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Lesson Plan – PCCU Conference for Educators

**Cross-Cultural Comparison between South Korea and the U.S.**

**Understanding and Teaching Culture through the Arts**

**Reflection:**

I currently teach at Westtown School, a Quaker boarding school in West Chester, PA. This academic year (2023-24), I am teaching two semester-length courses called *Genocide Studies 1 & 2*. Next year, I will teach a semester-length course titled *Modern Asia* (Fall 2024). In both courses, students spend time developing a strong sense of the ways in which humans build cultural identity and establish shape their experience around cultural arts. We explore the rich history of Jewish arts that provided victims a sense of shared purpose in *Genocide Studies 1*, and in *Modern Asia* we examine the role of visual and musical art forms among East Asian and South Asian countries. One important common feature in South Korea and India is the use of performance and cinematic art (K-Drama, K-Pop, Bollywood, etc.) to establish areas of “soft power” for each country respectively. This workshop has provided me with resources (slides, readings, and activities) that reinforced my own understanding of Korean identity and art as well as elements of cross-cultural connection to integrate into my classes.

**Lesson Objectives:**

The aim of these lessons is to provide a basic understanding of Korean history, culture, and arts through concept of “soft power.” While this term originates in the field of political science (Harvard political scientist Joseph Nye coined the term), it is a useful concept for K-12 students to understand. Namely, it helps them to cultural arts as an important component of a country’s influence on others. These centers of cultural art - such as K-Pop, Japanese anime, Bollywood, Hollywood, Nollywood, etc. – provide an economic engine for the home country, export values and ideals, and promotes tourism and outside investment.

These lessons are meant to be educational and FUN! I hope to use them in my Modern Asia class next year. And, I hope that they translate well across different disciplines (History, English, Art, etc.) as well as among different age-groups. The lessons are designed for three days of activities for a standard 40-45 minute teaching period.

**Essential Understandings**:

* Students will learn about the various ways in which the arts (especially, musical and movement arts) can promote cross-cultural understanding. It assumes that students will have a very basic knowledge of South Korea but may have familiarity with K-Pop. The concepts and ideas from presentation slides, companion resources, and group discussions from the Cross-Cultural Comparison Conference will underscore the lessons and activities of this unit.

**Unit Goals:** By the end of this unit, students will gain an understanding of

* some basic music and movement-based concepts from South Korea & the U.S.
* the ways in which Americans learn about and experience Korean culture and society as well as the ways in which Koreans view aspects of their culture and society
* important aspects of the Korean Wave (hallyu)

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| **Lesson** | **Theme** | **Resources & References** | **Procedure & Activities** |
| **Day 1** | **Basics on Korean culture & “Soft Power”** | **Worksheet**: Terms & Answer Key  Video link  [*Hallyu Explained: the reason Korean Culture is taking over the world*](https://youtu.be/CmkULRHGa40?si=weAB7VmN-U0RsMUU) *(7News Australia)* | 1. **“Last Pair Standing”**: Invite students to create pairs. They will work together as a team and either remain standing (as a team) or sitting down (as a team). If there is an odd number, the teacher may arrange a group of 3.   Using the Terms sheet, the teacher will read the activity’s directions, then will proceed to read terms. The goal is for students to explain each term in their own way of describing. The terms become increasingly difficult. The last pair standing wins.   1. **Video (“**[**Hallyu Explained: Korea’s Soft Power**](https://youtu.be/CmkULRHGa40?si=weAB7VmN-U0RsMUU)**”)**: After a brief follow-up discussion of familiar and unfamiliar terms, students will then view a video on “Korea’s soft power.”  The teacher can ask: *How can one country influence others without military strength or valuable mineral resources? Which of the terms from the “Last Pair Standing” exercise demonstrate Korean influence?* (Answers will vary.)   The teacher will explain the **3-2-1 method** of engaging the video. *Write down 3 memorable details, 2 questions that may not have been answered, and 1 interesting fact.* The class discussion will be centered on the **3-2-1 notes** and aim to further their understanding of “soft power” and Korea’s global “*hallyu*.”   1. **Exit ticket:** Each student offers one aspect of U.S. “soft power” that might be well known and appreciated in South Korea. |
| **2** | **K-Pop as a “Soft Power” force** | Resource: CNN.com “[South Korea brought K-Pop and K-Drama to the World. The Korean language could be next](https://www.cnn.com/2023/01/17/asia/korean-language-learning-rise-hallyu-intl-hnk-dst/index.html).” | 1. **Brainstorm “Familiar story reimagined”**: In small groups of 4-5, students will research and analyze a K-Pop song’s lyrics. The goal is for students to examine elements that would be familiar to a non-Korean audience and to see how it is reinvented through K-Pop. If possible, students should also view the musical video (via *YouTube*). By the end of the period, the teacher will ask groups to share out to the class. *What was the song’s main theme? How did it reimagine or reinvent a familiar story/*   Examples can include (among many others): “***Icarus***” by JJ Project, “***Sherlock***” by SHINee, “***Hyde***” by VIXX *.*   1. **Focused reading**: This is a time for students to examine the concepts of “soft power,” through cultural arts and language learning.   After the introduction, the three main sections include: (1) Rise in Language Classes; (2) Government Efforts; (3) From K-Pop to Employment.  *Depending on the reading proficiency of the class, the reading may be assigned individually or divided into sections (among a group of 3).* Students should note three take-aways to share; each takes a turn providing their three details and all end with notes on the three readings.   1. **Exit ticket:** Each student identifies one reason why a person may want to learn English and one reason why a person may want to learn Korean. (Answers will vary.) |
| **3** | **K-Pop dancing as Cultural Art** | **Video**: [Learn the Gangnam Style with K-Pop sensation Psy](https://youtu.be/_LWpXRXl12I?si=f1v6bAMWlxjcHMk5) | 1. **Brainstorm “What elements of K-Pop are most appealing to its fans?”**: In small groups of 3, students will consider what elements of K-pop appeal to its fans. Each group should have a scribe who will share the group’s findings afterwards. *It is important to note that students do not have to be K-pop fans in order to recognize that there are aspects that appeal, such as synchronicity, musical harmony, the use of technology, etc*. The goal is for students to recognize that cross-cultural understanding of cultural art requires intentional focus on aspects that can be admired and appreciated. Difference should be recognized, but steps toward acceptance and bridging across difference is the process towards understanding. 2. **Videos (Learning “Gangnam Style”)**: After a brief discussion, the teacher will then organize students into small groups of 4-6 students. The teacher will explain that the video will provide a brief tutorial on a cultural dance Then, each group will try to give its best, most synchronized rendition! 😊   *The goal is to have fun in movement-based art while also seeing how difficult it can be learning synchronized dances.*  **Final reflection:** Students will write a short essay (or share in a discussion) their understanding of Korean arts and cultural “soft power.” The aim is to draw together the major themes of the mini-unit. Some queries to incorporate:  *How can art bring together different groups of people? How does it foster cross-cultural understanding? What makes K-pop globally appealing?*   1. **Exit ticket:** Students vote on the best dancing group. |

**Last Pair Standing**

Directions: Students work together in pairs (or groups of 3) to gauge their background knowledge of Korean culture and arts.

Teacher reads: *This activity is a fun exercise to see how much we know about South Korea, its culture and its arts. You will work together in pairs. First, I’ll read a term aloud. You and your partner will then have 15 seconds to talk and write down a word or small phrase that demonstrates familiarity with the term. For example, if I read “K-Pop” then you might write Korean Pop, Korean dance music, or Boy bands/Girl bands. The aim is to gauge familiarity, not perfect knowledge. We’ll go around and share what groups have written. If a term stumps the pair, then you’ll sit. We’ll go to the last pair(s) is/are still standing. Afterwards, we’ll take a look at each term.*

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| K-Pop | Seoul | BTS | K-Drama | Kimchi |
| Tae Kwon Do | Hangul | Celadon | Bibimbop | Hallyu |
| Sijo (“she-jo”) | Hanbok | Janggu | Dancheong | Bojagi |

**Answer Key**

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| **K-Pop**  *Korean Pop music* | **Seoul**  *Capital of South Korea* | **BTS**  *K-Pop Boy band*  *#1 in the World* | **K-Drama**  *Korean drama*  *Popular for plot twists* | **Kimchi**  *Korean “national” food*  *Salted & fermented vegetables* |
| **Tae Kwon Do**  *Korean martial arts*  *“Art of hand & foot strikes”* | **Hangul**  *Korean writing system created by King Sejong* | **Celadon**  *Specialized green glazed ceramics famous among Korean arts* | **Bibimbap**  *Korean “national” dish*  *Cooked rice with seasoned egg, vegetables, etc.* | **Hallyu**  *“Korean wave” Cultural export of music & trends* |
| **Sijo (“she-jo”)**  *Traditional Korean poetry style* | **Hanbok**  *Traditional Korean garments* | **Janggu**  *Korean hourglass shaped drum used in traditional music* | **Dancheong**  *Traditional decorative painting on wooden temples* | **Bojagi**  *Ornate Korean cloth gift wraps* |