Interdisciplinary 4th Grade Unit on Japanese Culture

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

Kelly Nofzinger

Thesis Advisor
Dr. Diane Bottomley

Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana

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Abstract and Acknowledgements

Abstract

Multicultural education has become a recent focus in educational articles and magazines across the nation. It is essential for elementary educators to incorporate multicultural education into their classroom in order for students to have a sense of cultural awareness in real life situations. As a professional educator in a system that is always changing, it is necessary to stay focused on the educational needs of the students. Research has proven that the interdisciplinary method of teaching is one that caters to all students’ developmental and academic needs. This thesis is founded on the method of interdisciplinary teaching and offers educators a plan for integrating cultural awareness into an elementary classroom. Included in this thesis is an overview of the importance of multicultural education, an analysis in support of the interdisciplinary method, and a Japanese cultural unit for a fourth grade classroom.

Acknowledgements

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## Japanese Unit
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The Importance of Multicultural Education

Minority groups in the United States have begun to compromise a large proportion of school population. Especially in California (and throughout the southwest), Hispanics are becoming a majority of school enrollments. As the Caucasian population decreases, the minority population will be increasing. Soon, schools will be flooded with children of different ethnicity. In order to deal with this cultural melting pot, students must have a cultural understanding of one another. The best way to increase cultural awareness and interpersonal skills is to use multicultural education.

There are a number of purposes of multicultural education. First and foremost, multicultural education promotes the ability to cross ethnic boundaries and participate in other cultural groups. Second, multicultural education can be used as an introduction to concerns about sexism, classism, and handicappism. All of these arguments help support the issue of increasing multicultural education into school curriculums.

Multicultural education gives students the skills they need to cross ethnic boundaries. Students who are well educated about other cultures feel less stress and anxiety when placed in multicultural situations. In a world that is continually growing smaller and smaller, it is essential for students of different ethnicity to feel comfortable around each other and to work cooperatively. By enforcing multicultural education, teachers can create conscientious citizens in a global world.

Besides having an awareness and knowledge of other cultures, it is important for students to have a positive moral attitude about these cultures. Teachers can model for students how to value a culture’s customs and traditions through multicultural education. Students can compare and contrast another culture to their own to find similarities and
differences. By improving students’ attitudes about foreign cultures, teachers will inadvertently be decreasing any cultural tensions that students may possess.

Teaching multicultural education is a perfect opportunity to lead into other subjects such as sexism, classism, and handicappism. After learning about other cultures, students will learn how to value one’s differences. This will give them insight into the value of gender differences, class differences, and handicap differences. The goal of multicultural education is to create a community of learners who are aware of and embrace not only cultural diversity but who also have the ability to value the differences among ethnic groups and other groups that are different from themselves.

References:

The Benefits of Interdisciplinary Methods in Elementary School

Jean Piaget, in 1969, described learning as “a process of continued modification of our schemas...through two simultaneous processes, assimilation and accommodation” (Pappas, 21). Recent research has extended Piaget’s ideas and reaffirmed that children are active, constructive learners who thrive in a social environment. The best way to satisfy this learning style is with interdisciplinary teaching methods. There are a number of strong arguments that support the use of the interdisciplinary in elementary schools. The interdisciplinary method is useful in connecting related information, developing multiple intelligences, and allowing for social interaction. Also, the interdisciplinary method gives students the opportunity to apply meaningful use of academic skills. All children, including children with special needs, can benefit from the interdisciplinary method. This method incorporates the use of multiple sources and is more valuable than traditional methods. This Honors Thesis Project was created using the interdisciplinary method for these specific reasons.

In the traditional approach to social studies topics in elementary school, children often receive isolated bits of information about the same topic at various grade levels. For example, every year students may study different aspects of Hispanic cultures instead of using an integrated study at one time and learning all the related information cumulatively. Instead of presenting children with isolated information that is unrelated, it is necessary for children to have the opportunity to make connections. Using the interdisciplinary method, students will be more likely to accurately interpret information and make better sense of the theme or idea presented to them.
In a subject-centered classroom, students learn one discipline at a time. This style of learning is useless for educators who teach according to Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences. Gardner’s theory states that all humans have at least seven intelligences areas: verbal, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. It is logical to say that if students develop through each of these intelligences in school, they need the experience of using a number of intelligences at one time. An interdisciplinary unit is the most practical method for intelligence-development. An interdisciplinary unit gives students the opportunity to approach a social studies topic from a variety of angles and thus use a variety of intelligences.

Besides individual development, students also need the opportunity to interact with their peers and teachers. Interdisciplinary units give students a chance to work socially and interact with their classmates. This interaction stimulates the development of problem solving skills as well as social skills. During interdisciplinary units, the students learn to use their teachers and peers as resources. This skill of location resources will be useful to students both during and after their time in school.

Along with being able to locate resources, students need to learn how to tackle a real-life problem from different angles. When making a major decision they need to examine all aspects and consequences. For example, when applying for a part-time job in high school, students need to not only consider wages but also time commitment, location, social environment, and more. The fact that problem-solving involves using more than one discipline provides a major argument for using the interdisciplinary method. This method is helpful for developing problem-solving skills because it encourages students to apply a variety of skills and knowledge into an investigation.
Instead of simply practicing skills, students involved in an interdisciplinary unit will find purpose and meaning for their skills. An interdisciplinary unit will incorporate all subjects across the curriculum and therefore increase the students' opportunities to use multiple disciplines and skills.

Another argument for the interdisciplinary method of teaching is based on its benefits for children with special needs. Many children with special needs spend a portion of their day outside the classroom. This absence makes it difficult for these children to feel included in the regular activities of the classroom. Using an interdisciplinary unit can give a classroom teacher a huge amount of flexibility in overcoming the problem of the absences of children with special needs. In an interdisciplinary unit, the topic is presented over a period of time. This means that the students who are not in class can participate in the unit at any time during the day. Furthermore, those children will have the flexibility to catch up on assignments later during the day. Also, children with special needs will be able to use a variety of disciplines to investigate a topic. Those who have trouble writing or reading can use videos, pictures, interview, technology, etc. to find out information or to participate in projects/demonstrations. Children with special needs can benefit greatly from interdisciplinary units.

Besides catering to a variety of intelligences and disciplines, interdisciplinary units also use a variety of sources. In traditional approaches to research, students use a single textbook that contains a bias view of history. In an interdisciplinary unit however, students are exposed to multiple sources of information. They can use materials from all areas of study from a variety of publishers as well as at different grade levels. They can
also use technology, such as online encyclopedias and the Internet as sources of information. Having these multiple sources is beneficial because they can access many viewpoints, avoid bias texts, and delve into neglected topics. This type of research is especially important for historical studies and multicultural studies. Interdisciplinary methods expose students to a number of sources that will expand their horizons and force them to question what they know.

All of these arguments support the interdisciplinary method of teaching. As a preservice teacher I have always been encouraged in my courses to use integrated methods of teaching. Based on research and my experiences here at Ball State, I strongly believe that the interdisciplinary method is essential in reaching out to all students in creating a more understandable, significant thematic unit for elementary school students.

References:


Purpose and Rationale

The overall purpose of creating and implementing an interdisciplinary unit on the Japanese culture is to build a deeper understanding of, and higher appreciation for, various cultures. American children, with the help of this unit, will have the opportunity to experience and study the Japanese culture. The rationale for this project is to expose students to multiculturalism and create a sense of value for multiculturalism in the elementary classroom. Students will compare and contrast the Japanese culture to their own culture in an interdisciplinary manner. By studying Japanese culture, students will have a more acute awareness of the Japanese culture along with a better grasp on how cultures can be similar and yet still different from their own.
Goals

The primary goal of this fourth grade Japanese Cultural unit is to create a deeper understanding of the Japanese culture as well as a better appreciation of foreign cultures in general. Students will increase their knowledge of the Japanese customs and traditions while creating a framework for how to study foreign cultures. The content presented in this unit is driven towards and structured around the Indiana Academic State Standards. More specifically, the unit is developed around the fourth grade Language Arts and Social Studies standards. Throughout the unit students will focus on journal and letter writing that is stressed in the Language Arts writing process standards. In conjunction with this, students will be practicing Social Studies process standards by doing individual and group research using technology and the Internet. Branching off from the standards, the unit incorporates all other fourth grade standards. This includes science, math, music, and art. The subjects are taught in an interdisciplinary manner and therefore have a greater impact on the achievement of the students. The affective goal of this unit is for students to analyze information on the Japanese culture (through literature, guest speakers, filed trips, and research) in order to gain a deeper insight into the Japanese culture and how it is similar and different to the American culture.
Listen to Japanese speaker
Practice Origami and investigate Ikebana
Students will compare traditional Japanese music and art to that of their own culture and investigate how music and art are expressions of culture.

American Life

Students will learn about Japanese customs, folk tales, and Haiku.

Keep journals
Create a class play from "The Badger and the Magic Fan"

Compare and contrast Japanese life to American life

Japanese garden

Grow rice in shallow containers

Japanese Cultural Unit
(4th Grade)

Art
Music
Social Studies
Language Arts
Technology
Geography
Science
Math

Find out new information from communication with pen pals

Create Venn diagrams comparing population and landforms

Students will investigate the landforms, climate, and major geographical features of Japan.

Visit a Japanese garden

Students will communicate with pen pals and research information about Japan on the Internet.

Students will compare and contrast information they learn about Japan with that of their own culture.

Students will compare and contrast information they learn about Japan with that of their own culture.
Unit Overview

**Week 1**

**Monday**
- Introductory Activity-explain unit goals, complete anticipation guide (to assess prior knowledge)
- Pass out/explain unit journals/folders: students will keep journals throughout the unit to make observations, record thoughts, and write about new information
- Geography: map skills- see Geography Map Lesson

**Tuesday**
- **Ongoing:**
  - Assign characters for play: students can volunteer themselves or nominate others for parts
  - Begin pen pals: students will be communicating with Japanese pen pals over unit period
- LA-vocabulary and *The Bracelet* lesson

**Wednesday**
- **Ongoing:**
  - Play-practice lines: students can read lines with a partner, group, or practice silently
  - Rice-begin growing (Science): students will be growing rice and keeping observations in their journals
- Geography/Science-label lowlands, discuss volcanoes and earthquakes: students will compare and contrast the last and geological occurrences of Japan to that of the United States

**Thursday**
- **Ongoing:**
  - Play-practice: students will practice lines with a partner
  - Rice-journal observations: students will record initial observations of the progress of their rice
- LA-Japanese folktale (from bibliography list): students will create a sketch-to-stretch to identify the theme of the folktale and compare this folktale with similar American folktales
- Music- traditional Japanese music: students will compare Japanese music to pop culture music and traditional American music

**Friday**
- **Ongoing:**
  - Play-practice: students will practice lines with a partner
  - Pen pals: students will write to their pen pals discussing what they have learned so far about Japan and offer comparable information about America
- SS/LA-Haiku (see bibliography list); discuss traditions/customs
Unit Overview

Week 2

Monday
- **Ongoing:**
  - Play-practice and begin prop designs
  - Rice-journal observations: students will make observations on any new happenings or findings regarding their rice
- Art-Props: Japanese fans and scenery: as a class, students will discuss what props need to be made and what scenery would be appropriate for the play
- Health/Science/LA- Japanese diet (use folders): students will make Japanese menus
- Technology-begin small groups researching Japanese current events/politics/government on Internet

Tuesday
- **Ongoing:**
  - Play-practice and work on props: students will organize themselves into groups to create the sets and props for the play
  - Pen pals: students will ask their Japanese pen pals any questions they have about life in Japan or any questions about Japan in general
  - Technology-computer research (small groups): groups will continue their research on Japanese events/politics/government
- Math-introduce abacus: students will practice math problems with an abacus and discuss the benefits and drawbacks of the instrument
- LA-introduce Haiku: students will create a rough draft of their own haiku

Wednesday
- **Ongoing:**
  - Play-practice and finish props: the class will begin rehearsals of the play and finish sets and props
  - Technology-continue small group Internet research
- LA-edit/revise Haiku poems: students will share their poems with a partner and offer advice and criticism
- *SS-ceremonial tea party with guest speaker, sample Japanese food, discuss customs (incorporate LA)

Thursday
- **Ongoing:**
  - Play-practice: students will have a full dress rehearsal
  - Technology-small group Internet research
  - Rice-journal observations: students will continue their observations and record any problems or successes they are having with their rice
- LA-finish editing/revisions on Haiku poem; discuss another Japanese folktale: students will read a Japanese folktale with a partner and create a simulated journal entry from the point of view of the main character
• SS-discuss Japanese gardens (stories/pictures/importance to culture and art of Ikebana.)

Friday
• **Ongoing:**
  o Play-practice: full rehearsal
  o Technology-Internet research: students should be ready to complete their Internet projects
  o Pen pals: students will offer their findings of how Japan and the United States are alike and different
• LA-final copy of Haiku with art: students will share their Haiku with the class and describe their art work that they chose to include
• *SS- field trip to Japanese garden: discuss the art of planning a garden and then students can create their own garden on paper
Unit Overview

Week 3

Monday

- **Ongoing:**
  - Play-practice: students will offer advice and constructive criticism to each other to make the play as good as possible
  - Rice-journal observations: students will make predictions about what their rice will look like by the end of the week
  - Wrap up-begin room decorations for culminating activity (discuss plans for origami, hanging fish, Japanese flag, and number symbols)

- **SS/LA-Martial arts expert to discuss significance/history of karate (show students some examples): students will have the opportunity to practice some karate moves**

Tuesday

- **Ongoing:**
  - Play-practice: full rehearsal
  - Pen pals: students will write to their pen pals about the most interesting fact they have discovered about Japan and what they think is most interesting about America
  - Wrap up-room decorations (Art- origami decorations): students will create origami decorations to be placed around the room for Parents’ Night

- **LA- students write their own Japanese folktale based on an American folktale that encompasses Japanese values that they have seen in other folktales**

- **Phys Ed- practice Karate stretches and breathing exercises**

Wednesday

- **Ongoing:**
  - Play-practice: full rehearsal
  - Wrap up-room decorations (Art-hanging fish decorations)

- **SS- history of baseball: students will get in small groups to discuss how baseball has been influenced by the Japanese and how baseball has impacted America**

- **LA- edit/revise Japanese folktales: students will peer edit their Japanese folktales**

Thursday

- **Ongoing:**
  - Play- practice: full rehearsal
  - Pen pals: students will write to their pals about the upcoming Parents’ Night and answer any questions that the pals may have about life in America
  - Wrap up- begin set up of ‘stations’ and work on room decorations (Art-Calligraphy and number symbols); explain culminating activity

- **LA- edit/revise Japanese stories: students will make their final revisions on the Japanese folktales in small groups**
• Music- listen to Japanese National Anthem: students will compare the Japanese National Anthem (its meaning) to the American National Anthem and discuss similarities and differences

Friday

• Ongoing:
  o Play-final practice
  o Rice- final journal observations: students will make their final observations and write a culminating entry about the process of growing rice
  o Wrap up- finish room decorations; finish set up of stations; run though culminating activity

• LA- finish Japanese folktales with art: students will share their folktales in small groups and volunteers can share with the whole class

• **Evening:** culminating activity (Parents’ Night)
Initiating Activity

The main objective of the initiatory activity is to motivate the students about the Japanese unit. The teacher will come into school dressed in a traditional kimono. She will begin by informing the students what will happen during the Japanese unit (goals for learner). “Over the next three weeks we will be immersed in Japanese culture. We will learn some Japanese customs, taste Japanese food, practice Japanese art and music, study Japanese history and geography, and learn a few Japanese words. Before we begin we will do an anticipation guide to see what we may already know about Japanese culture. Next we will hear a Japanese folktale and listen to learn the theme of the story and if we have heard that theme in any of our American folktales. Let’s listen to The Badger and the Magic Fan (by Tony Johnson).” The teacher will orally tell the folktale to the students. Once she is finished the teacher will ask for responses to the story. After discussion the teacher will tell the students how this folktale ties into their unit. “At the end of our unit we will have a ‘Japanese Culture Night’ where your parents can come and view what we have done and learned. On that night we will perform The Badger and the Magic Fan as a class play.” The teacher will hand out scripts and the class will nominate/volunteer students for certain parts. During the three-week unit students will have access to books about Japan, Japanese folktales, and other Japanese stories. These books, along with the books that the teacher will use for her lessons are listed in the bibliography.
Geography and Math Lesson

Name: Kelly Nofzinger

Grade: 4

Objectives:
- Students will accurately label bodies of water, major cities, and major geographical features on an outline map of Japan.
- Students will create a Venn diagram comparing the climate and geography of the United States and Japan.

Indiana State Standards:

Social Studies (Geography)
4.3.1 Use latitude and longitude to locate places in Indiana and other parts of the world.
4.3.2 Estimate distances between two places on a map, using a scale of miles, and use cardinal and intermediate directions when referring to relative location.

Mathematics (Problem Solving)
4.7.4 Use a variety of methods, such as words, numbers, symbols, charts, graphs, tables, diagrams, tools, and models to solve problems, justify arguments, and make conjectures.

Materials:
- Poster size maps of Japan and United States
- Internet access
- Encyclopedias
- Outline maps of Japan
- Overhead projector

Motivation: The teacher will ask the students if they have ever traveled outside of the United States or Indiana. Students will describe how the land and weather was different in that place compared to where they live. After a few students have shared their experiences, the teacher will state the goal for learner.

Goal for Learner: “Today we are going to investigate the geography and climate of Japan and compare that to the geography and climate of the United States.”

Procedure: Students will be given a blank outline map of Japan. The students will pair with a partner and use classroom resources (internet, wall maps, encyclopedias, etc.) to find and label the bordering bodies of water, the capital cities, and two major geographical features (such as Mt. Fuji). After the pairs have successfully completed their maps the class will have a whole group discussion to compare their findings. The teacher will fill in the blank outline map on the overhead projector. After the map is complete the teacher will ask the students some questions to generate a discussion that compares the United States and Japan.
Where is Japan located with respect to the North and South Poles and the Equator? Where is the United States located?
How does this location affect the climate? What is the climate like in the U.S.?
The teacher will describe the climate of Japan and ask how it is similar or different than that of the United States. Next the teacher will create a Venn diagram on the overhead projector and describe its key features. She/He will think aloud and model one similarity and one difference between the geography and climate of Japan and the U.S. and fill that information in on the diagram. Then the class will think of one similarity and one difference and the teacher will fill that information in as well. Finally, the students will use their maps and what they have learned from the class discussion to create their own Venn Diagrams that compare the geography and climate of Japan and the United States (4 similarities and 4 differences).

**Evaluation:**

**Checklist**

- Included four similarities and four differences
- Information was accurate
- Complete outline map with accurate information

Three checks = Proficient  
Two checks = Satisfactory  
One check = Unsatisfactory

**Extension:** Students will pretend that they are an explorer who just discovered Japan. They will write directions on how to get there from the United States and draw a picture of what they see.
Japanese Unit
Language Arts Lesson

Name: Kelly Nofzinger
Grade: 4

Objectives:
Students will make and confirm predictions about the story.
Students will discuss the impact of Japanese internment camps on the lives of Japanese-American citizens.
Students will write about their thoughts of Japanese internment camps.
Students will write a simulated journal entry from the point of view of the main character.

Indiana State Standards (English/Language Arts):
4.2.3 Make and confirm predictions about text by using prior knowledge and ideas presented in the text itself, including illustrations, titles, topic sentences, important words, foreshadowing clues, and direct quotations.
4.3.3 Use knowledge of the situation, setting, and a character’s traits, motivations, and feelings to determine the causes for that character’s actions.
4.5.2 Write responses to literature that: demonstrate an understanding of a literary work and support judgments through references to both the text and prior knowledge.

Materials:
The Bracelet by Yoshiko Uchida
Laminated pictures of Japanese internment camps

Prereading: The teacher will give a short social studies lesson on Japanese internment camps during World War II to set the stage for the story (pass around pictures). “After Japan bombed Pearl Harbor (in Hawaii) many Americans were fearful of the Japanese. The government set up camps to lock up many Japanese-American families. These innocent families were torn from their homes and placed in internment camps. All their belongings were taken away and they only had each other.” The students will do a quick-write on their thoughts about internments camps.

Reading: The teacher will read the story aloud to the students. The teacher will pause to ask for predictions about what will happen next.

Responding: The teacher will ask students for their responses to the story. “What did you think of the story? Why? What was your favorite part? Why? What didn’t you like about the story and why? Were our predictions correct? How does this story relate to what we learned about internment camps? How do you think Japanese-Americans felt towards the American government after being taken from their homes? How would you feel if you were put into an internment camp?

Applying: Students will use this story for a simulated journal entry. At the top of the page they will write ‘Internment Camps: The Bracelet’ and the date. Then the students
will write an entry from the point of view of Emi. The students will share their responses with a partner and volunteers can share with the whole class.

**Exploring:** Students will split into groups of four. Each group will receive one of the laminated pictures. The Teacher will model writing a free verse poem about one of the laminated pictures. Using the picture they received, the group will create a poem that describes what they see in the picture.
Culminating Activity

The closing activity for the unit will be a ‘Japanese Culture Night.’ Parents will come in to sample food, view the activities completed by the students, and watch the performance of *The Badger and the Magic Fan*. There will be four centers around the room: food-sampling center, pen pals center, art project center, and best work center. At the food-sampling center the parents can taste seaweed crackers, practice using chopsticks, and try green tea. The pen pals center will hold a number of email printouts that show the communication between the American and Japanese students. This center will also have a computer on which the students can take their parents on a virtual tour of a Japanese school. At the art project center the parents can view pictures of the students making a variety of art projects throughout the last two weeks as well as their son or daughter’s best project (selected by the student). The best work center will consist of each student’s best work that they have chosen to display. The students will have approximately 30 minutes to take their parents to the different centers around the room and explain each one. Finally the parents will view the production of *The Badger and the Magic Fan*. 
Japanese Unit
Evaluation and Assessment Strategies

Art
• Completion of projects and participation in discussions about how Japanese art portrays culture and compares to American art.
• Quality and creativity of projects

Technology
• Completion and documentation of current events project
• Student displays quality writing in current events project
• Student kept up communication with Japanese pen pal and wrote about appropriate/suggested topics

Social Studies
• Participation and contribution in small and whole group discussion
• Students journals display knowledge of Japanese customs, values, traditions, and comparisons with United States
• Completion of journals along with accuracy of content

Language Arts
• Grammar/mechanics of all written assignments (journal, Haiku, etc.)
• Completion of all written assignments with correct grammar/mechanics and assignments communicate a message about what the student has learned
• Participation in play

Science
• Documented observations in journals
• Completed menus that followed the guidelines for Japanese menus

Math
• Accurate comparisons of Japanese population and economics versus that of the United States using statistics
• Participation in abacus lesson
• Accuracy and completion of activity sheets about Japanese number symbols and Japan vs. U.S. comparison sheets
Bibliography

Tradebooks

This is the story of a brave young girl who develops cancer ten years after the bombing of Hiroshima. While she is in the hospital Sadako is visited by a friend. This friend tells her that if she makes one thousand paper cranes then the gods will grant her wish to be healthy again. Sadako works through her pain and loneliness and hangs on to the hope that after one thousand cranes she will be well again. Despite her efforts, Sadako dies. This somber and brave story is illustrated in black and white and conveys to children the effects that war has on individuals. A possible activity to use with this story is a simulated journal from Sadako’s point of view.


Folktales


This classic Japanese folk tale is about a sneaky badger and the tricks he plays on people. Three tengu children (goblins of Japan) are playing with a magic fan that
changes the sizes of their noses. The badger steals the fan, distorts a princess nose, and ends up getting a taste of his own medicine. The story follows the badger’s sly tricks as well as the father’s efforts in restoring his daughter’s nose. This folktale is wonderful for teaching morals about getting what you deserve. An activity to do with this folktale would be to create a class play. There are plenty of parts for the students and a funny storyline.


**Informational**


**Activity Books**


**Haiku/Poetry**


Internet Sites

Kids Web Japan
http://www.jinjapan.org/kidsweb/
This web page is amazing for kids who want to learn more about Japan. It is colorful and exciting and written at a perfect level for upper elementary students. The links are easy to follow and students can learn about a variety of topics: regions of Japan, economy and industry, daily life, climate, and more. Students will also be delighted to find links to Japanese cookbooks and basic facts. This website would be perfect for a social studies/geography lesson where students work with partners to find information on Japan.

Way of Tea (Japanese Tea Ceremony)
http://www.kato3.org/chanoyu/
Although this site is geared for higher level of study (such as middle school or high school), it can be very useful for a teacher who is not familiar with a Japanese Tea Ceremony. The site takes the reader through all the steps of a traditional ceremony and is also informative about the cultural and spiritual reasons behind the ceremony. The illustrations could be highly useful in teaching elementary students about the ceremony. This site would be great when used in conjunction with a lesson about Japanese tea ceremonies.

Eric's Origami Page
http://www.paperfolding.com
This website is colorful, entertaining, and informative. It is a site that is beneficial for both students and teachers. There are links to information about the history of origami as well as specific instructions on how to make a number of different animals. The directions are clear and precise and the color photographs make the steps easy to follow. This site would be great for teaching the connection between origami and math as well as for letting students explore origami on their own.

Virtual Edo
http://www.us-japan.org/EdoMatsu
This illustrious website is a perfect addition to the Japanese Unit. It contains a plethora of information about ancient Tokyo as well as bright, colorful pictures to accompany the history lessons. The website is interactive and easy to read. Students can learn about Tokyo before industrialization and modernization. A possible use for this site would be for students to research one area of interest about Tokyo with a group and report on it to the class.