Bringing Korea into the Classroom Lesson Plan: Korean Culture through Fairy Tales

OBJECTIVE: Students will understand the concepts and relationship taught in Confucianism. Students will analyze a Korean fairy tale to find evidence of Confucianism teachings.

STANDARD: 6.GE.C.8 – Modern cultural practices and products show the influence of tradition and diffusion, including the impact of major world religions.

BACKGROUND: Confucius was a philosopher (551 BC – 479 BC) who searched for ways to solve societal ills. He developed a philosophy of morality that he shared with leaders. After his death his ideologies spread throughout Asia and the rest of world. Confucian’s ideas shaped Asian governments and the daily lives of the people. One of the key ideas is obedience and respect for authority and elders. Those in charge are to look out for the people under their authority, while those being looked after are to obey and respect authority figures.

PROCEDURE:
1. Explain to students that they will be comparing and contrasting two versions of the Cinderella fairy tale. Have students discuss what happens in the American Cinderella story from beginning to end. Discuss character traits and their relationships to each other. Identify the moral lessons learned from this fairy tale.

2. Have students get into groups and read The Korean Cinderella by Shirley Climo. As they are reading they will fill out a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting the American version of the tale to the Korean version. As a whole class discuss the similarities and differences.

3. Have students individually think about their family and write about the relationships they have with other people in the family and in society. Who do they obey? Who do their siblings obey? Who do their parents obey? Why do people obey certain people? Discuss as a whole group their responses.
4. Have students get back into their groups to reread the Korean Cinderella looking for examples of any Confucian relationships in the tale (respect and obedience to authority). Also have them look for any relationships that do not fit in with Confucianism. Students will share with their findings with the class.

5. Discuss as a class if any of these Confucian ideas are found in our American society.

6. Another way to introduce the Korean Cinderella story is to read so far in the story as a class and stop periodically at certain points in the story, then ask students if they would like to talk with the Korean Cinderella. Walk out of the classroom as if you are going to get her, then reenter with a crown or some prop that signifies when you are wearing it that you are taking on the personality of that character. As Cinderella talk a little about what has happened in the story from her perspective. Students can then ask questions to Cinderella to get a better understanding of her perspective. Within your responses to questions you want to guide students to the Confucian principles that are guiding Cinderella’s behavior.

7. Students will then get into groups and will be preparing for a Korean family meeting. Each group will be assigned a character from the Korean tale. They must prepare for a discussion in which they must defend their behavior / actions in the story based on following or not following Confucian ideas.

8. Each group will have one person representing that character and they will have their team there with them as friends of the family for support if they get stuck on a question.

9. Every team will summarize their perspective. Other teams can question that character about anything. The Community leader (the teacher – new role new prop) that happens to stop by is neutral and steps in when things are not clear or if the discussion needs some guidance. Guide the dialogue in a way that reinforces the importance of Confucianism in family and society interactions.

**EVALUATION**: Students will be assessed on whether they correctly identified the Confucian relationships in the tale.
EXTENSIONS:

1. Students will work alone or with a partner to create a two sided voice poem where they have the American Cinderella and the Korean Cinderella share their perspectives. It could be done with any of the characters.

2. Students can rewrite the Korean Cinderella from the perspective of one of the other characters, for example the step mother.

3. Students can rewrite a classic American fairy tale, such as Red Riding Hood, with Confucian principles included within the story line.