

Lesson Title: My Path in Nature: A Lesson Based on a Painting by Shitao

Class and Grade level(s): *Visual Art, Grade 4*

Goals and Objectives:

In collaboration with the grade level team and as part of an investigation into soil and plant life-cycles, the students will learn the importance of bamboo in the Chinese culture and discover what plants today influence our lives.

The student will be able to:

Day One/Two: Meet Shitao

I can determine important information and record it in my portfolio.

I can design and present a team poster about subjects that are connected to Shitao's artwork. [e.g., Jigsaw using a biography of Shitao or Wen Tong or Su Che, a paragraph about Chinese poetry or bamboo or Chinese scrolls or calligraphy or something about Chinese philosophy.

Day Three: Nature is My Teacher

I can record notes and wonderings as I carefully observe a plant native to Kansas soil.

I can write a poem from my notes and reflections about the visual and symbolic qualities of my plant.

Day Four: Brushes and Brushstrokes

I can apply my previous knowledge of value by mixing three values of ink.

I can create a glossary of brushstrokes using both traditional and experimental techniques.

Day Five/Six: Beauty Remembered & Represented

I can construct a Chinese-style scroll using found natural objects (sticks?).

I can select and paint a native Kansas plant that symbolizes my personal strengths through the characteristics/nature of the plant.

Day Seven: Words to Recall Reflections

I can write my poem onto the scroll using careful and purposeful lettering and alignment.

Day Eight: Celebrating Beauty

I can respectfully add a sign of my admiration to the artwork of my classmates. (This step should only be included if this lesson has been preceded by a lesson in which students created their own seals/chops.)

I can share about a learning moment that stands out because of this assignment.

I can reflect on and record my performance toward the learning targets. [Self Assessment]

Time required/class periods needed

Investigation will last at least 8 Class Sessions of 55 minutes each.

Primary source bibliography

Shitao's painting with a description by Su Che of Wen Tong, a Song Dynasty bamboo painter (Translated from the work):

"He dallies amid bamboo in the morning, stays in the company of bamboo in the evening, drinks and eats amid the bamboo, and rests and sleeps in the shade of bamboo; having observed all the different aspects of the bamboo, he then exhausts all the bamboo's many transformations."

"Bamboo in Wind and Rain" by Shitao <http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/4917>

**Other resources used:****Lesson plan adapted from:**

Month-by-Month Masterpieces, by Bobby Chertock, Goody Hirshfield, & Marilyn Rosh. Scholastic NY, 1996. pgs. 55-60.

If applicable: Seals students made from clay preceding this project.

Non-Fiction Readings for Jigsaw:

Chinese poetry

Bamboo

Chinese Calligraphy

Chinese Seals

Bamboo

Plants Native to Kansas

Required materials/supplies

Chart Paper

Poster Paper/Markers-Colored Pencils

Learning Target Sheet-Self Assessment Form

Specials Binders (to record notes)

Black tempera or India ink

Ink wells/cups

Drawing Paper 18 X 5 ½

Paint/Bamboo Brushes

Fine point black markers

Red ink pad (if using seals)

Sticks

String/Ribbon

Paper Towels

Newspaper

Individual Seal (can be made by carving into fine Styrofoam)

Elmer's Glue-All

Paint shirts

Procedure:**Day One/Two: Meet Shitao**

1. Show Image of Shitao's painting
2. Prepare chart paper to record the following statements from the students. It is important for them to go back and review as they describe and analyze a work.
3. Have students share "I notice... statements about the visual qualities.
4. Have students then share similar statements about the principles of design.
5. Ask "Who feels a connection to this work?"
6. Break students into Jigsaw teams and have students read and take notes on the material.
7. Students, in teams, will review their notes and select the most important aspects.
8. Using markers, colored pencils, etc., student groups will create a poster to share with the student body about the importance of their area of study.
9. The teams will present their posters to the class keeping in mind the RAFTS model as they write create: Student Role: Teacher; Audience: The rest of the class; Format: Poster; Topic: Each team will have a different topic; Strong Verb: Convince
10. On both days students should give appreciation to classmates for their efforts and think of at least one thing they learned from and liked about the presentation/poster.

Procedure:

Day Three: Nature is My Teacher

1. Students will gallery walk through the Science Lab or, if possible, take a short walk on the prairie or in a garden. They will observe and take notes about the plants and images they see. [Native Plants and Grasses] If you go outside, have students collect sticks for the edges of their scrolls.
2. Students will share comments/wonderings. Teacher will answer questions at this time.
3. Students will choose one plant they feel is the most like them. [Wiry, colorful, light, etc.] then spend 8 minutes carefully examining and noting in excruciating detail everything about the plant they have selected. This can be a list of words and thoughts that are descriptive and meaningful to them and to the plant. Nothing they feel is incorrect.
4. Students who are willing can share some of the descriptors they've chosen.
5. Demonstrate constructing a poem using a list of words and thoughts. Assignment: Write a poem using your descriptive list in combination with what drew you to the plant initially.

Review Main Learning Target: **I can select and paint a Kansas grown plant that symbolizes my personal strengths through the characteristics/nature of the plant.**

6. Students share appreciation.
7. Store drafts of poem in portfolios.

Procedure:

Day Four: Brushes and Brushstrokes

1. Present materials for traditional and experimental painting. Give instructions for safe and responsible usage.
2. Place ink on a tray just in case there is a spill. Alternatively, you can use water and tempera paint cakes – this is really very close to using traditional inksticks in Chinese calligraphy. Paint cakes are available from Dick Blick.
3. Cover workspace with newspaper.
4. Mix ink concentrations in wells or containers that have lids for storage.
5. Each container should have about one inch of water and the ink can be added to darken the value with a paint brush.
6. Once the class has the ink wells ready they will come to the demonstration table and I will show them specific stroke styles -**traditional**. Thick/Thin, dots/dashes, twirling, single stroke lines, push the brush, etc.
7. Students will do a test sheet to make sure they are achieving a light, medium, and dark value.
8. Once they have achieved the correct values they may **experiment** with techniques and brushstrokes.
9. Instruct the students to blot any extra water or ink with paper towels.
10. Clean up supplies.
11. Share discoveries.

Day Five/Six: Beauty Remembered & Represented

1. Cover work surfaces with newspaper.
2. Students will paint from memory their chosen native plant.
3. Remind students that the white space is an important part and that they should keep it simple.
4. Instruct them to use a mixture of brush strokes.
5. Make sure to use at least the three values they mixed the previous class period.
6. Key words to consider: Overlapping, foreground, background, space.
7. While the student is waiting for the ink to dry, they may glue the ends of the scroll to the sticks they found.
8. Clean-Up

Day Six: Words to Recall Reflections

1. Students will add string or ribbon to the ends of their scrolls.
2. Students will take out the draft of their poem and revise it if necessary.
3. Have a peer listen and critique. [one compliment/one would you consider]
4. Review that calligraphy, the art of writing, was as important as the painting itself in Chinese culture.
5. Once their poems are ready, the students can write it on their scroll in a careful hand with a thin black marker.
6. If you are using seals/chops, students can stamp their artwork in red.
7. Write attribution cards for display. Include: Student Name, Title of the work, Media/Materials, Date.

Day Seven/Eight: Celebrating Beauty

1. Students will lay out completed works. A community room or cafeteria could be used for this if more space is needed.
2. Divide students into two groups: One group will stay at their work and the other will circulate and respectfully stamp the artwork of their peers. Mention that this type of appreciation was common in Ancient China.
3. Groups will switch and repeat step 2.
4. Student will complete an exit pass: *The thing I will remember most: The part I would do differently in the future: The part that is the best: To turn in on final day.*
5. Teacher circulates to review each piece with each student. Questions and answers can be asked and given at this time. Teacher assessment using rubric of choice will be done during this time as well.
6. Students will display the scrolls in the main hallway or in the gallery area.

Exit Pass

Name _____

4- _____ T- _____

Learning Moment:

The part I would do differently in the future:

The part that is the best:

The thing I will remember most: