



Implementation Plan: Maria R. Avery

***Reading The Landscapes of East Asia: An Exploration
of the Geography of Japan and Korea as Viewed
Through Literature.***

***Maria R. Avery
8th Grade United States History
Long River Middle School
Prospect, CT 06712
Region 16 School District***

Implementation Plan

This seminar, *Reading The Landscapes of East Asia: An Exploration of the Geography of Japan and Korea as Viewed Through Literature*, sponsored by the Five College Center For East Asian Studies and The Teachers Center for Global Studies and funded by the Massachusetts Geographic Alliance and The United States Japan Foundation has proven to be a very meaningful experience for me as a Social Studies Educator. There have been many ideas, teaching strategies and resources I have taken away with me on combining literature and geography to teach about East Asia.

As to some background on my teaching assignment, I teach United States History to 8th graders. The course is thematic with major moments of US and World History examined through the lens of four major themes: *History is All Around Us: Local History*, which is an entry point for the students to connect to history on a personal level; *We The People: Governmental Studies*, which is a study of US Governmental Structure and an exploration of our country's basic freedoms as outlined in The Constitution and Bill of Rights; *Struggles For Equality in America*, a unit in which various social justice movements are studied and researched and *The Price of Freedom: Americans At War*, where the students examine how wars have shaped our nation's history and



Implementation Plan: Maria R. Avery

transformed American society. The essential questions that guide the students learning are “Is the history of America a story of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” for all Americans? and “At what price is freedom achieved?”

There are several entry points in the course where I can bring in resources acquired through this seminar. All of these resources will help to strengthen my mission as a Social Studies educator to allow all my students to see themselves in the story of the history of our nation or in the perspectives on history that make up the diverse experiences that are “We The People” of the United States.

KOREA:

The first three sessions by Hye-Souk Wang (East Asian Studies, Brown University), Young Un 9Wheeler School), Tom Barner (Day Middle School), Robert Vacca (Horace Mann Middle School) and Arlene Kowal (NCTA seminar leader) focused on Korean culture, language, history and art and providing entry points for teaching about Korea into the classroom. So much wonderful knowledge was acquired and strategies and resources were provided to introduce Korea in the classroom. I found several handouts and resources from these sessions to be useful for my US History students. I found the handout entitled **Korean Bingo Review Game** and the **Map of Modern Korea** to be particularly useful for background knowledge of Korean history and culture prior to a study of World War II and The Korean War.

In these first sessions on Korea we also received some wonderful books and handouts on Modern Korean History. I plan on using some excerpts from two books that we received **Lost Names: Scenes from a Korean Boyhood** by Richard Kim and



Implementation Plan: Maria R. Avery

Still Life with Rice, by Helie Lee. **Lost Names** will be part of a lesson on the occupation of Korea and the Japanese role in World War II. **Still Life with Rice** by Helie Lee in particular the excerpt that describes the grandmother's escape from Communist North Korea) will be part of our lesson on The Korean War. I found the resource, **Saving Face: Identifying Korean Literature and Getting The Background** by Louise Maher-Johnson to be a useful annotated bibliography on 21st century Korean and Korean American literature from which I chose these two books. The students will be discussing these novels in Literature Circles. I intend on using the **Literary Circle Role Descriptions** handout to aid me in this activity. I also plan on using the handouts on **Five Themes of Geography** and **Humanities Interface Literature/Social Science** to connect what the reading assignments on Modern Korean History to The Five Themes of Geography.

The last session of the series focused on Selected Literature of East Asia. From this session I received many resources to help with my teaching of Korea. I plan on doing a guided reading with my classes from **Korea: A Walk Through The Land of Miracles** by Simon Winchester on his travels to the DMZ. I will compliment this reading with pictures and video of my own experience at the Demilitarized Zone. The class will have a discussion on the legacy of a separated Korea as part of a study of The Cold War.

JAPAN:

The last four sessions focused on Japan's geography and ways to use Japanese literature in the geography classroom. I start my unit on *Struggles For Freedom in America* with an overview of the quest by various groups of Americans to achieve



Implementation Plan: Maria R. Avery

“liberty and justice” for all. I would like to use *A Stranger in A Strange Land* literature reading from the book *A Jar of Dreams* as part of a lesson on the root causes of and ways of overcoming racism in America. The students complete an independent research documentary on various groups in America and their struggle for equality. The struggles of Japanese Americans and Korean Americans are included in this study. I would like to use the **What is A Hero?** handout given by Marilyn Day and Carolyn Cicciu, as part of my unit on civil justice in America. I will modify it to include heroes of Japanese American and Korean American ancestry. They will be an included “hero” portion in the student research documentaries.

I found the handouts given to us by Piper Gaubatz (Geography, University of Massachusetts Amherst), *Geography of Japan* from *Japan Digest* and *Geography's Importance to Japan's History* by Patrick Grant from *Education About Asia Magazine* particularly useful as background information for my students prior to a lesson on World War II. The *Top Ten Things to Know About Japan in the Early 21st Century* by Carol Gluck from *Education About Asia Magazine* can be a post World War II study reading assignment for my students.

As part of my study of World War II, the students will watch *Tora! Tora! Tora!* and I will be using the lesson plan for that film I received from Marilyn Day and Carolyn Cicciu. As a focus for my study of World War II I plan on using the book acquired from this series, *The Girl with The White Flag*, by Tomiko Higa, focusing on how civilians are affected by war. I plan to use the **Five Themes of Geography** and **Humanities Interface Literature/Social Science** to connect the reading assignments on wartime



Implementation Plan: Maria R. Avery

Okinawa to The Five Themes of Geography. I will also be using *The Girl with The White Flag Reading Questions* prepared by Marilyn Day and Carolyn Cicciu.

The students will also examine the effects of the dropping of the Atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. I will be using several materials acquired from the sessions on Japan to enhance my students understanding of the immense human suffering surrounding this event. The students will read and respond to *A Bomb That I Experienced* and poetry written by Keijiro Matsushima, a written account given to us by Marilyn Day and Carolyn Cicciu. This will be enhanced by watching the video <http://www.fcceastudytours.org/fcceas2009videos.html> from the Five College Center For East Asian Website of Mr. Matsushima sharing his experience with the participants of the 2009 Study Tour to Korea and Japan. The handout on the new website *Voices of Hibakusha*, <http://www.inicom.com/hibakusha/> also given to us by Marilyn Day and Carolyn Cicciu will allow my students to hear other survivors tell their stories of destruction, loss, survival and hope for a free world of nuclear weapons. The sessions by Arlene Kowal and Karla Drake on Haiku and Tanka writing helped me to improve on my Haiku writing and the enjoyment one can achieve from writing this type of poetry alone or in a group. I particularly enjoyed the group dynamic involved in writing Tanka and plan on using both styles of traditional Japanese poetry in my lesson on Teaching About The Bomb. The students will read examples of poetry by Hiroshima poet, Sadako Kurihara in *Black Eggs*, from a handout given to us by Carolyn Cicciu and Marilyn Day. They will also read some examples of Haiku and Tanka written by survivors of the bombings from *White Flash/Black Rain: Women of Japan Relive The Bomb*. They will then be given directions on Haiku imagery and themes and they will



Implementation Plan: Maria R. Avery

be asked to create a traditional Haiku or Tanka poem (in small group) to share in their journals and with the class to make a connection with the immense human suffering of this event.

My students have participated in *Pinwheels for Peace* in the past. I intend to have Pinwheels For Peace become a culminating activity for this lesson to be planted on Peace Day by next year's class in September.