

Developing an Art-based Integration Program for the Korean Schools in the United States

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to develop an art-based integration program for the Korean schools in the United States to improve students' academic performance and nurture the spirit of the young and can enable students taking art classes to better understand social and cultural phenomena influencing their lives. This study integrates with six other subjects that are language art, math, religion, social studies, and Korean history. Art classes are considered the main vehicle for integrating the entire program using a thematic approach. The methodology of this study is based on the literature research and the information of the place, the Korean School of Columbus, is that the school is one of 124 Korean Schools in the Mid-western states and is located in the northern part of Columbus, Ohio. In this study, I developed an art-based integration program to be connected well with other subjects to help students to make sense of them in the complex societies and to help them to obtain the five goals that are included: First, students will understand about a Korean history and culture through making a kite; Second, they will know that a kite can be used as ways of communication with people and God; Third, they will also know how different types of kites respond to the airflow of the wind; Fourth, they will understand an enjoyable and different way of learning about aspects of Fine art, Bible, , Language art, Mathematics, Science, History, and Social studies; Lastly, they will learn how important to cooperate with each other.

Keywords: *Community-based art education, Art-centered integration curriculum, Korean school, Art education, Communication.*

1. Introduction

Today, from our postmodern perspectives, the term *community-based art education(CBAE)* is very diverse and broad, and does not seem to exclude those settings where formal education occurs in the private and public schools. According to Congdon, Blandy, and Bolin (2001), CBAE involves people coming together in local arts centers, museums, schools, religious facilities, social clubs, and recreation facilities, both formal and informal. Viewed from their perspective, community-based art education programs incorporate a broad range of art objects and practices. Such programs take place in schools, park facilities, art centers, art museums, retirement centers, and local churches, in addition to local, state and federal prisons. Historically, local churches as community organizations have usually offered educational programs including arts as the result of the conviction of community needs on the part of interested individuals (Hartshorne & Miller, 1932). According to Merz and Furman (1997), most churches in American society are a "gathered community" of individuals who freely associate because of shared spiritual values. "Church members gather

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together for the primary purpose of being together because they share spiritual values, not to fulfill contractual agreements regarding their obligations to each other or to society.” (p. 35). With this shared spiritual values, local churches as community organization embrace the moral problems of society and offer a religious education that is a social responsibility which is concerned with the most vital issues of life.

Children in our society need to feel a sense of connection with the communities in which they live and the world around them. I believe one solution to the problem of the educational shifts would be an integration of institution art programs with community-based art resources, church-based art programs, and religion. In other words, a church can become a catalyst of change in the community; it can be more involved by opening its doors to be used as community centers. Therefore, I believe that church-based art programs can become one way of addressing this emerging problem. Based on this belief, the purpose of this study is to develop an art-based integration program for the Korean School of Columbus in the Korean Church of Columbus where I teach art on Saturdays on a voluntary basis. To make art classes in the educational programs of the Korean schools more meaningful to children, I will make an integrated art program with other subjects that are language art, math, religion, social studies, and Korean history. Art classes are considered the main vehicle for integrating the entire program using a thematic approach. The big idea of the integrated program is *communication*.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Korean Churches as Educational Institutions

Historically, churches served as a community of devotion in the absence of public schools and colleges, were a vital center for the teaching of languages, mathematics, arts, and sciences, and were crucial means of communication and education (Cremin, 1997; Martin, 1999). According to Cremin (1997), churches took on the functions of schools in the old colonial days and awakened themselves in a traditional role as a catalyzer of other educative institutions: “they created new agencies like the camp meeting and the Sunday school to propagate their ideas, and they sought to inspire more traditional agencies like the family, the school, the college, the press, and the voluntary association.” (p. 49). He also mentioned that the disestablished churches of the 1830s and 1840s worked actually at many of the public tasks and the liberals later assigned the educative tasks to the public schools. As through 19th century to 20th century, the shift in which Americans placed broader and heavier responsibilities on public schools became the important matter of concern of public policy and the progressives (Welter, 1962).

As I mentioned above, churches historically took on the functions of families and schools as a community organization and connected the bridge between individual and local community, between one local community and other states’ communities, and between one country and other country with the shared spiritual values. Since the beginning, most churches have shared a close and unique relationship with local communities and have embraced the important aspects of human expression and the social problems. Today, churches continue to create a sense of connection with their communities by opening their doors to be used as community centers. For instance, Korean churches play a very significant role in immigrant life. Compared with Chinese and Japanese immigrant, Korean immigrants are very much churchgoers (Park, 1996). As centers of immigrants’ activities, Korean-American churches exercise great influence on the life of Korean-American communities. Korean-American churches provide the security and identity that immigrants cannot find in the society. Within the Korean community the church functions as a vital source of education through Wednesday School, Korean School, Vocational Bible School, and Sunday School.

2.2 Important Aspect of Art

An important aspect of all of these programs is art, because it is recognized that the arts are a powerful medium to reflect the society and culture and can be considered as a vehicle to liberation, a communicable sensory language that emancipates culture to free expression (Martin, 1999). Viewed in this way, art expresses what is not always possible through words; it functions as a social conscience and speaks to all mankind. Educationally, art experiences enable students to develop a sense of identity and affect how they see themselves as part of a community. Through art experiences young people are able to build powerful communities in which they can thrive. The reason for including the art in the church program is the belief that it improves students’ academic performance and nurtures the spirit of the young and can enable students taking art classes to better understand social and cultural phenomena influencing their lives. Within this scenario the arts become useful instruments in worship and education as they integrate the visual as well as the passion of one’s faith and life experiences.

2.3 Meaning of the Big Idea

Since the big idea of the integrated program is communication, I would like to define the meaning and importance of the word. Generally, communication is the giving and receiving of information. That seems simple enough, but there are three different types of communication such as written communication, verbal communication, and non-verbal communication. When we communicate with someone or pray God for help, what types of communication can we use? We, of course, can use all the three types of communication. Since prayer is the primary means of communicating with God and also historically in Korea kites used as ways of communicating with people, children will write their prayers on each kite and send the kite to God. The prayer journal will be used as ways of written communication after making their own prayer journal.

3. Research Methodology and Place

The methodology of this study is based on the literature research and the information of the place, the Korean School of Columbus, is that the school is one of 124 Korean Schools in the Mid-western states and is located in the northern part of Columbus, Ohio. The school founded in 1981 is registered with and supported by the Chicago-based Korean Education Center. The Korean government has many Korean Education Centers all over the world to educate Korean immigrants and their children. In the United States, there are six Korean Education Centers located in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Houston, Washington D.C., and New York (Jung, 2010) .

4. Results of an Art-based Integration Program

4.1 The Goals of the Art-centered Integration Program

Through this integrated program, I want students to learn about how to develop ability to explore, express, communicate, interpret, and create through making Korean kite and a prayer journal. They also develop understanding and appreciation of Korean art and craft as well as Korean language and culture. Art class will be centered in this integrated program. To support the integrated art program, I will include six other subjects that are Bible, Language art, Math, Science, History, and Social studies (see Figure 1).

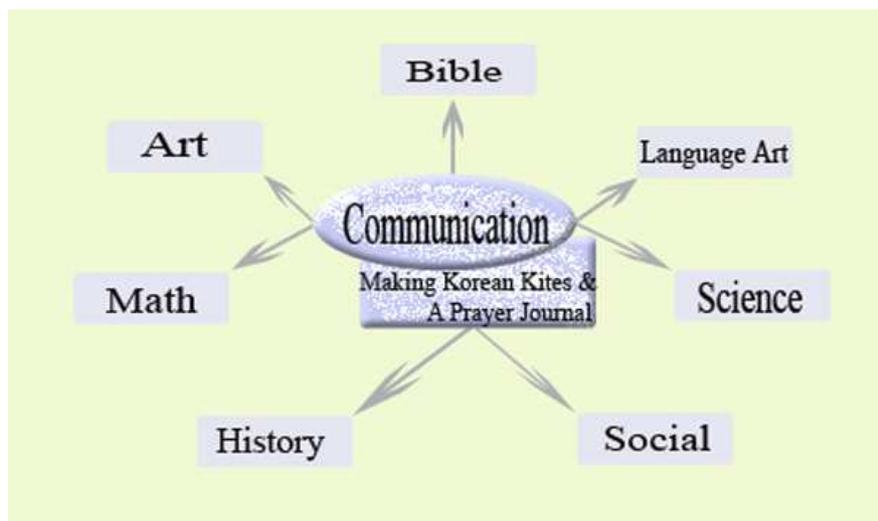


Figure 1. Art-based integration program

4.2 Roles of the Six Subjects

The role of art in the integrated program is to enhance the quality of students' life and bring joy to all students through appreciation and experience in visual forms of expression. Integrating art projects with other subjects helps students to understand how art can be an interesting aspect of communication. The roles of six other subjects are as follow:

Bible study: It is the purpose of a church to prepare and challenge its children to develop spiritually, intellectually, physically and socially. Through Bible studies, students will understand what prayer is and how important prayer is. For instance, among the things Jesus said about prayer.

Language art: Languages are God's gift of communication to each other. Students learn Korean language by speaking it, writing it, thinking it and reading it. In this integrated art class, students will use Korean language when they write prayers on Korean kite and their prayer journal.

Math study: The goal of the mathematical instruction is to develop students who are problem solvers, critical thinkers, and effective mathematical communicators. Activities are designed to stress higher order thinking and complex problem solving skills, as well as to develop the ability to transfer and apply skills across various disciplines. Math subject especially is very important to create a Korean kite because kite would not be flied without an accurate balance.

Science study: This program is designed to teach students to observe and understand their world through exploration and through a growing familiarity with the scientific method. The students investigate and experiment with materials that have been carefully selected to enable them to discover concepts and develop skills. In this integrated curriculum, science teacher will help students to understand how different types of kites respond to the airflow of the wind.

History Study: Through learning the history of Kites, the students understand the world in which they live and eventually Korean history and culture.

Social study: Students learn each other through a variety of experience to understand and appreciate the society in which they live. During the art class, they should help each other and learn to be completely humble and gentle; be patient.

4.2 Tasks and Goals

Students will learn about the history of world kites and how to make Korean kites, *Yeon*, that have a long history. For instance, "kites have been used by many cultures to celebrate special events and occasions. Kites have been around for 2 to 3 thousand years. It is not known for sure who or where the kites was invented, but China is credited with the invention because they were the first to record their use in legends."¹ In the Korean history, kite flying is traced back to 637 A.D., during the first year of the reign of Queen Chindok of Silla, when General Kim Yu-Sin used a kite to calm the agitated populace. He launched a kite in the night sky over Kyongju which is located in the south region of South Korea. The kite had a large cotton ball attached that was burning, causing the superstitious people to think it was a falling star soaring up in the sky, and that their misfortunes would soon come to a close. Another general in Korean history, general Sunsin Lee during Japanese invasion of Korea in 1592 used kites a means of communication between islands and land and also a way of military operation orders.² There are many other histories about Korean kites. Very often Koran kite, *Yeon* has been used for military purpose and eventually kite flying has become favorite entertainment to ancestors of Korea. Today, people fly kites wishing for a good harvest and well-being of their family and to mark religious occasions and holidays.³

They will first learn about the histories of Korean kites from copies that I will give them and design their own kite. After making their kite, they will decorate on it and write their prayers on the kite. Lastly, they will go out and fly it. From this integrated curriculum, they should; 1) Know about Koran language and histories; 2) Know that they can use a kit as ways of communication with people and God; 3) Learn an enjoyable and different way of learning about aspects of Bible, Art, Language art, Mathematics, Science, History, and Social studies; 4) Learn how important to cooperate with each other.

4.3 Learning Activities

This integrated curriculum project, *Communication*, will take place in the Korean school every Saturday at 9:00~10:20 am for five weeks. During the first three weeks, students will make a kite. And for the last two weeks, they will create a prayer journal as ways of communication with people and God. In the first activity, students will be making a kite. The kite design and materials will be up to the students and their ability level. After students complete the kite they will go outside and fly their kites to send their prayers God and experience the wind lifting their kite and keeping their kite in the air. I will encourage them to make different types and shapes of kites so that they can experience the various aerodynamic forces that impact a kite when it is flown.

¹ <http://www.first-school.ws/activities/occasions/kiteday.htm>

² <http://www.csun.edu/~ghsiung/fighters4.html>

³ <http://www.kid-at-art.com/htdoc/lesson20.html>

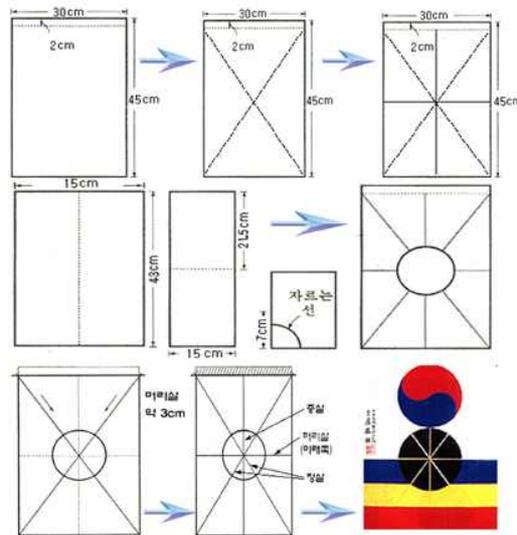


Figure 2. The simple steps of making a Korean Kite

4.4 Lesson Plans

Week one:

Title: Making a kite (see Figure 2)

Student objective: The students will understand about a little history about a kite and design, build, and fly a kite. They will know that a kite can be used as ways of communication with people and God. They will also know how different types of kites respond to the airflow of the wind.

Materials needed to make a prayer journal: 1 sheet of brightly colored 30 cm X 45 cm typing paper, 5 pre-cut bamboo sticks, 1 roll of sting, poster paints, wax crayons, PVA glue, and scissor, and Bible.

Activity # 1 (Bible, Korean language, History, and Science teacher involved)

- Knowing a history and back ground about world kites and Korean kites. For instance, how are kites important to Koran culture?
- Discussing about kite that how kites can be used as a tool to communicate with God and people.
- Viewing a variety of kites, especially Korean kites
- Discussing about different types of kites and how kites fly

Activity # 2 (Math and Science teacher involved)

- Preparing materials needed to make a kite
- Making a kite that can fly
- Deciding on a shape or form
- Designing the sticks and frames for the kite. Make sure it will be a strong frame but also be light weight
- Choosing the cover material (strong but light)
- Choosing how you will stabilize your kite
- Having the students measure and cut out the kite shape

Week two

Activity # 3 (Bible teacher involved)

- Decorating your kite using markers, paint, stamps, and paper scraps
- Discussing about some questions: 1) what is a prayer? 2) why are prayers important to us? 3) how are people used to communicate with God?
- Writing your prayers on the kite

Activity # 4 (Math teacher involved)

- Placing 5 pre-cut bamboo sticks on the sheet of brightly colored 30 cm X 45 cm typing paper (don't glue too much on to the kite because it will become too heavy and would not fly properly)
- Letting dry them out
- Cutting 5 pre-cut bamboo sticks to fit kite
- Taping 5 pre-cut bamboo sticks to the sheet
- Punching a hole for string
- Tie several short pieces of string to the kite
- Tie your kite line to the loop in the bridle

Week three**Activity # 5 (Bible, Social study, and Science teacher involved)**

- Getting ready to launch your kite, make sure you are in an area that is open and free from trees, electrical and telephone lines, buildings, and automobile traffic
- Flying the kite in an open space
- Praying and communicating with your classmates and God

Week four & Week five**Title: Making a prayer Journal**

This activity will take place for two weeks. The main goal is to let the students know that when you write prayers in your prayer journal, it is like writing a letter to God. I will encourage them to write the names of people you want to pray for and draw a picture of something you want to pray about. I will also teach that God always listens when you pray.

Materials needed to make a prayer journal: white poster board, white paper, colored permanent markers, tissue paper in various colors, two paper fasteners (for each student), scissors, measuring stick, craft knife, hole punch, shallow containers, white glue, water, newspaper, and paintbrushes.

Activity # 6, Activity # 7, & Activity # 8

- Using markers, draw outline of a landscape scene that you like. For instance, include sun, grass, hills, trees and river or lake
- Tear tissue paper into different size pieces
- Brush glue mixture over scene on small poster-board piece
- Place torn tissue paper onto glued surface (one piece at a time)
- Brush more glue over torn tissue paper (set aside to dry)
- Fold larger poster-board piece along score lines
- Insert paper fasteners into holes to secure paper inside journal
- Glue top edge of small poster board onto front flap of larger poster board

5. Conclusion

The change in the structure and function of the home is inevitable because the number of women who participate in the economic and social activities has been greatly increased with the rapid change of the modern society in the world. As a result, the numbers of students, who are neglected, and left unprotected by their parents and teachers, in harmful environments have also been increased. So the matter of raising children is regarded as a common social issue in societies worldwide. The reality is that society needs to focus more on the social welfare of children if we intend to achieve greater equity, and improve social and living conditions globally. To understand this reality and solve the problems, I developed an art-based integration program to enhance the teaching of art and be connected well with other subjects to help students to make sense of them in the complex societies that are changing rapidly. This study also try to provide a solution to help to address the problems created by the shortening of the school week in the social, economical, and cultural changes in Korean and the United States by opening the churches' door and then offering educational programs to the local community.

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