



Case Study Three  
High School Series

EVANS HIGH SCHOOL:  
CHINA EXCHANGE PROGRAM  
STEMS FROM NCTA SEMINAR



# INTRODUCTION TO CASE STUDIES

## INTRODUCTION

This school-based case study is one of 16 prepared by InSites, a nonprofit research organization. This case study is part of an evaluation of the National Consortium for Teaching about Asia (NCTA) and offers you an opportunity to study educators engaged in the work of promoting Asia in classrooms and schools. Understanding their experiences, impressions, and methods in teaching about Asia can help you determine how to foster attention to Asia in the context of your unique educational setting.

## ABOUT THE NCTA EVALUATION

Launched in 1998, NCTA is funded by the Freeman Foundation whose major objective is to strengthen the bonds of friendship between the United States and the countries of East Asia through educational endeavors. NCTA deepens teachers' knowledge about the literature, cultures, history, and art of China, Japan, and Korea. Teachers are drawn to participate in NCTA by receiving resource materials, presentations by Asia experts, stipends, and opportunities to participate in study tours and other enrichment activities. Since 1998, more than 3,500 teachers in 42 states have participated in the seminars. For more information about NCTA, visit [www.nctasia.org](http://www.nctasia.org).

In 2002, NCTA and the Freeman Foundation asked InSites to evaluate its work. The case studies are one of several products in the evaluation. For more information about the evaluation, see [www.insites.org/ncta](http://www.insites.org/ncta).

## BASIS FOR CASE STUDIES

As part of the evaluation, InSites gathered information from teachers participating in NCTA seminars. This information was gathered in the spring of 2003 and serves as the foundation for the case studies. The schools represented vary in geographic region, type of school and community, number of NCTA teachers in the school, and teacher subject areas. To disguise

identities, InSites replaced the names of people, places, and schools with pseudonyms and altered some peripheral facts. In addition, InSites edited some quotations for clarity and length.

## USING THE CASE STUDIES

The case studies show teachers engaged in teaching about Asia and promoting the presence of Asian studies in their schools. Seminar leaders can use them to encourage NCTA participants to consider their role in fostering a sustained presence for Asian studies. However, even if you're an educator who hasn't been involved in NCTA, you can benefit from the case studies. Whether you're a teacher, an administrator, a professional development provider, or a policymaker interested in bringing knowledge of Asia to American students, the case studies can help you generate ideas for fostering a presence for Asian studies in classrooms and schools.

## STRUCTURE OF THE CASE STUDIES

Each case study begins with a vignette that introduces the central characters and focus of the case study. The case study then presents information about the school, district, and/or state, and a brief description of the NCTA seminar. Impact of the NCTA Seminar details how NCTA participants have used what they learned in their classrooms and schools. Next Steps presents multiple views about promoting a sustained presence for Asian studies at the school. Discussion Questions focuses on key points in the case study and helps you consider how these issues relate to your own educational setting.

## CROSS-CASE EXAMINATION

You can conduct a cross-site examination of features in these case studies by logging onto [www.insites.org/ncta](http://www.insites.org/ncta). Information is presented by school and organized into three categories: context, seminars, and NCTA teachers.

# EVANS HIGH SCHOOL: CHINA EXCHANGE PROGRAM STEMS FROM NCTA SEMINAR

## VIGNETTE

*Can the school sustain  
the current momentum  
to increase interest in  
Asian studies?*

Social studies teacher Vivian Coleman sees a “kind of excitement about we’re doing” with Asian studies at her school. It wasn’t always so. When she first broached the idea of taking the National Consortium for Teaching about Asia (NCTA) seminar to her colleagues, she found no one in the social studies department interested. Eventually she recruited a language arts teacher, Ginny Cross, to take the 30-hour seminar with her. They attended the seminar taught by Debra Madison through distance learning on an interactive, instructional television system.

From there it has “snowballed,” according to Vivian. Four teachers from Evans High School have now taken the seminar, and two have traveled to China with a group of students as part of a sister school exchange program. When NCTA seminar alumni at Evans were invited to a meeting to learn about the possibility of establishing an exchange relationship with a partner school in China, they jumped at the opportunity. Within a year, the Evans’ principal was part of a “Key Actors” tour that took her and other principals, along with district and state administrators, to China to visit Chinese schools and sign exchange agreements. Following the trip, the Evans’ principal has worked with the NCTA teachers to make the sister school relationship a reality and has made a commitment to beginning Chinese language instruction in the school to reward the enthusiasm of the students and teachers at Evans for the exchange with China. It is hoped that these activities will increase interest in Asian studies throughout the school.



**Evans High  
School**

Located in the central part of a sprawling city of half a million, this magnet school with a focus on technology has a student population of 800 to 850. One teacher describes the ethnic makeup of the student population as “an interesting blend of students. We have about a third Hispanic population, about 30 percent Caucasian, and then there is a mixture of Asian, African American, and a small minority of Native Americans. Most of the Asians here are Vietnamese.”

## EVANS HIGH SCHOOL AND ITS COMMUNITY

Evans High School is surrounded by a modest, time-worn neighborhood, in a working class community where unemployment has been rising in recent years. As a magnet school that focuses on technology, it draws students from all around the city. Although students must apply for admittance, most are admitted.

The social studies chair at Evans High School estimates that “more than 50 percent of our students’ parents have never gone to college. A large percentage of them never completed high school, particularly among the immigrant population.” The population is ethnically diverse, including a growing Vietnamese community. But the social studies chair says that the community does not demonstrate an interest in other cultures: “Trying to convince them that they ought to know about cultures that are so far away is not an easy thing to do. It is one of those things that has to trickle down.”

Art teacher Rocco Tomita thinks that ethnic diversity at Evans offers an advantage for incorporating Asia into the curriculum. He says, “I think our student body and the diversity that we have is an area that will foster curiosity [about Asia].” Vivian Coleman, who is chair of the social studies department, noted that some of this curiosity comes from Vietnamese students. “Some of them have voiced that [they would] really like to learn more about Asia and about China. Because of their family histories coming here from Vietnam, some have mixed feelings about China and Korea. They do not know a lot of the background information on what happened before the families came here.”

“(B)efore we started attending the institutes — and I was the one who started that — I cannot say that there was anyone saying, ‘Gosh, we need to do more about Asia.’ It is so far removed.... No one’s ever mentioning Asia. When the opportunity came up to take the class, I personally wanted to know more about it. I wanted to do a little bit more. I then recruited a colleague to take it with me. That started the snowball.”

— *NCTA teacher*

A financial crisis in the city has been an emotional issue that has put a damper on life and morale in the school and the broader community. Money in the district and, therefore, the school is tight. The district social studies coordinator, who has an educational background that includes courses in Asian studies, supports professional development on Asia-related content for social studies teachers. However, he has very little money to provide professional development. Also, the district curriculum director doesn’t think the average teacher would be willing to attend a 30-hour NCTA seminar. He would prefer to train master teachers who would then conduct short workshops for their colleagues.

There is little Asian content being taught at Evans even though the district requires students to take two semesters of World History, one more than required by the state. Spanish is the only foreign language taught at Evans. Teachers and the principal seem to be interested in interdisciplinary teaching, but there are no formal mechanisms to make this happen and no incentives for doing so.



## NCTA Seminar Leader

The seminar leader offers the seminars through distance learning on an interactive, instructional television system. She says, “The teachers at the remote sites handle it well — they are usually starved for professional development and grateful to get whatever we have. I do try to meet them in person by traveling to their site or at least to their school during the seminar. We also do the enrichment trips that allows them to come together with their classmates at some point.”

## NATURE OF NCTA SEMINARS

Debra Madison, who is the NCTA partner site director and seminar leader, says that a seminar on Chinese Philosophy and Culture “completely turned my life around.” Since that seminar, she has used her high energy and enthusiasm to promote “all things Asian” and to mobilize key state leaders to visit China and support the inclusion of Asia-related material in the school curriculum (K-12 and higher education). She is the Program Coordinator for the Teaching Asia Institute based at the state university. Her outreach work includes leading NCTA seminars as well as organizing study tours to Asia for key educational leaders in the state.

Debra has conducted the NCTA seminars for five years. In the second year, she began offering the seminars through distance learning on an interactive, instructional television system. Standing before a live audience, Debra presents the material to the remote sites. But she doesn’t restrict herself to staying at the host institution for broadcasts, noting that “I have visited virtually all the remote sites and broadcast from those locations, so that I could be live in person with each group.”

Four teachers at Evans High School attended her seminars via distance learning and were inspired to add Asian content to their classrooms. After the seminars, Debra brought Evans to the attention of the Freeman Foundation, which funds the NCTA seminars as well as other Asia-related programs. This relationship has helped the district secure funding for key individuals to travel to China and for Evans to add a China exchange program.

Debra teaches “about 70 percent” of the seminars herself, using guest lecturers for some topics. In most seminars, she lectures for the full session. Says Vivian Coleman, Evans social studies teacher: “When Debra starts, it is three intense hours.” Occasionally Debra sets aside time for small group discussion about primary sources or ideas. Overall, Debra does not spend time on discussions of classroom application: “I don’t dwell on pedagogy. These are talented teachers. They can develop their own. We’ve got to present good content. And, we’ve got to present it to them as professionals.”

“Once I got to China, I couldn’t help but appreciate an opportunity of a lifetime.... I discovered things that you don’t discover until you are there. You will be just overwhelmed by the culture. You can’t read it. You are living it. That will change your attitude and your heart and head about everything.” — *Evans High School principal*

Participants are required to submit five lesson plans based on primary sources by Asian writers and also to compile a portfolio “of different kinds of assignments” given over the course of the seminar such as analytical essays, analyses of different types of documents or materials, and film reviews.

## IMPACT OF NCTA SEMINARS

Four teachers from Evans have participated in NCTA: Vivian Coleman, social studies teacher and chair of the social studies department; Ginny Cross, English teacher; Rocco Tomita, art teacher; and William Kaufman, communications teacher. Before the seminar, none of these teachers devoted much class time to Asia. Now each has incorporated new content into their classes. Also, as a result of their participation in the NCTA seminars, they learned from their seminar leader about opportunities to initiate an exchange program with a school in China. This led to their principal traveling to China as part of a state “Key Actors” tour where she signed an exchange agreement with a partner school. Since then, two teachers have taken a group of students to China for the exchange, and a second group of students is preparing to go.

### SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSES

When Vivian Coleman attended the NCTA seminar two years ago with English teacher Ginny Cross, she was teaching World History. Now she teaches U.S. History. “I will probably not be teaching [World History] again for a long time. They have me focused on U.S. History because of state-mandated tests. That is my strength and they want me there.”

Nonetheless, Vivian tries to incorporate Asia into her class whenever possible. “I do more background now about China when I start teaching about the Imperialist moves of the United States and the whole Open Door Policy, which I probably would have just glossed over had it not been for the background in class.” She also has her Comparative Government class do an exercise comparing the Chinese Constitution with the U.S. Constitution. Asia-related posters are displayed in her

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— *NCTA teacher*

classroom. She says, “I am a little more conscious about trying to find things related to Asia to put up.”

The most useful aspect of the seminars for Vivian Coleman were the lesson plans she wrote for U.S. History and the Asian content she gleaned for use in other classes. She said, “Debra is so enthusiastic and excited about this. She inspires enthusiasm.” Vivian recently published an article derived from one of her NCTA lesson plans in a journal. Her article was developed for her U.S. History class.

#### VISUAL ARTS CLASSES

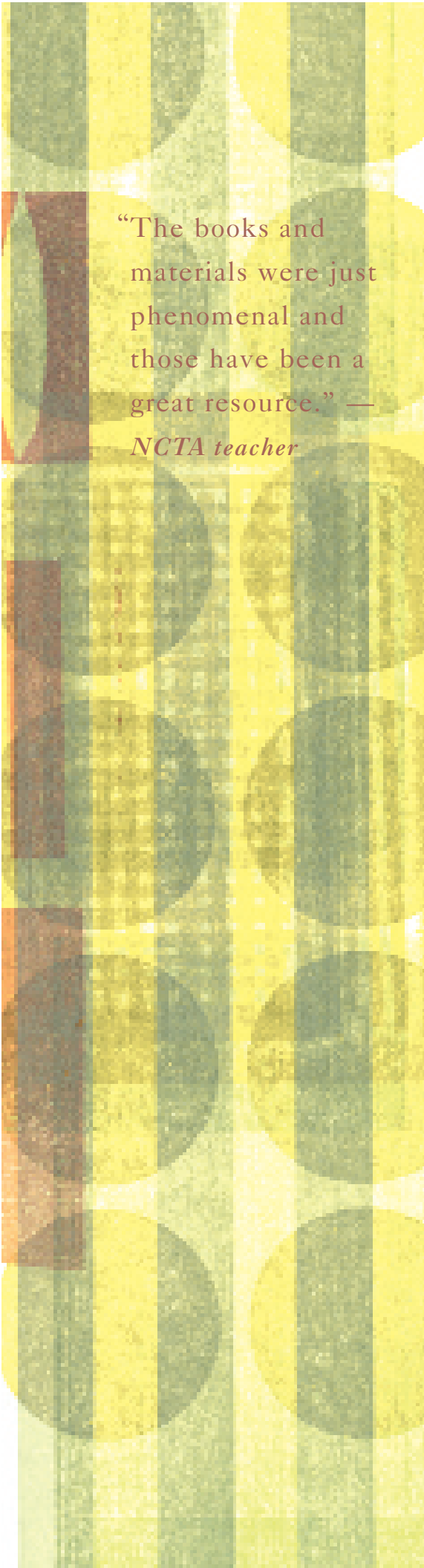
Most useful to Art teacher Rocco Tomita was a PowerPoint presentation on Chinese painting and pottery. He has explored Chinese brush strokes with the students in his Visual Arts classes. In his unit on masks in his Ceramics class, he has broadened his focus from African masks to include Chinese and Korean masks as well.

#### LANGUAGE ARTS CLASSES

Ginny Cross, who teaches English, including Advanced Placement (AP) World Literature, has introduced new novels by Asian writers to her tenth-grade World Literature students and to her Advanced Placement (AP) Literature and Composition class. In one class she led a discussion about a story from China involving themes of filial piety and the clash between Imperialist and Communist ideals.

Ginny Cross said the information and materials provided in the seminar were most useful: “It opened my eyes up to a lot of the literature that is already out there. What I like to do with a piece of literature is to hook some history onto it, because they are so connected you just cannot take the history out of the literature and the literature out of the history. [The seminar] has given me a lot more background to work with and to build on.” She specifically mentioned the usefulness of an anthology of Asian literature, which includes pieces she hasn’t found anywhere else, and the Cultural Atlas of China because her students “like the trivial facts....They do not have a visual picture of China so for them to hook onto a little bit of the culture helps them out with the reading of it.”





“The books and materials were just phenomenal and those have been a great resource.” —  
*NCTA teacher*

William Kaufman took the NCTA seminar last year. He is a Communications teacher and a former professional photographer. His Video Production students made a video about Evans High School, which Principal Burke took with her to China. The principal showed it to prospective exchange schools. William also plans to have his students produce a video based on their research on China (e.g., relating Confucius and the samurai warrior code of the Shinto to today’s society) and also a video of the school’s exchange experience. William envisions placing copies of both videos in every media center in the district.

William Kaufman said that “just about everything” in the seminar was useful: “My knowledge of China before the seminar was almost nil...China was a closed society. None of us could ever remember even discussing China when we were in school. It has opened me up. My ear is there when I hear something about China now. I’m thinking, ‘How can I incorporate that into my Video Production classes?’”

#### EXCHANGE PROGRAM WITH CHINESE SCHOOL

Debra Madison, the seminar leader, realized that policymakers and other political leaders weren’t supportive of Asia because they couldn’t relate to Asia so she secured funding from the Freeman Foundation to take key policymakers on a Key Actors tour of China. She also secured seed money from the Freeman Foundation—which funds the NCTA seminars—for a China exchange program at several high schools in the state. Debra approached social studies chair Vivian Coleman with the idea of the exchange program. Vivian talked to her colleague and fellow NCTA participant Ginny Cross. They next approached their principal, Laura Burke, who gave them her support, and “it took off from there.”

Laura Burke, the principal of Evans High School, traveled to China on the Key Actors tour as did the acting superintendent of the district. While in China, the principal visited prospective exchange schools and she signed an agreement to exchange students and teachers during the coming school year. When the acting superintendent returned, she started an Asian Advisory Committee to advise her on education matters as they relate to the Asian community.



## Key Points

- ❖ Four NCTA teachers have incorporated Asian content into their classrooms.
- ❖ Through the seminar leader, the teachers learned of opportunities to establish an exchange relationship with a partner school in China.
- ❖ Principal and district administrators traveled with the seminar leader to China to meet their counterparts and sign a school-exchange agreement.
- ❖ Principal secured funding for an adjunct Chinese language instructor at the school to support the exchange
- ❖ Seminar leader's outreach has resulted in districtwide interest in Asia.

## NEXT STEPS

Outside the NCTA teachers' classrooms, Coleman feels that not much is being taught about Asia at Evans. Since Asia is supposed to be covered in middle school social studies, high school teachers concentrate on Europe rather than Asia. Vivian's goal is for all ninth-grade World Geography teachers to incorporate Asia into their curriculum. The challenge will be adding the Asian material and still covering the required curriculum in the space of a single semester.

So far, the greatest school-wide accomplishment regarding Asia at Evans High has been organizing an exchange with a school in China. The Freeman Foundation is providing start-up funds for Evans's exchange program, which is one of several in the state. Additional local support is being sought from businesses within the state that have relations with China.

The principal and four NCTA teachers, plus one parent, have formed the Southeast China Exchange Committee. With the seed-funding secured by the seminar leader, they plan to send approximately ten students and two teachers to China each year. A group of Chinese students from their partner school will visit Evans each fall. In preparation for their trip, the students and teachers participate in a three-week introductory Chinese language course, offered for all the schools in the program, at a local university each summer. During the first year of the exchange, ten students and two teachers from Evans participated in a summer-semester Chinese language course, and then nine students and two teachers spent three weeks at their sister school in China.

According to social studies chair Vivian Coleman, no one at the school was clamoring for more information or curriculum about Asia before the idea of the exchange program came up. Now that an exchange agreement has been signed, people are enthusiastic about learning more from the exchange teachers and students.

The teachers at Evans also look for support for Asian studies at the state and district level. The state social studies coordinator has audited the NCTA seminar and continues to recommend it to social studies teachers statewide. In the Evans district, the acting superintendent participated in the tour to China and, on her return, formed a school/community group to consider how to encourage Asian Studies in the district. The members of the committee are diverse and include Vietnamese, Japanese, Korean, and Chinese individuals. The acting superintendent established the advisory committee as a way to get “systemic input, which is new to this system.” Interestingly, it was her trip to China that “influenced me in realizing that to make change, the system needs to reach out to all communities.”



For more information about other seminars and participants, see [www.insites.org/ncta](http://www.insites.org/ncta).

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Supporting Information

Two reports from the NCTA evaluation provide helpful information for addressing the discussion questions.

***Teaching about Asia in American Schools: Keys to Success*** presents findings about the impact of NCTA seminars on teachers, classrooms, and schools. It also describes factors that affect the sustained presence of Asia in schools and classrooms.

***Teaching about Asia in American Schools: Tips for Seminar Leaders*** provides information about how seminar leaders design seminars to both increase teachers' content knowledge and help them foster a sustained presence for Asia.

Both reports are available at [www.nctasia.org](http://www.nctasia.org) and [www.insites.org/ncta](http://www.insites.org/ncta).

1. What evidence do you see that NCTA teachers at this school are getting serious content about Asia into their classrooms? How satisfied are you with the level of serious content about Asia that they are getting into their classrooms? What factors challenge their ability to infuse Asia into their classroom curriculum? What factors support it?
2. How are NCTA teachers sharing what they know about Asia with colleagues? What other formal and informal strategies would you encourage these NCTA teachers to use to bring greater attention to Asia in their school curriculum?
3. One of the goals of NCTA is fostering a sustained presence or permanent place for Asia in schools and classrooms. How successful have NCTA seminar participants been in reaching that goal in this school? (See **KEYS TO SUCCESS** — [www.insites.org/ncta](http://www.insites.org/ncta) — for more information on factors that are necessary or make a contribution toward reaching this goal.)
4. What strategies for recruiting additional teachers for future NCTA seminars could be used in this school or area to help ensure a sustained presence for Asian studies? (See **TIPS FOR SEMINAR LEADERS** — [www.insites.org/ncta](http://www.insites.org/ncta) — for some practical information relating to seminar activities, including recruitment.)
5. Consider the conditions for supporting a sustained presence for Asia in the curriculum of schools described in the **KEYS TO SUCCESS** report and this discussion of Evans. To what extent do you think there is a sustained presence for Asia in your school?
6. What Asia-related initiatives and interests in your own community might enhance the teaching of Asian content in your school? (For example, is there a consulate, museum, business, university, community college, or organization of native Asians that could be engaged?)
7. What practical and feasible actions might you and your colleagues undertake to foster a greater long-term presence for Asia in your school and its curriculum?

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# Case Study Three – High School Series Evans High School: China Exchange Program Stems from NCTA Seminar

## About the Case Studies Series

This case study is one in a series of 16. The full set of case studies is listed below. You can access them at [www.insites.org/ncta](http://www.insites.org/ncta).

### Middle School Case Studies

1. Baker Middle School: Media Specialist Promotes Asian Studies School Wide
2. Clemens Middle School: Seminars and Study Tours Help Foster Asian Studies
3. Emery Middle School: Team Plans to Use Asian Studies to Reform Curriculum at Low-Performing School
4. Hardin Middle School: Teachers Infuse Asia in Art, Geography, and History Classes
5. Hay Edwards Middle School: Teachers Bring Asian Studies to Rural School in Transition
6. Kaiser Middle School: Lone Teacher Mobilizes Interest in Asia
7. Wadsworth Middle School: Cross-Disciplinary Team Develops Strong Asian Curriculum

### High School Case Studies

1. Alternative School: Teachers Organize School Year Around Asian Theme
2. Beye High School: Teachers Fit Asia into Standards-Driven Curriculum
3. Evans High School: China Exchange Program Stems from NCTA Seminar
4. Jefferson High School: On-Site Seminar Enriches Asian Content in High-Performing School
5. Lincoln High School: Interconnected Initiatives Expand Presence of Asia
6. Meridian High School: Teachers Implement Asian Studies in Multiple Disciplines
7. Montview High School: Teachers Include Asia in Revised English and Social Studies Curriculum
8. Saunders High School: Critical Mass of Teachers Increases Asian Studies at Private School
9. South Lake District High School: District Collaboration Magnifies NCTA's Presence

For further information about the NCTA evaluation, see [www.insites.org/ncta](http://www.insites.org/ncta).

For information about the NCTA program and the five national coordinating sites, see [www.nctasia.org](http://www.nctasia.org).