

Integrated Learning: Being Involved in Activities through Experience and Conversations - From Unit of “Let’s make Wagashi” for Fourth Grade, Primary school -

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Objectives of the study

In our school, for the curriculum of the Period of Integrated Learning (hereinafter called “Integrated Learning”), two pillars, “tradition” and “environment,” are established. In “tradition,” we learn Japanese traditional culture. We invite external lecturers and expand learning on the contents that differ according to grades, respectively, for example, in the first year grade, *karuta* (cards) and *hyakunin-issu* (card game of the one hundred famous poems), in the second year grade, classical Japanese dance, in the third year grade, game of go, and in the fourth year, the tea ceremony. The other pillar “Environment” is a Integrated Learning pillar newly established in 2014.

The objectives of the present study are, first, to link the two pillars of newly established “Environment” and “Tradition” in the comprehensive curriculum of the fourth year grade, and develop the Integrated Learning unit, and second, to perceive the growth of children in learning that links these two pillars.

In addition, the third objective is the point in that the children grow as a group in a classroom through the Integrated Learning. Specifically, we have desires to nurture the children to interact with “other people” and “their comrades” compassionately, to work together as a classroom group to address the challenge, and for each one of the children to fulfill their roles and responsibilities in the classroom group.

This paper focuses on clarifying how “Tradition” and “Environment” were linked in perceiving the growth of children and how the curriculum was designed. Above all, in this presentation, the authors would like to primarily discuss their activities with special emphasis on the development of “Environment” curriculum.

1. Overview of “Tradition” and “Environment in the fourth year grade

First of all, the overview of one-year program of “Tradition” and “Environment” will be discussed. Learning was developed with the above-mentioned two pillars linked to subjects, events, etc.

Our school lays stress on the school tea ceremony, and in “Tradition” of the fourth year grade, we work on the tea ceremony every year. We ask cooperation to instructors of *Chado Urasenke*, invite them to the school once a week, a total of 15 times a year, and receive tutelage from them. In addition, pupils make a tea ceremony bowl of their own, have a tea ceremony, and are given the time for getting ready for the grand tea ceremony.

In the “Environment” pillar, in order to perform learning activities to experience natural blessings, pupils buckled down to the cultivation of *azuki* beans (red beans) and glutinous rice. Using *azuki* beans and glutinous rice they grew for material, leaning activities were developed to those of making *Wagashi*, Japanese sweets. In cultivation activities, as outside lecturers, cooperation were asked to Joint-Enterprise Cooperatives “Renge-no-Sato Gifu”. “Renge-no-Sato” is at grips with fully pesticide-free production. We borrowed their rice paddies and fields and grew glutinous rice and *azuki* beans. At the same time, *azuki* beans were grown in fields and planters at the school, too. While we were performing cultivation activities, we worked on *Wagashi* making. Because the children had little experience in cooking by themselves, we formulated a plan for them to make *Wagashi* by a few processes for the first time and to gradually enable them to work on *Wagashi* making by themselves.

The following table summarizes the learning development for one year.

Table 1 Outline of “Environment” in “Let’s make Wagashi” (2014)

Month	Environment	Tradition	Events and other subjects
5	Tasting of Kashiwa-mochi (rice cake wrapped in an oak leaf), and investigation of azuki beans		
6	Seeding of azuki beans	Start of Chado practice	Rice transplanting (glutinous rice)
7	Wagashi making using azuki beans	Practice for serving Japanese tea	
9	Cultivation of azuki beans	How to prepare Japanese tea and how to handle <i>fukusa</i> (double-layer square of silk cloth).	Making a tea ceremony bowl (shape forming)
10	Harvesting azuki beans Learning by investigating azuki beans and flour	Practice of <i>bonryakudemae</i> (simplified tea-making procedure using a tray)	Making a tea ceremony bowl (painting) Rice harvesting
11	Drying of azuki beans and taking out beans. Discussion on how to use harvested azuki beans.	Practice of <i>bonryakudemae</i> (simplified tea-making procedure using a tray)	
12	Continue taking out harvested azuki beans.	Practice of <i>bonryakudemae</i> (simplified tea-making procedure using a tray)	
1	Plan for Wagashi making	Exercise of <i>bonryakudemae</i> (simplified tea-making procedure using a tray)	Rice-cake making
2	Making Wagashi using our own materials.	Last day of practice	Various tea ceremonies
3	Making <i>Nerikiri</i>		

“Rice transplanting,” “rice harvesting,” and “rice-cake making” stipulated in the table above had annual events linked with environmental learning. “Tea ceremony” was planned as an event linked with learning of tradition. The “*Matcha-chawan*: teabowl making” was handled with arts and crafts, tradition and annual event linked. In addition, it was designed to think of interrelation between tradition and environment, such as Wagashi which was made with the material the pupils themselves cultivated to be served at the tea ceremony. In this way, through the interaction of subjects with events, and

furthermore, through the mutual interaction of comprehensive pillars, one organized Integrated Learning time was developed.

In the following section, discussion will be made on how and with what as a momentum the children changed and improved in those that had been put in practice through the year in the unit of “Let’s make Wagashi,” together with on the accomplishment as well as the action assignment.

2. Development of learning of “Let’s make Wagashi”

From this part of the section, the accomplishment and action assignment will be clarified while showing how “environment” and “tradition” were developed as learning, respectively, on the basis of the unit called “Let’s make Wagashi.” See Table 2 for the outline of the unit.

Table 2 Outline of development of “Let’s make Wagashi” unit

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| [1] | To encounter with Wagashi and azuki beans and have a desire to cultivate azuki beans and glutinous rice and make Wagashi by themselves, too. |
| [2] | To cultivate azuki beans and glutinous rice. |
| [3] | Chado practice begins. In the practice of the tea ceremony, first, to practice to learn how to serve tea and how to receive Wagashi served at tea. |
| [4] | To make several kinds of simple Wagashi using Azuki beans to have images of Wagashi and to enjoy a feeling of the season (rice dumpling, rice-flour dumpling with sweet azuki beans, etc.). |
| [5] | Chado practice for making tea and enjoying the tea by themselves or serving guests with the tea they made. |
| [6] | To investigate whether there are any Wagashi that could be made with the materials (azuki beans and glutinous rice) they grew (investigate materials of Wagashi). |
| [7] | To harvest and sort out azuki beans. |
| [8] | To make Kashiwamochi, Sakuramochi, and Daifuku, respectively, and to be aware of differences in ease of making Wagashi, texture, smell, etc. by differences of materials used and processing of materials. At the same time, pupils begin to have specific images of Wagashi to be served at a tea ceremony. |
| [9] | Practice of bonryakudemae begins. |
| [10] | For the Grand Tea Ceremony, preparation begins. Before the Grand Tea Ceremony, boil azuki beans to make sweet bean paste, and make Wagashi. |

Through this unit, children’s consciousness is changing from the thought of “we want to eat by ourselves the azuki beans and glutinous rice which we cultivated” to “when we made and ate Wagashi by ourselves, they were really good. We want to have

someone eat these to enjoy.” According to the observation of authors, the turning point of children’s consciousness was when “[5] Chado practice for making tea and enjoying the tea by themselves or serving guests with the tea they made” of Table 2 began. Up to that point, in the Chado practice, children who repeated the practice to learn how they should behave had their consciousness changed by directing their viewpoint to other people. Pupil A told us, “When I served tea to the guest, the guest gave a broad smile. The smile made me happy, too.” This indicates that the pupil experienced actually that making someone feel happy made herself happy. In the Step [8], pupil B asked us whether the pupil may take back home Wagashi made extra. When we asked the reason, the pupil said “I want to share it with my younger brother.” We could perceive the consciousness of the child who wants to share what the pupil felt good and share the joy together.

In this way, it could be said that children began to direct their attention which used to be directed to themselves to other people by becoming conscious of “other people” through learning of this one year. We were able to perceive the attitude of children who reflected themselves by directing their attention to other people, like what they wanted to communicate to them through the tea ceremony and how they could communicate their feelings to them, and wanted to use the experience for their next activities.

The action assignment which has come into sight through this study is, in particular, Step [6]. That is, children found it difficult to collect information from diversified standpoints and to search materials in accordance with their purposes. This is the big action assignment as the whole school, too. It could be said that children are under-motivated to be proactive in obtaining the information they want. In addition to this, we would like to mention as our future tasks how we can keep them motivated to seek out for information, too.