Neuwoehner High School, Special Education District in City and Country, St. Louis
• Date: November 17, December 2, December 8, January 13, January 20, February 3, February 24, March 24, and, May 12
• Duration: 45 minutes each day
• Participants and its number: Special Education students (10th~12th grade)
  8 ~ 10 students + 2 teachers

Goals

1. To promote interest in and study of Japan
2. To broaden student knowledge

Topic for Each Activity

• Day 1: Japanese Greetings and Origami (Samurai Hat and a Box)
• Day 2: Manga #1
• Day 3: Manga #2
• Day 4: Densyo-Asobi (Traditional Japanese Games)
• Day 5: Radio Exercise
• Day 6: Setsubun & Japanese Ogres
• Day 7: Vancouver Olympics and Japanese sports
• Day 8: Japanese middle school student’s life
• Day 9: Review of what we learned about Japan and Origami (Frog)

Background and Coordinator’s analysis of the impact of the activity

Ms. Bubash, who is the teacher I worked with at Neuwoehner High School, asked me to come to her classroom as much as possible. She had already taught some about Chinese culture and wanted her students to know about Japan as well. I planned the program and we set the schedule together. I struggled at first because the students have some difficulties to memorize and focus on one thing. The very first day, even though I spoke about my country for 45 minutes, they asked me “so, how do you say this in Chinese?” I learned “I have to be more patient with them.” However after the 3rd or 4th visit, I realized that they started to remember what I taught! They took notes in their own notebook which helped them with remembering a lot. Even though the students are special students and take more time to understand what I teach, they are able, with more time, to understand and learn something new.
Overall K-12 School Activity

- Date: November 2009 - May 2010
- Number of participants: Approximately 3000 students
- Program Lists:
  - 1st grader: Origami, Book Mark Making with their Japanese name on it, Story Telling
  - 3rd ~ 4th grader: Origami, Book Mark Making with their name in Japanese, and Story Telling
  - 5th ~ 6th grader: Calligraphy, Kite making, Language and Clothing, and Japanese Food
  - 7th ~ 9th grader: Calligraphy, Writing System in Japanese, Middle School Student’s Life in Japan, and Origami
  - 10th ~ 12th grader: Discussion of “Women’s Role in Japan,” “Japanese Mind,” “Marriage,” “Tea Ceremony and Japanese Dancing,” “High School Student’s Life,” “Being as a Japanese, philosophy,” “School System in Japan” etc...

I am not sure how much of an impact I had on the students and teachers I met in St. Louis. I hope they became interested in Japan or Japanese culture or even any other different culture. I always taught them "Knowing different culture is a JOY!" A lot of students have their own cultural perspective. It is sometimes wrong, for example, the concept of sushi for American students is “raw fish.” It is not totally wrong, but I would like to add a little bit more information for them so that they can try to eat sushi even if they do not want to eat raw fish. I had no background in teaching something to either little children or special education students. Therefore it was sometimes hard for me to come up with ideas for activities for them. I spent a lot of time discussing with teachers what would be the best topic and activities for them. I believe it helped a lot to make good lesson plans. What I learned from visiting schools as a JOI coordinator was that if I only got one school visit, I would make sure each student could bring one souvenir home so that they can show it to their parents and maybe they might remember there was one Japanese lady who came to talk to them.

Comments from teachers
- Thank you for presenting to our students on Thursday. The course on Japan was voted overall favorite class. The students enjoyed learning about Japan, but more importantly, they enjoyed learning from you. You are a very engaging speaker! (6th grade teacher)
- I recently had the pleasure of hearing Kana Morishita speak about Japan to a group of my seventh grade students. She taught the students a little about the geography, language and clothing of Japan and did an excellent job! (middle school teacher to Debbie)
- Thank you so much for visiting our classroom again! The students really enjoyed tasting the dish you made, and learning about Japan! You are really good with the kids, and a true joy to work with! We look forward to seeing you again next year! (4th & 6th grade reading teacher)

Comments from my supervisor
Kana’s willingness to work with students of all ages and intellectual ability is amazing. She was able to appropriately work with pre-school students, typical K-9 students, special needs students and university students alike. Her activities and presentations were always age and ability appropriate. Teachers, students and parents alike learned so much from her. She researched, studied, and took private lessons in things such as dance, singing, kite making, tea ceremony and origami. Kana is a wonderfully gifted teacher. Regardless of what she says – her impact has been enormous.
K-12 School Activity: Kirksville Visit

**Date:** January 12-14, 2011 (For three days)

**Place:** Kirksville Middle School, Adair County Public Library, and Kirksville Primary School

**Participants:** 300 (6th graders), 200 (7th graders), 112 (2nd graders), and about 40 adults and 10 kids at the library

**Background:** When I had a teacher's workshop for “Japan in the classroom,” I met one teacher, Ms. Carolyn Chrisman. She teaches 7th and 8th grade social studies at Kirksville Middle School and asked me to come and visit her school someday. Fortunately, I was able to visit! Carolyn contacted me a few months later and invited me to come and teach Japanese culture. According to Carolyn, students and even adults who live in Kirksville have a poor understanding of Japan because Kirksville is a very small town, located about 200 miles away from St. Louis.

**Comments from Coordinator:** I can say that the visit to Kirksville was one of my most exciting and unforgettable visits ever. I was told that most of the students, teachers, and adults who live in Kirksville had never seen a Japanese person before. Compared to St. Louis students, I thought that there would be not much curiosity about Japan. However, when I received all the “thank you” cards from the students I spoke to, I saw a lot of messages that said, “You made me I want to go to Japan! Arigatoo!” Now, all of them know the story of “Peach Boy,” they know where Japan is located, and they know how to greet in Japanese. I hope I could be the one to help with opening the door to a different world for them.

**Comments from Supervisor:** Kana had a great impact on the students at Kirksville. Her willingness to be there for three straight days working all day long each day is a wonderful testament to her dedication to her work. The impact on the students will be felt a lifetime. She opened up a little the window to the world so that they could see what other parts of the world are like.

**Wednesday, January 12th**
- 7th grade World History classes about Japanese school life, history, traditional vs. modern. 7 presentations at 45 minutes each. 200 students total.
- At night: Adair County Public Library Topic is Tea Ceremony and Table Manners

**Thursday, January 13th**
- 6th grade Social Studies classes and some reading classes. To the Social Studies classes, I talked about the geography of Japan and travel to Japan. To reading classes, I talked about religion and folk tales. 7 presentations at 45 minutes each. 600 students total.
- 4:30-5:30pm Adair County Public Library. Topic is “Japanese Paper Craft: Kiri-e”.

**Friday, January 14th**
- Kirksville Primary School. We discussed origami, folk Story-telling and traditional toys and games. 4 presentations at 30 minutes each. 112 students.
Japanese Festival 2011

- **Date:** September 4–6, 2010 (For three days)
- **Place:** Missouri Botanical Garden
- **Participants and its number:** 2500
- **Backgrounds:** The Japanese Festival at the Missouri Botanical Garden is one of the largest and oldest festivals of its kind in the United States. Since 1977 the Garden has hosted this unique event at one of the largest Japanese gardens in North America. I was volunteering this festival in 2009, but in 2010, my second year of JOI, I had the chance to be more involved with this festival and participate in some performances as well.

- **Comments from Coordinator:** There are two types of work that I did for this festival. One was to help with organizing the volunteers, and the other was to be one of the performers. It took about 6 months for me to practice, but I was very glad and honored to be one of the members who supported the festival. And more than that, I got to know more people through practicing and performing. Even after the festival was over, I maintained a bond with the other participants which helped my JOI outreach. When I received a request from teachers for a Japanese musical performance which I could not do it on my own, a group I met at the Festival came to play the music for one elementary school and a library. I felt so appreciative. They all became my good friends and Japanese cultural advisors.

- **Comments from Supervisor:** The Japanese Festival in St. Louis is one of the largest in the country. Kana worked hard for months before the festival learning the dances on her own time, sometimes driving very far to meet with her teacher. She worked long hours before and during the festival to make sure that it was a great success.

- **Event Schedule:** Every year there are about 45 activities at the Japanese Festival. I took charges of four different activities in 2011.
  
  - **Saturday, September 4**
    - 2:00–3:00PM: Niji Choral Music
    - Volunteering at the T-shirt booth
  
  - **Sunday, September 5**
    - 1:00–2:00PM/2:30–3:30PM: Kimono Fashion Show
    - 7:30–10:00PM: Karaoke
  
  - **Monday, September 6**
    - Nami & Fujima-Ryu Traditional Japanese Dance Show
    - Volunteering at the T-shirt booth
Japan Earthquake and Tsunami Relief Movement: "Hope for Japan"

Date: April 8, 2011
Place: Webster University
Participants and its number: About 300 people
Backgrounds: On March 11, 2011, the most powerful earthquake in Japan's recorded history struck the north-eastern part of the country. It triggered a massive tsunami and the disaster of the nuclear power plants in Fukushima. After the catastrophic triple disaster, Professor Noriko Yuasa, some faculty and staff, and the Japanese Students Association (JSA) at Webster University came up with the idea that we should help Japan by fundraising. The meetings were held several times and we decided to sell bracelets at $3 each and to have an event which could make a strong impact on the St. Louis community.

Comments from Coordinator: With everyone's great support, this event raised about $3,000 in only one day. And the amount of money which students, faculty, and staff raised was more than $14,000, and JSA sent it to Junior Chamber International (JCI). Due to a quickly planned event and its scale, there were also some conflicts among us, but I felt very thankful to Webster University to let us hold this event on campus for the St. Louis community. What I thought was great was that there were many Japanese organizations which helped by setting booths or donating their time and effort to make this event successful. I realized that this was the first time I have seen community, students, and the University collaborate with each other to achieve one goal, which was very rewarding for not only St. Louis community, but also for the people in Japan.

Comments from Supervisor: All of us were deeply saddened by the problems Japan faced after the earthquake and tsunami this year. Most of us did not really know how to help from here. Thanks to Kana's efforts we were able to quickly get information out to our community on the needs and raise a lot of money to help in some way. Kana was so energetic and worked so hard. Having someone from Japan guide us was a great help.

The Event program
- 4:00PM – 9:00PM
  - Art and Craft Sale
- 5:00PM – 6:30PM
  - Panel Presentations and Discussion
    - Topics: Active Citizenship
    - Media Coverage of disaster
    - The Future of Nuclear Energy in Japan
    - Identity Crisis for Japanese Youth
- 6:30PM – 9:30PM
  - Reception
  - Osuwa Taiko Performance & Workshop