



Case Study Four
High School Series

JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL:
ON-SITE SEMINAR ENRICHES ASIAN CONTENT
IN HIGH-PERFORMING SCHOOL



INTRODUCTION TO CASE STUDIES

INTRODUCTION

This school-based case study is one of sixteen prepared by InSites, a non-profit research organization. This case 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, the 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, over 3,500 teachers in 42 states have participated in the seminars. For more information on NCTA, visit 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 on the evaluation, see 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 cases. 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 begins with a Vignette that introduces the central characters and focus of the case study. The case 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 on 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. Information is presented by school and organized into three categories: context, seminars, and NCTA teachers.

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VIGNETTE

What might NCTA teachers do to expand Asian studies given their limited time and lack of interest in collaboration?

CARL DONNELLY describes himself as a third-generation Asian educator. He says, “The first generation learned the language, the second generation created documents, and now we who are in the third generation are disbursing them to the public.” In his role as an educator, Carl endeavors to bring Asian studies to the attention of state and local policymakers and to build grass-roots support for Asian studies among teachers.

An example of Carl’s grass-roots work is a recent 30-hour seminar he led for the National Consortium for Teaching about Asia (NCTA). Believing that he would have better attendance, he brought the seminar to the teachers. Carl brought the seminar to the high-achieving school district of Oakwood and invited global studies teachers from the high school and social studies teachers from the middle school to attend. Carl limited enrollment to these specific disciplines because the required curriculum and state tests pinpoint ninth- and tenth-grade global studies as ideal places to incorporate Asian content. Thus, he hoped to capitalize on this potentially fertile environment for increasing knowledge about Asia among these groups.

JANE VINCENT, ARTHUR LINN, and MARIA MONTAL — three of the eight social studies teachers at Jefferson High School — took the NCTA seminar. As a result, all have increased the Asian content in their global studies classes. They noted that resource materials they received from NCTA helped them put together lesson plans that went beyond the minimum standards. Helping students attain excellent scores on standardized tests is a valued asset in this achievement-oriented school district. Yet, this is also a high school with little teacher collaboration on lesson plans and almost no interdepartmental sharing. So while Maria, Jane, and Arthur all expressed a feeling of greater con-



Oakwood City

Oakwood City is a middle-class neighborhood made up of predominantly business and professional people who commute to a large metropolitan city and its environs. About 84 percent of the residents are Caucasian, but the county's population of Asians and Hispanics is growing rapidly.

confidence in their teaching and knowledge of content as a result of participation in NCTA, they have had few opportunities to share that knowledge beyond their classrooms.

JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL AND ITS COMMUNITY

Oakwood City has a strong community focus on education. People choose to live in Oakwood because of the quality of the school district. One parent says, “You don’t move here for the housing. You move here because you believe in the schools.” Oakwood competes fiercely with neighboring districts in the arena of academic achievement, and the community’s residents strongly support the schools’ activities.

STATE AND DISTRICT CONTEXT

Assistant Superintendent **MARTINE BROUSSARD** and the three participating NCTA teachers agree that Asia is in the global studies curriculum because of state tests, noting that “if it gets tested, it gets taught.” The exams measure students’ knowledge of global history at the end of the ninth grade and geography at the end of the tenth grade. Despite the efforts of advocacy groups to increase the content about Asia, the tests focus predominantly on Western history and geography.

The imminent departure of several administrators, including Martine, poses a major change in leadership for the district. To ease the transition, Martine has agreed to stay in her post until the superintendent decides on her replacement.



**Jefferson
High School**

Jefferson High School serves a student body of 5,500 students in grades nine through twelve. On average, 97 percent of the high school's graduates attend college.

THE HIGH SCHOOL

As in many high schools, the layout of Jefferson High School gives each department a section of a wing of the school. Although this arrangement allows for easy conversation among teachers of the same department, it also reduces the opportunities for exchanges between teachers from different departments.

Teachers are assigned five teaching periods per day and one period per day for lesson planning. By delaying the start of classes one hour on every Monday, the school sets aside time for individual departmental meetings. Ideally, this time is meant to be used to discuss lesson planning and curriculum development. In actuality, the majority of these Monday morning planning periods are used to discuss administrative issues and rarely do teachers work on curriculum or collaborative lesson planning.

ANN CHONG, principal of Jefferson High School, is a hands-on leader who encourages “interdisciplinary dialogue” and teacher innovation. Her support for departmental decision making on curriculum development has inspired a few teachers to design new courses or update old courses. However, when Ann told teachers she was willing to work with the schedule to provide a block of time during which teachers could work together to prepare courses, “There were no takers.”

The predominantly academic curriculum at Jefferson emphasizes college preparatory subjects. Social studies is the only department in the school with four required courses: Global Studies I, Global Studies II, U.S. History, and Government and Economics. With that many requirements, teachers say it is difficult to find space in the schedule for an Asian studies elective — and difficult to find someone to teach it. Students take as many Advanced Placement classes as possible in their junior and senior years. Some teachers see this as inhibiting their ability to bring in new ideas because students don't have the time to take on more coursework.

NATURE OF NCTA SEMINARS

“I appreciated that we as teachers received lectures from scholars in the field who taught us things we didn’t know. It was especially true for me. Certainly the opportunity was handed to me on a silver platter.” — *global studies teacher*

The seminar leader, **CARL DONNELLY**, who is director of the East Asian Association, has an extensive background in Asian studies. He has a Ph.D. in Asian studies, has lived in Japan, and has led a number of tours through China. He is fluent in Chinese and proficient in Japanese. As part of his work with the East Asian Association, Carl runs a variety of programs such as a study tour to China, sponsored by the East Asian Association, that was attended by **MARTINE BROUSSARD**, Jefferson’s assistant superintendent, and other educational leaders. The NCTA seminar was conducted by the East Asian Association as a partner NCTA site.

Carl designs and oversees each NCTA seminar in the Oakwood area and teaches at least one or two sessions per seminar. For the NCTA seminar at Jefferson, Carl brought the experts to the teachers at the high school. Martine comments, “Teachers had easy access — no trouble with parking — the best and brightest authorities came to them.”

The seminar was about 75 percent content and 25 percent pedagogy. The content covered four historical periods — with a pedagogy session after each of these periods taught by an education expert. Some of the top Asian scholars in the country taught the content sessions. NCTA participant **MARIA MONTAL** says, “This definitely was one of the best professional development programs I’ve taken — and I’ve done a lot of different workshops.”

At a follow-up meeting, participants said that they gained substantially from the content sessions, noting that the stories and anecdotes were particularly useful in the classrooms. However, they were not as satisfied with the pedagogy sessions. Instead of an education expert making the connection between content and classroom, teachers said they would prefer to use the pedagogical time for lesson exchange and lesson building among participating teachers. The teachers emphasized that the NCTA leaders should recognize their professional experience and expertise. “For a lot of us, we already know the techniques to teach. We needed more time to work amongst ourselves. We are our best resources,” says global studies teacher **ARTHUR LINN**. The seminar leader planned to make these changes in the next NCTA seminar.

“I am better able to integrate deeper information and knowledge into my teaching, and I’m better able to make cross connections.”


— *global studies teacher*

IMPACT OF NCTA SEMINARS

Assistant Superintendent **MARTINE BROUSSARD** visited China on the East Asian Association’s tour organized by **CARL DONNELLY** and said it was “an eye-opener.” Since her trip, she has encouraged the teaching of Asia at Jefferson. Martine thinks it’s important for teachers to take ownership of changes in their teaching. “We are victims of our own educational experiences, and to change student perceptions, it is vital to first open up teachers’ eyes.” She supports change that brings both administrators and teachers together. She comments, “Change won’t happen if it’s only top down. It needs to be bottom up. That’s how units will get taught.”

JANE VINCENT, who teaches Global Studies I and Global Studies II, came to Jefferson with “very little background in global history. Most of what I teach, I have not studied. I have done professional development, and since then I’ve worked very hard to learn more.” She identifies her involvement with professional development (including NCTA) as integral to her learning to teach global studies. “The opportunity to work with [the NCTA seminar and other opportunities] really propelled integrating content about Asia into the curriculum.” Drawing on her NCTA learning, she designed and teaches an elective on the history and literature of war.

ARTHUR LINN teaches Global Studies II. Jefferson requires him to teach certain topics, but he has found the guidelines flexible, allowing him to integrate personal interests into what he teaches. “The great thing is you can do whatever you want. So if I want to spend three weeks on Asia, I can as long as I cover other things. Having the state exam is somewhat restricting, but you still have the flexibility at the same time to cover other things.” He started a “Japan Now” strand in his Global II class. He also introduced students to some Chinese language phrases, showing them ancient symbols and having them decipher the meanings.



“NCTA has enriched our teaching and what we can bring to the table. It has deepened my interest in Asia and created a new door.” — *global studies teacher*

At her previous school, **MARIA MONTAL** found it hard to put her NCTA experience to work in her curriculum. She says, “I didn’t really have a chance to use a lot of the material because of the way the curriculum was set up in the other school.” But at Jefferson, where she teaches global studies and U.S. history, she finds it easier to use her NCTA resources. In fact, she commented that she almost has too much material now: “I’m teaching global studies for the first time and I’m spending a lot of time learning content.”

A first-year teacher who also teaches global studies has discussed lesson plans with Arthur and Jane, and she has tried some of their Asia lessons in her global studies classes. She is interested in the NCTA seminar but feels constrained by lack of time.



Key Points

- ❖ Strong culture of success built into fabric of school
- ❖ Departments structurally isolated, contributing to few collaborative or interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum
- ❖ Pursuit of further professional development in Asian studies by NCTA participants
- ❖ Seminar with prestigious scholars offered at the school
- ❖ Support for Asian studies from administrator who will soon retire

NEXT STEPS

Assistant Superintendent **MARTINE BROUSSARD** became convinced of the importance of Asian studies on the tour to China sponsored by the East Asian Association and has encouraged greater availability of professional development opportunities for teachers. In her view, a pattern of staff development takes place through developing awareness, implementation by a core group of teachers, and spreading the knowledge among staff. She says that NCTA teachers Jane, Arthur, and Maria “need more champions.”

Seminar leader **CARL DONNELLY** has raised the level of awareness of Asia within the school by bringing in the NCTA seminars. All of the NCTA teachers have implemented more content about Asia in their classes. In practice, though, teachers at Jefferson have little time for the informal exchange and dissemination of information. Teachers have not initiated many team or cross-subject projects in the past, nor are there plans for these in the future. When the principal offered to schedule common planning for English and social studies teachers to collaborate, no one expressed interest in taking advantage of her offer.

NCTA participant **ARTHUR LINN** does not see the school adapting to changing demographics such as the town’s growing Asian population. “In general, the school is a white school, but it’s important for kids to be exposed to other cultures. We see ethnocentrism here.” He cites lack of time and energy as powerful inhibitors to making a schoolwide effort to integrate Asian studies into the school.

Teaching about Asia remains weakly integrated amongst other teachers of social studies. Although the newly developed Advanced Placement World History course may be a logical way for a school such as Jefferson to mainstream Asian studies, the department seems to be holding off until the course has been tested further.

Carl has encouraged teachers to seek out professional development opportunities beyond the NCTA seminar. **JANE VINCENT**, who teaches Global Studies I and II, participated in an East Asian Association workshop after the NCTA seminar, and this experience helped her put

together an elective on the history and literature of war. In addition, both Jane and Arthur, who teach Global Studies II, intend to apply to attend the NCTA study tour to China and are interested in taking more NCTA courses.

Carl has highlighted the importance of bringing excellent content on Asia to teachers and getting educational leaders to see the importance of Asia in the curriculum. How will the retirement of Martine affect Asian studies? She says, “I can’t imagine the next person wouldn’t want to run with this project. You look for ideas and places you can go to make your mark — and this is perfect.”



For more information about other seminars and participants, see 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 on 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 and 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 — 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 — 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 Jefferson. 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 Four – High School Series Jefferson High School: On-Site Seminar Enriches Asian Content in High-Performing School

About the Case Studies Series

This case study is one in a series of sixteen. The full set of case studies is listed below. You can access them at 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 on the NCTA evaluation, see www.insites.org/ncta.

For information on the NCTA program and the five national coordinating sites, see www.nctasia.org.