

China Summer Institute 2015 *Connie Steinman*
Connecting Chinese & American Cultures Through Sign Language & Religious Gestures

Organizing Questions:

- How is sign language used to communicate in an area where visual languages using gestures & iconic signs instead of auditory language?
- How hand shapes, body language, facial expressions, and symbols are used to show how language is conveyed?
- Are similar hand shapes from a signed language used in religious art convey the same messages or meaning in pieces of work from the same era? What do Buddhist hand gestures in the Mogao Caves illustrate?
- How did different cultures communicate successfully along the Silk Road trade route?
- What are similarities & differences between Chinese & American Sign Language? When ASL hand shapes and Chinese symbols are changed, how does this change in meaning?
- What is the difference between a hand shape for a sign and a classifiers hand shape?
- How are iconic signs created? Can you create your own?

Introduction

The Silk Road has been a major trade route traveled by many different cultures into China. Communication using various spoken languages and non-verbal languages including signed languages & gestures brought people together and supported business transactions along the Silk Road. Some languages share similar sounds, symbols, and gestures. The Mogao Caves was a major resting point and marketplace along the Silk Road. Various people from different cultures including monks made this dangerous journey along the Silk Road to Magao Caves to trade or buy/sell many goods including silk, silver, furniture, and other hand-made items.

In the Magao Caves, various religious artwork including pictorial graphs & sculptures created by the monks were discovered. This

artwork portrayed Buddha and his teachings in many forms using hand shapes to convey messages, meaning, or beliefs in stories or sculptures. Students will explore and discover how Buddha played a significant role on the Silk Road and Magao Caves and how hand shapes convey meaning. The hand shapes will be analyzed to confirm if they represent similar religious meanings during different eras and used as method of storytelling or communication.

Students will be introduced to American Sign Language and non-verbal communication. They will learn how signs are formed applying the rule called "The 5 parameters." Two non-verbal activities will be performed to show how one would naturally use gestures to communicate without voice and how 2 people whose language and culture are different learn to communicate and break culture barriers. Students will compare Chinese Sign Language and American Sign Language's alphabet hand shapes to analyze any similarities. Students will analyze and examine ASL hand shapes as one signs a different shape to how one writes a 2nd different symbol changes the word and meaning. Articles on the Monks vow of silence & hand shapes will be read and critical thinking skills applied. Students will read several short articles on Buddha's teachings and analyze the hand shapes that Buddha poses in illustrations. We will compare them to iconic gestures that we use everyday. They will choose a symbol to research and define to create their own. Students will learn that there are several ways to communicate and be more accepting to other cultures without prejudice to one's mode of communication or language differences.

These activities include hands-on, making inferences, analysis, compare and contrast, critical thinking, illustration, signing and performance skills.

Objectives

- Students will memorize, define, and explain the 5 parameters of a sign to sign the signs.
- Students will participate in non-verbal communication in a group activity "The Suits" to find their suits and organize themselves
- Students will act out a given scene using non-verbal communication including symbols & signs to trade or make a transaction on the Silk Road.
- Students will compare similarities in hand shapes for Chinese Sign Language (CSL) & American Sign Language (ASL) and the letters the Han shapes represent.
- Students will analyze how as the ASL hand shapes change in form will change the meaning of a sign and compare to how the

second symbol of a Chinese character is changed can change the meaning.

- Students will research, study, and draw the symbolic hand shapes that the Buddha portrays in the Mogao Caves
- Students will compare the gestures and meanings of Buddha's teachings through several eras.
- Students will develop their own iconic symbols or hand gestures to show their own identity or meanings and appreciate new ways to communicate.

Resource & Materials:

- "The 5 Parameters" 1x student
- "Chinese Institute Power Point" by Connie Steinman
- Article- "Monks Vow of Silence" Wikipedia 1x student
- Deck of cards- For Suit game
- Acting activity cards for Silk Road trade activity (will create soon)
- 1. Card #1- 2 people on road with goods
- 2. Card #2- 1 person enters with silk to trade
- 3. 1 person from 1st pair does not want it the other wants it cheap
- Chinese symbols for metals: Gold, silver, bronze & family: Mother, Father, sister, brother (will copy from Internet dictionary or from PowerPoint) 1x student
- "Comparing signs for each parameter" created by me.
- Learning American Sign Language textbook Carol Padden signs same above
- Questions about after activity: How did you communicate? Which method most difficult? How did you deal with frustration? Created before class.
- Articles on trade on the Silk Road and Mogao Caves as a trade center (yet to be found)
- Buddhist hand shapes from book- copied 1x per student 3 shapes.
- Article on Buddhist hand shapes
- Questions for Buddhist hand shapes for Internet Search
- Tracing paper or white paper
- Colored pens or markers
- Article on iconic signs
- Article on Classifier Hand shapes –packet & article

Equipment:

- Laptop with PowerPoint presentation
- Ceiling projector connected to desktop/laptop/Internet

Teacher Preparation:

- Articles, handouts, packets are copied so each student receives 1 copy of each.
- PowerPoint Presentation is finished & laptop connected to projector through entire lesson. Will go back & forth. Will post Chinese symbols on PP & other visuals
- All articles & handouts will be reread & familiarized by me.
- Create & copy "comparing the 5 parameters" self- created.
- Buddha hand shapes will be photocopied from book for students to trace and multiple copies made for mistakes
- Roll of white butcher paper
- 1 pair of scissors for each pair of students
- Box of #2 pencils, box of sketch colored pens, rulers for each group of 4 students
- 1 class period of computer lab time booked in advanced for research of Buddha hand shape meanings.
- Textbook & page # for family signs to compare the changes in parameters & Chinese symbols for family
- Buy deck of playing cards
- Create acting/communication cards before Day 1 by writing each action on 1 index cards to create a pack
- Questions for after non-verbal activity & Buddha research questions typed on PP and copied on 2 separate papers so students can have one copy each when assignment given

STANDARDS***Common Core Standards******Academic Language Standards (ALS) (for World Languages)*****Reading** (Informational Texts)

List, define, summarize, and memorize textual information to support understanding ASL history and signing skills.

Research Buddha hand shapes to identify meaning & learn about beliefs & stories. Describe why student chose their symbol and meaning to self.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Compare & contrast, analyze, synthesis performances, signs, symbols, and ideas. Analyze how many languages share the same sound, signs,

symbols, etc. but they have a different meaning in a different language. All languages follow their own grammatical structure & rules. Analyzing patterns in any one language.

Writing Standards

Write summaries from articles, explain and define terms in sign language, describe and explain in detail Buddha gestures, and draw and label own sign.

UNIT PLAN

Connecting Chinese & American Culture Through Sign Language & Religious Gestures

TIME REQUIREMENT

5 CLASS PERIODS (55 Minutes/period)

LESSON- DAY 1

EQUIPMENT

Deck of Cards, laptop & projector (Steinman PowerPoint), 5 parameters worksheet, worksheet "Comparing Signs for Each Parameter."

TEACHER PREPARATION:

This unit introduces the students to American Sign Language as a non-verbal form of communication. ASL is a language with its own grammatical structure & rules like any other auditory or signed language. They have to memorize the "5 Parameters of a Sign" to see how the signs are signed and the grammar rules.

- Teach/memorize/read/practice "The 5 Parameters of a Sign"
- Explain rules of "The Suits" A Card Deck
 1. No talking at all!
 2. Do NOT show your card to anyone!
 3. Each student gets one card
 4. Without talking or showing card find your suit in a group – hearts, spades, diamonds, clubs
 5. After students find their suits, have them line up in numerical # with Ace's first to Card #2

***Students will communicate nonverbally to line up

 - Have student response to performance questions handout & Discuss.

LESSON PROCEDURE

1. Warm-up activity, "What would it be like to be Deaf?" 1 paragraph written
2. "The Suits"- Rules explained, all participate
3. Answer questions in response to activity of how they felt & communicated.
4. Discuss
5. Exit Ticket- List 3 ways of communicating non-verbally

LESSON- DAY 2

EQUIPMENT:

The 5 Parameters worksheet; PowerPoint Presentation, laptop, projector, article of "The Monks," Trading on the Silk Road Activity cards, Textbooks for the ASL Alphabet hand shapes.

TEACHER PREPARATION

Teaching students new ways to communicate non-verbally & how to memorize the 5 parameters. Teaching Deaf history of ASL and how hand shapes were realized. Preparing students to communicate in a complex situation using gestures.

- Introduce The 5 Parameters
 - Students share new ways of communicating
 - Show PP video of Monks taking a vow of silence
 - Read article about Monks- Summarize in 3 sentences
 - Explain Activity rules for "Trading on Silk Road"
 - No Talking, Don't show your card, use non-verbal communication; Act out your card
1. Each card sets up & adds to the scene between buyers & sellers
 2. 2 students start the scene of buyer & seller
 3. 2 students enter as buyers, 1 doesn't want a product, the other really cheap. Sellers describe their product non-verbally and gesture what they want in exchange
 4. I build scene from here
 - Discuss & list how they communicated
 - Teach the ASL hand shape Alphabet- Fist size letters
 - Apply 5 parameters- students look for pairs of signs

LESSON PROCEDURE

1. Warm-up- List 3 ways you communicated from Day 1
2. Show PP of the Monks- discuss

3. Read article- written summary
4. Act out "Silk Road" activity
5. Compare how people communicated- discuss
6. Sign Fist Letter hand shapes
7. Pair how signs change using parameters. Apply 5 parameter to find pairs of signs in textbook that share 1 parameter

After Lesson Activities

Other team-building, non-verbal games or activities.

Finding pairs of signs from textbook that share 1 parameter, but different in another to explain.

List how Monks contributed to visual language

Summarize how Monks communicated

Discuss language barriers from "Silk Road" activity

Sign "Fist Letter" 2 or 3 letter words

Pair similar signs that share a parameter

Hand shape game

Label iconic signs

Assessment

Memorize & explain each parameter

Explain a sign using the 5-parameter guide

Sign using the correct gestures

Explain how Monks developed ASL alphabet hand shapes

List ways to communicate using visual gestures

List ways of communicating by trading

Sign fist letters finger spelled words smoothly

Explain & apply the 5 parameters to new vocabulary

Identify & explain differences in patterns in symbols

Define iconic signs

Analyze how we can conserve one aspect of our cultural heritage

Analyze gestures

Lesson Day 3

Equipment:

ASL alphabet hand shape worksheet or book, Chinese Sign Language alphabet hand shapes (PP), Signs copied from ASL textbook for family signs, Chinese symbols for family (PP)

Teacher Preparation

Review 5 Parameters and emphasize how one difference in a parameter can change the meaning of a sign. Students compare how family signs change between mother/father, sister/brother. Show Chinese symbols for same signs to show how the 2nd symbol can change the meaning.

Lesson Procedure

1. Warm-up List the 5 Parameters of a sign
2. Given pictures for ASL family signs- write 1 difference in parameter
3. Show ASL alphabet & CSL alphabet hand shape letters
4. Students list similar letter hand shapes from both sign languages
5. Learn how gender changes in ASL using locations on the face
6. Learn how 2nd symbol in Chinese symbols is changed to mean a different article. Write how the 2nd symbol changed.
7. Students write what do different languages have in common and how each language follows certain grammar rules.
8. Answer questions if we can learn a different language if we recognize patterns in other languages or learn grammatical structure of 2nd language? Can we find similarities in another culture's language and develop better communication?
9. Exit- can sound or spelling in language change meaning.

Lesson Day 4

Equipment

ASL/CSL hand shapes (PP), Chinese symbols, Iconic symbols, Iconic article, and articles on Silk Road & Mogao Caves.

Teacher Preparation

Review hand shapes & symbols to recognize patterns & rules in other languages. Present iconic symbols and how they change meaning in other cultures around the world. Prepare articles how communication & symbols were represented on the Silk Road & in the Mogao Caves.

Lesson Procedure

1. Review ASL & CSL signs & symbols
2. Do they recognize any patterns or rules?
3. Read & define iconic signs article. What are common iconic signs that we use? Do they mean something else in another culture?

4. Read about articles about the Silk Road & Mogao Caves. How does sign language & symbols bring different cultures together & how languages are developed? How does language lead to conservation of heritage?? Answer questions & summarize articles.
5. List 3 iconic signs you use often.

Lesson Day 5

Equipment

Buddhist hand shapes (PP), short article on Buddhist hand shapes

Teacher Preparation

Discuss how language & symbols bridge cultures together and language is developed? Does language lead to conservation of a heritage? Buddhist gestures & hand shapes (PP), Buddhist article, butcher paper cut up, pencils, rulers, markers

Lesson Procedures

1. Warm- up- questions
2. Read article on Buddhist gestures
3. Show PP of Buddhist gestures- ask if any mean anything to them
4. Write about one symbol and feeling related
5. Introduce Buddhist gestures in Mogao Caves
6. Analyze relationships of hand gestures on Buddha through different parts the cave
7. Trace symbol on paper for research and write other related meanings
8. Create own hand gestures to draw, write,

DAY 6- computer lab to research chosen gestures

DAY 7- Compare & analyze gestures

Resources:

Asian Culture Exchange Association. Hand in Dunhuang. Japan. 26 Oct. 1993.

Magus Consulting. Silk Road Experiences. 2010. 21 July 2015.

www.silkroadexperience.org