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| **ELEMENT** | **DESCRIPTION** |
| **Author** | Susan Turnipseed |
| **Lesson Name** | Using Visual Thinking Strategies with Images from China |
| **Content Areas** | Writing, Critical Thinking, World History, Technology |
| **Grade Levels** | 4th grade |
| **Duration** | Quarters 2, 3, and 4 |
| **Lesson Theme and Topic** | Students are curious learners and as part of this unit they will be invited to participate in thoughtful conversations on photographic images of China. They will make local and global connections through these conversations, as well as see themselves as citizens of a diverse and changing world. |
| **Instructional Objective** | Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) center on open-ended yet highly-structured discussions of visual art. These discussions increase critical thinking, language, and literacy skills. The perspective of each student is valued and used to develop engagement and thinking. Students learn from one another, respect each other, listen, and understand there are multiple ways to see any given situation. Using photographs featuring a variety of unique settings taken during my trip to China, these discussions will build students curiosity and awareness of a diverse world. To extend the learning conversations, images will be posted in our classroom blogs so the discussions continue online. |
| **Specific Global Competencies** | * + Invite deep engagement   + Embody local and global connections   + Embody global significance |
| **Alignment to District or State Content Standards and Testing and Assessment** | * ELA 4.SL.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly. * ELA 4.W.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information. * ELA 4.W.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. * ELA.4.W.4 With some guidance and support from adults, use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of one page in a single sitting. * Social Studies Goal 2 / Indicator 2 Evaluate the interaction of world cultures and civilizations, philosophies, and religions. * Tech 4.CP.1.1 Utilize virtual collaboration environments to contribute within a group to the production of a digital output. |
| **Instructional Strategies and Activities** | Pre-Unit   1. Students are introduced to and practice Visual Thinking Strategies in their homeroom classes. VTS centers on open-ended discussions of visual art.  Students are asked to look carefully at works of art, talk about what they observe, and back up their ideas with evidence. Using carefully selected pieces of visual art, teachers ask three open-ended questions:  * What's going on in this picture? * What do you see that makes you say that? * What more can we find? * 2. Students will be introduced and comfortable using Kidblog to share posts and comments. These blogs are typically introduced in our Tech classes and then used in reading classes for book discussions.   Unit Activities   1. Students will extend their use of VTS to photographs taken while I was in China. We will begin by together looking at a couple of photographs and going through the discussion of the three VTS questions. Examples of some of the images can be found at [China Adventure](http://www.youblisher.com/p/374244-China-Adventure/). 2. Other photographs from China will then be posted on Kidblog for students to share their opinions and ideas in writing. They will also comment on the posts of other classmates and build on their ideas. 3. A new photograph will be posted every other week for students to view. During the two-week period, students will write a post and comment on others posts. Comments from me, as well as the other 4th grade teachers, will also be part of our blogs. 4. As a culminating activity, students will be asked to write a post that summarizes their learning and thoughts on China. |
| **Formative Assessment** | Assessment will be based on student posts and comments at Kidblog. Students will be expected to back up their opinions and ideas with evidence from the photographs for each post, as well as offer thoughtful comments to the posts of their classmates. The expectation will be one post for image and a minimum of two comments to others’ posts.  A final post will be required after the final photograph has been posted for students to summarize their learning and thoughts. |
| **Differentiation** | VTS emphasizes respect for all responses and opinions. Students of all abilities have their responses validated as part of the discussions. Different viewpoints are valued and acknowledged. As part of the writing piece at Kidblog:   * IEP students will write and respond according to their IEPs with keyboarding assistance as needed. * Enrichment students will be encouraged to respond to a greater number of posts. Groups can also be established to create other avenues for responses. |
| **Resources** | Visual Thinking Strategies - <http://www.vtshome.org/>  China Adventure - <http://www.youblisher.com/p/374244-China-Adventure/>  Kidblog - <http://kidblog.org/home.php>  Blogs Webpage - <http://st005.k12.sd.us/blogs.htm> |
| **Reflections** | VTS has been used in our school since it opened in 2009. We have worked with faculty at South Dakota State University, as well as staff at the South Dakota Art Museum to implement the program. I am excited to extend this program and incorporate my experiences in China with the 4th graders I work with in Tech class. It is my hope that students will make connections between the photographs and what they see and know locally, plus promote engaged, authentic speaking, listening, and writing. |