

Introduction

The Ohio Japan Project began in the mid-1980's when Ohio agreed to join with Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin to form *The Great Lakes in the Schools Project*, funded by the U.S.-Japan Foundation. The members of the project from Ohio developed a series of lessons on Japan. During a trip to Japan in 1988, the Ohio team discussed these lessons with educators in Japan and had them formally critiqued by the International Society for Educational Information, Inc. in Tokyo. The society published a version of the lessons in Japan, while in Ohio they were published as *Learning About Our World: Japan*.

Again with funding from the U.S.-Japan Foundation, the Ohio Japan Project sent a delegation of teachers in Ohio to Japan for two weeks in June-July, 2001. While there, the teachers gathered information to update the lessons previously published and to develop new ones, which reflect more current developments in Japan.

Before and during the trip to Japan, the participants spent a great deal of time studying how the Japanese develop lessons that enhance deeper understanding by the students of the concepts to be taught. These lessons reflect the way Japanese teachers construct their lessons to accomplish that deeper level of knowledge and skill development. In this way, students retain the information for a longer period of time, which will help them be more successful on the future state achievement tests and the Ohio Graduation Test.

The original publication of lessons identified the connections to the social studies and foreign languages curriculum models. The lessons in this publication will be correlated to the new state social studies standards, thereby providing another basis for improving student performance on the new state achievement tests and the Ohio Graduation Test.

However, it should also be recognized that it is extremely important for citizens in the United States to be knowledgeable about events in other parts of the world. Our country's history has always been intertwined with that of other people and places around the world. The events on and since September 11, 2001 certainly demonstrate this.

Introduction

One country worth knowing about is Japan. For more than a half century Japan and the United States have come together as international allies and economic trading partners. Japanese companies have a significant presence in the United States, and certainly in Ohio, and American companies are recognizable in Japan. During this period of time, the people of the two countries have come increasingly in contact.

It is important to note that while these lessons focus on Japan, they can be used as examples of how to teach other countries and cultures around the world. Therefore, the lessons can be helpful on a broader scale and can assist teachers in preparing students to be knowledgeable citizens about issues and cultures in various parts of the world.

Implementation

The lessons in the original *Learning About Our World: Japan* were coordinated with *Foreign Languages: Ohio's Model Competency-Based Program* and *Social Studies: Ohio's Model Competency-Based Program*. Both of these state models contained the study of cultures in other parts of the world throughout the pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade program.

In December, 2002, the State Board of Education in Ohio adopted social studies standards. References are made in each lesson to appropriate grade-level indicators in the social studies standards to provide examples of the connections between these lessons and the new standards. It should also be noted that these references are not intended to be comprehensive but are illustrative of the connections between these lessons and the standards.

The standards, the social studies Ohio Graduation Test, and the social studies state achievement tests will address the study of historical and current events in various parts of the world. These lessons are helpful in addressing the standards and tests.

The Ohio Department of Education is also developing state content standards in foreign languages. These standards are not expected to be adopted until December, 2003, after the publication of these lessons. While specific references to the foreign language grade-level indicators cannot be provided at this time, teachers of foreign languages will find many of these lessons to be useful – particularly as their students study the culture of the target language.

This package of lessons is intended to provide an interdisciplinary approach to instruction. Contained within the lessons are activities that utilize a wide variety of disciplines. Appropriate implementation should involve more than the foreign language and social studies teachers. Accordingly, the lessons may also relate to objectives in other strands and grade levels.

Classroom teachers in the Ohio Japan Project developed all of the lessons provided. You are welcome to use them exactly as they are presented or make any modifications to meet the instructional needs of your students. They may even be used to spark ideas about teaching other cultures.

Pronunciation

JAPANESE NAMES: PRONUNCIATION RULES

There are five phonetic vowel sounds you need to know to pronounce Japanese names. These vowels are always pronounced the same:

| | |
|----------|-----------------------|
| a | as in father |
| i | as in police, machine |
| u | as in pull, full |
| e | as in enemy, elf |
| o | as in original, oh |

Here are most of the Japanese letters written in romanized alphabet for easy pronunciation. Modifying the common letters can create the sounds in parentheses.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|-----|-----|----|----|--|------|----|----|----|------|
| a | i | u | e | o | | | | | | |
| ka | ki | ku | ke | ko | | (ga | gi | gu | ge | go) |
| sa | shi | su | se | so | | (ja | zi | ju | je | jo) |
| ta | chi | tsu | te | to | | (da | zi | zu | de | do) |
| na | ni | nu | ne | no | | | | | | |
| ha | hi | fu | he | ho | | (pa | pi | pu | pe | po)* |
| ma | mi | mu | me | mo | | | | | | |
| ya | | yu | | yo | | | | | | |
| ra | ri | ru | re | ro | | | | | | |
| wa | | | | wo | | | | | | |
| n | | | | | | *(ba | bi | bu | be | bo) |

Note: "L" and "R" do not exist in Japanese. "R" when used in London sounds very close to "Rondon". "N" is the only consonant that can be pronounced alone or with a vowel. If "N" doesn't have a vowel after it, it will be just an "n" sound alone. There are several other rules that involve the lengthening of a vowel sound, the doubling of a consonant, etc. but the basic sounds above will help you with most of the Japanese names that you will encounter.

Names are usually written in this lesson plan book with the first name and then the family name. In the "Famous People" lessons, we have capitalized the family name to make it even clearer which is which. Please note that some websites referenced do not follow this order and list the family name first. Please check the format of the website to know which is listed first.