

International Arts Consortium 2003-4:

**Ceramics, Tea Ceremony, and Poetry
Residency Plan**

John Stanford International School, Seattle, with teaching artist

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Project Title: Japanese Culture and Arts through Ceramics

Arts Areas: Visual Arts and Drama

Grade Level: This residency was piloted with second and third grade students, but it could be adapted for students in first through eighth grade.

Time Frame: This residency was piloted in three sessions, of 50 minutes each: making a tea bowl; glazing a tea bowl; using the bowl in a tea ceremony. The artist recommends a sequence of five lessons (once a week for five weeks, with longer sessions of 60-70 minutes), two sessions each for making and firing, to give students more time to develop ceramics skills and experiment with different combinations of glazes.

Project Focus: This residency introduces students to Japanese arts and culture through production of a simple ceramics piece (a glazed tea bowl), which is then used in a formal tea ceremony. The artist will also introduce Japanese aesthetic concepts, and students will experience the process whereby everyday eating utensils (*Gohan Chawan*) are elevated to the honorary position of tea ceremonial ware (*Matchawan*). The artist believes that, by creating a functional piece of art and using it in context, students will gain a deeper understanding of form and function and their relation to everyday life.

Resources/Materials needed:

- Kiln for firing to cone 6
- 1 to 1-1/2 pounds clay per student (Japanese measure in grams, 454 grams to the pound). There will be clay left over, which the artist can teach parents to store
- 1-1/2 gallons of glaze per color, per class of 20-30 students. To allow for the dipping process, it's better to have more glaze than is really used. Glaze can be purchased in powder form, in five-pound bags, which is very inexpensive.
- Wax resist (smallest jar will easily serve 4-5 classes), 4 or 5 brushes, small sponges (for parent/community volunteers to use before glaze-firing)
- Space large and flexible enough to accommodate water, dirt, and student groups in creative mode. No floor covering required if working on linoleum
- Smocks for students to use in the glazing sessions
- Access to water in the classroom
- Access to copy machine
- Normal clean-up materials (rags, towels, squeegee)
- Tea cakes (the pilot project used Harvest brand, in sesame and almond flavors; available in Asian markets, such as Uwajimaya in Seattle)

Resources/Materials provided by the artist:

- *Matcha* tea

- Utensils for preparing tea; accoutrements for tea ceremony
- Miscellaneous Clay tools
- Examples of tea bowls

Learning Goals, keyed to Arts EALRs and Frameworks for grades 2/3

Goal#1: Students will learn ceramics vocabulary (see **Key vocabulary**) for the parts of a pot [1.1.1] and will develop ceramics skills by making glazed pinch pots [1.2]

- Students will create 3D forms and will use texture in 3D works [1.2]
- Students will explore color [1.1.1] and pattern [1.1.2] in using Japanese glazing techniques
- Students will vary pressure, placement, and direction of ceramics tools, and will demonstrate proper care of tools and materials [1.2]

Goal#2: Students will apply a creative process [2.1] by creating functional tea bowls.

- Students will gather information about ceramics techniques through samples of work and direct instruction
- Students will practice problem-solving in refining their work, based on instructor feedback and self-evaluation (smoothing lip, assessing thickness, etc.)
- Students will practice decision-making in combining glazes and working with concepts of positive and negative in patterning [1.1.1; 1.1.2]
- Students will practice techniques for coping with frustration and failure [i.e. when a pot collapses]

Goal#3: Students will use their tea bowls in a traditional Japanese tea ceremony [1.3; 1.4; 2.3; 3.2; 4.4]

- Students will explore the relationship between form and function by drinking from tea bowls that they have made [3.2]
- Students will learn a culturally specific "responding process" through direct instruction in the "dance of responsiveness" between hostess and participants in a tea ceremony [2.3]
- Students will be introduced to Japanese aesthetic and philosophical concepts (about nature, etc.) that are part of the tea ceremony [1.3; 4.4]

Residency Plan:

Session 1: Students shaped clay balls of the appropriate size (about 1-1/2 times the size of a golf ball), so that the ball of clay cannot be seen when the student's hands are clasped over it: this exercise provided a practical/philosophical lesson in taking only as much material as one can really use (if you take more than you need, you won't be able to handle the material). * After looking at samples of pinch pots, each student learned to pinch open her/his pot and to refine the pot's lip and foot. Students also made ceramic labels with their names (as young students have trouble writing their names legibly on the bottom of a small pot), to attach to their pots; with more time, students could create a unique, identifying design (*moyo*) to apply to the surface

*Parent/community volunteers can make clay balls in advance of the session.

Interim: After instruction from the artist, parents smoothed each student's pot, to erase cracks without changing the pot's form. During each session, make a few extra pots for students who can't find their pots. After drying (approximately 48 hours required, depending on the humidity of the room) the greenware was low-fired to a bisque. The artist then instructed parents on how to wax the bottoms of the pots, to keep glaze off.

Session 2: Parent volunteers passed out the bisqueware to students. The artist demonstrated glaze techniques (dip, half-dip, splash, splatter) and asked students to choose two of the three available colors to use. She then worked individually with students to glaze their pots and to overcome any tactile resistance (the "eeeuuw" factor). The artist also provided some simple worksheets (Japanese flag, Tea Ceremony, Calligraphy) with brief instructions for students to use as they were waiting for their glazes to dry between applications.

Interim: Parent volunteers cleaned the wax on the bottom of each pot by sponging off any glaze, a crucial step before the glaze-firing. Pots were then glaze-fired.

Session 3: Students participated in a tea ceremony presented by the artist and two Japanese community volunteers. The class of twenty-eight students was divided into four groups of seven: as the first group of seven filed into the tea house (*tatami* mats laid on the floor) and took their places in a row, the rest of the class, arranged around the outside of the house, observed. Each student brought with him or her a specially folded paper (*kaishi*) to serve as a plate for the tea cake. As the tea ceremony unfolded for each group—ritual greetings, distributing and eating cakes, making, pouring and drinking tea—the artist instructed all students on appropriate postures, behavior, tea-drinking techniques, and philosophy. Students learned about the origins of the tea house, as a place for political discussion through metaphor and poetry, and about the ways in which all of nature is represented within the confines of the small room. Students practiced using all five senses, and thought about the value of a man-made (rather than machine-made) ceramic object, through which the personhood of the maker is communicated to the user.

Assessment Strategies

- Completion of visual art piece/creative process: classroom teacher records attendance and participation in residency sessions
- Student checklist (see checklist following)
- Student reflection (see reflection following)

Key Vocabulary (many JSIS students participating in the pilot were in Japanese immersion classes)

Ceramics: pinch pot; lip; foot; body; walls; hip; glaze; greenware; bisqueware; low-fire; glaze-fire; glazing techniques: dip; half-dip; splash; splatter

Japanese vocabulary: ceramics
Nendo ~ clay
Yakimono ~ pottery or dishes

Uwagusuri ~ glaze
Tebineri ~ hand forming
Kuchi ~ lip
Kodai ~ foot
Kama ~ kiln
Ro ~ wax

Japanese vocabulary: tea ceremony

Mizusashi ~ fresh water pot
Hana ~ flower
Matchawan ~ ceremonial tea bowl
Chasen ~ tea whisk
Hishaku ~ bamboo ladle
Chashaku ~ tea scoop
Gohan Chawan ~ rice bowl
Konichiwa ~ good afternoon
Ocha ~ tea
Sensei ~ teacher
Okashi chodai itashimasu ~ Thank you for the tea cake, may I partake of it?
Otemae chodai itashimasu ~ Thank you for the tea, may I partake of it?

Japanese Tea Bowls

Student Self-Evaluation Checklist

1. I used an appropriate amount of clay for my tea bowl;
I didn't take more clay than I needed. Y N
2. The walls of my bowl were the same thickness all the
way around. Y N
3. The lip of my bowl did not crack when it was fired. Y N
4. I used two colors of glaze in decorating my bowl. Y N
5. The colors I chose and techniques I used for applying
glazes make a pleasing pattern. Y N
6. My bowl is functional: it doesn't leak and I can drink
tea from it without dribbling. Y N

Japanese Tea Bowls

Student Reflection

Read *To See a World* by the English poet, William Blake:

To see a world in a grain of sand
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And eternity in an hour.

Think about how the sentiment in this poem is similar to the aim of the tea house, where a single (or a few) sounds, tastes, smells, sights, and textures suggest all of nature. Remember, and describe below, two examples of what you heard, tasted, smelled, saw, and touched during the tea ceremony.

I heard _____

I tasted _____

I smelled _____

I saw _____

I touched _____
