



An Endangered Asian Animal Sanctuary in Ceramics

This art project offered valuable education sessions, providing a diverse approach to the study of Asian Culture.

2010 was an exciting year for Doncaster Gardens Primary School. We were fortunate enough to receive a grant from the National Asia Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP). It enabled us to fulfil our dream of building an Endangered Asian Animal Sanctuary in our school's courtyard as a special year five project in 2011.

Students were encouraged to become independent learners, applying their individual strengths, ideas and strategies to inquire about China and its endangered animals. The Asian Expo showcased the students' depth of knowledge about Asia. It reflected their efforts and learning outcomes from their research into the history, language, ethnic groups, population and currency of an Asian country. The art component of this project began in term one and it sequentially flowed into terms two and three of the Visual Art program.

The sculptures of the Chinese Village and the collections of animals now residing at Doncaster Gardens Primary School's courtyard have generated life-like resources that

focus on China and the environment of its endangered animals. This endangered animal sanctuary and Chinese village has also created a resource for future sustainability studies in other learning areas such as literature, maths, geography, history, environment and inquiry learning. The project has increased the children's awareness of the endangered animals in China and enriched their knowledge about the history, culture and customs of China.

The project also developed a solid foundation to complement our Studies of Asia in the curriculum, which is part of our commitment to Becoming Asia Literate School for the 21st century. The miniature display of a traditional Chinese Village and the collection of China's endangered animals emphasize the importance of conservation of animals and their habitat, looking at China as an example. It has made students aware of the actions and the steps that they can take to assist the cause, which can include the food they purchase at the canteen and at the supermarket. For example, they can avoid products made with palm oil because its production affects the orangutans and their habitats.

The major highlight of this project was

giving the students an excellent opportunity to work with experienced artist Jane Annois, who specialises in ceramics. This provided them some special skills in working with clay, and learning the technique of constructing sculptures in a miniature size was a challenge to them. The special techniques of applying paint to the sculptures to create the desired colour and tones were also acquired by the students.

The project has broadened and enriched the students' knowledge and awareness about China's endangered animals and their environment. Learning outcomes were demonstrated through their research and the final products of ceramic animals, temples and tiles.

I believe that we have more than achieved our objectives in this project and it was very satisfying to see the students expressing enjoyment as the project progressed, and parents taking an interest and valuing their children's achievements from doing this project.

Grace Cheung

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