



Case Study Seven
High School Series

MONTVIEW HIGH SCHOOL
TEACHERS INCLUDE ASIA
IN REVISED ENGLISH AND
SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM



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.

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.

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. Information is presented by school and organized into three categories: context, seminars, and NCTA teachers.

MONTVIEW HIGH SCHOOL: TEACHERS INCLUDE ASIA IN REVISED ENGLISH AND SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

VIGNETTE

How will the Asia-related curriculum developments in the literature and history departments be sustained after the retirements of key teachers?

HANNAH MOSS, the media specialist at Montview High School, leaves little to chance when it comes to sharing what she has learned about Asia and expanding the visibility of Asian studies in the district. She says, “I keep pitching Asia. You can be a sales person for this. I think that is a great asset.” Hannah was one of eight teachers at Montview to participate in one of the 30-hour seminars offered by the National Consortium for Teaching about Asia (NCTA). In addition to taking the NCTA seminar, Hannah visited China on a study tour and took a Fulbright tour of Japan.

The teachers at Montview pooled the funds that NCTA provided for Asian resources, and Hannah chose most of the materials that would reside in the Asia Resource Center. When her staff compiled a list of those resources, it turned out to be 37 pages long. Receiving the money for resource materials encourages curriculum development, according to Hannah, because teachers feel that “we can’t let [the resources] go to waste.”

After taking the seminar, Hannah teamed with the humanities chair to develop a unit on China and Japan for the freshman English classes. The history department also made changes in its curriculum due to participation in the NCTA seminar. As part of her continuing involvement in the new Asian curricular units, Hannah makes presentations to the humanities classes, which includes showing them the Asian artifacts from her trips to Asia.



Community of Montview

Montview has attracted many new residents in recent years because of its excellent schools, skilled work force, and proximity to major cities. Most of the residents are white. The Asian population is under 5 percent. The superintendent described the community relations with the district as positive: "Parents trust that we are moving the children in the right direction. I sense support for everything that is going on here."

A critical factor in helping make Asia a part of the curriculum at Montview is having people who "are willing to grow and take the time to go to these various seminars," according to Hannah. The work at Montview has been a collegial effort and Hannah prefers to work this way. She says, "I work better when I work with someone.... I have lots of resource ideas but I can't get them down on paper like [the humanities chair] can. So having that team approach is a real bonus."

In the last two years, three teachers who were instrumental in incorporating Asia into the curriculum have retired. Teachers, administrators, and district leaders point to Hannah, who will not retire for another five years, as the one keeping Asian studies strong at Montview High School.

MONTVIEW HIGH SCHOOL

Montview High School, the only high school in the district, serves approximately 1,000 students in grades nine to twelve. Classrooms in the modern building radiate from a central pod, which houses the administrative offices and media center. The Asian collection occupies one section in the main room of the media center.

STATE STANDARDS AND TEACHER RECERTIFICATION

The NCTA seminars appealed to teachers at Montview because they addressed both the professional development requirement and the new content expectations in the standards. The state standards cover both instruction and content. For some time, the state standards have been undergoing development and review. Changes in the state history standards have expanded coverage beyond a Euro-centered focus on Western civilization to an international focus that includes Asia.

Teachers at Montview High School have a fair amount of autonomy in how they address state standards. Teachers have been encouraged to develop courses based on their interests as long as these connect to the standards. Since there are no required books in English classes, teachers have the option to choose Asian literature to address the development of skills specified in the standards.



Montview District

Although the student population is mostly homogeneous and middle class, the district mission statement recognizes the need to prepare students for a global society. To achieve this, the district committed to providing learning and skill-building opportunities for teachers and increased the number of professional development days in their contracts.

The state requires teacher recertification every five years. Teachers say that this requirement keeps them on the lookout for relevant professional development offerings.

NATURE OF NCTA SEMINARS

JANICE MARSHALL, the seminar leader, works at a university center for Global Studies. She uses the state standards to guide her planning for the seminars, noting that the standards make it easier “to run the seminar because it’s very clear what teachers are expected to know depending on what they are teaching.”

Janice’s approach to the seminars is to recruit experts on the various areas specified in the standards. She will “give them a photocopy of the standards and say, ‘this is what the teachers are going to have to lecture to their kids about.’” Because time is limited, she believes it is important to “stick to what’s directly relevant [to teachers] in the classroom.” In addition to the presenters, Janice provides a binder of materials from various sources for teachers to review on their own time. She estimates that 90 percent of the seminar time is spent on content about Asia and 10 percent on discussions of pedagogy.

IMPACT OF THE NCTA SEMINAR

The eight teachers who have taken one of the NCTA seminars have built Asia into the History and English curricula. They have also developed a strong resource section on Asia in the media center.

WORLD HISTORY CURRICULUM

History teacher **LOUIS BRODNER** has revised the world history curriculum about five times during his lengthy tenure at Montview. When the NCTA seminar was offered, it addressed his need to take curriculum-



NCTA Seminars

The seminar leader spends the bulk of the seminar on content about Asia because most of the participating teachers do not have a current background in East Asian history. Every week she makes available books from her resource library that are relevant to the topics to be covered in that session. “At the beginning of each class, I show them curriculum and books and materials. They can check them out for a week.”

related courses for recertification. However, it also gave him the opportunity to revise the world history curriculum in light of changes in the state standards that had expanded coverage beyond a Euro-centered focus on Western civilization to an international focus that includes Asia.

After taking the seminar, Louis took the lead in redesigning the World history curriculum. Now teachers devote 25 teaching days to Asia in the freshman year and 35 in the sophomore year. According to one of the NCTA participants, the changes in the ninth- and tenth-grade curriculum have made it easier to teach U.S. history to eleventh and twelfth graders because students are familiar with the world history context for issues in the United States.

NINTH-GRADE UNIT ON CHINA AND JAPAN

HANNAH MOSS, media specialist, and CATHERINE STYNE, humanities chair and English teacher, designed a three-week unit on China and Japan for all ninth-grade English classes. In this interdisciplinary unit, they linked Asian studies to content standards in English, history, art, and information literacy. The unit contains background information for the English teachers and includes numerous handouts from the NCTA seminar. Students read nonfiction and fiction selections from either China or Japan and must choose their materials from the media center’s Asian collection. Teachers use the project to conduct one of their common assessments, including a five-paragraph essay.

Catherine says that the ninth-grade Asian unit gives students “a taste for [China and Japan],” — a taste that they get again in world history and U.S. history. One of the ninth-grade English teachers appreciates the combination of Asia in both the English and history curriculum and the timeliness of offering it to ninth-graders. This teacher also sees that the China/Japan unit yields some collegial benefits for teachers: “We don’t always have anything that we are teaching in unison. Because this is 16 solid days that, at one point or another, everybody is doing, it just energizes you.”



Students' Perspective on Asia

One NCTA teacher says that her students are “unaware that these societies are thousands of years old” and that the students are interested to learn that the Chinese created gunpowder, had paper long before the Europeans, and that they explored the world in ships five times as big as the European vessels. “Things like that they find interesting. They love the food and the writing.... They ask questions.”

ASIA RESOURCE CENTER

NCTA teachers pooled the funds that NCTA provided for Asian resources. Using these funds, media specialist Hannah selected the materials for the Asia Resource Center. As one NCTA world history teacher says, “The entire collection basically came from [NCTA] mini-grant money that we had. A lot of that has supported what we have done. It is a resource for us and, of course, the English teachers use it when they do the China and Japan project.”

By highlighting the Asian resources in one section of the media center, Hannah has drawn attention to the materials — and students come back to it. Hannah notes that some students who are exposed to a section of a fiction book in their ninth-grade English project eventually check it out so they can read the entire book.

Through her own classroom presentations, Hannah brings her knowledge and resources directly to students and keeps the administration well informed of her activities. The principal notes that Hannah “will come down from time to time and keep me in the loop. She will explain to me where she is going and give me a schedule of the classes, and then, if I have an opportunity, I will drop by and visit. Her students are always very focused on the instruction.”



Key Points

- ❖ School support for professional development for teachers to meet state requirements for recertification
- ❖ State requirements for content on Asia in the curriculum used by seminar leader to tailor the NCTA curriculum to meet teachers' content needs
- ❖ Participation of eight Montview teachers in NCTA seminars
- ❖ NCTA resource funds pooled to develop the Asia Resource Center at Montview
- ❖ NCTA teachers' awareness of need to set up curriculum and professional development so that other teachers will continue to include Asia in the curriculum after retirements of NCTA teachers and other Asian studies supporters

NEXT STEPS

Those who have worked on bringing Asian studies into the curriculum, including both world history teacher **LOUIS BRODNER** and humanities chair **CATHERINE STYNE**, see their curriculum development work as a way to pass the Asian focus to the new teachers. According to one NCTA teacher, the teachers decided that “if we could get a curriculum developed using the information we had learned about Asia, then we would just pass it along to these new teachers. It was an opportunity to get [new teachers] on board.”

The superintendent of the district says that the NCTA training “brought people together for a specific purpose, but the benefits of that collaboration linger and take on a life of their own and continue to improve the quality of lives here. When [teachers] are in that circumstance, it is better for kids.”

The ninth-grade unit on Asia is a required unit in the English department, but even if this unit was no longer required, Catherine expects that some English teachers would continue it. Two other English teachers concurred. One says that she “personally would continue to do it as long as I could because I feel that the whole freshman class doing this is important.” Another comments that Catherine “is not the only one who is enthused about it.... It is so interesting and it meets so many other requirements.” Catherine would like to conduct a common assessment for sophomores around the assimilation of Asian and other immigrants in the United States.

However, she is concerned that the content on Asia would not remain if the state “reneges” on the history standards, saying that some teachers would go back to a Euro-centered curriculum because “there are few of us who are totally committed and convinced” of the value of Asian studies. She finds new teachers so overwhelmed in their first year that they don’t consider professional development such as the NCTA seminar. She says that it is veteran teachers who are the “self-starters” and who “always go to professional development workshops and want to know the latest things. They can really see the value of it.”

World history teacher **SARAH BARR** is one of the new teachers who others look to for leadership. Now in her fourth year of teaching at Montview, Sarah took the NCTA seminar in her first year of teaching because she felt a need to understand the Asian content that Louis and others had incorporated into the world history curriculum. Her continuing interest in Asia is evidenced by her plans to take a two-week seminar on China this summer. Hannah will also be taking that seminar.

Hannah says that an important component of their past success was the number of people from Montview who took the NCTA seminar and the collegiality that developed. “Now we have enough people on board and it has been in place long enough so that even the people who haven’t taken it know that it is something we do. I will keep after those people who have not taken it.”



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 Asian studies 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 Asian studies.

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 about 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 ***Keys to Success*** and this discussion of Montview. To what extent do you think there is a sustained presence for Asian studies 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 Asian studies in your school and its curriculum?

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Sally Bond (assistant team leader)
Carol Bosserman
Sally Boyd
Kelly Chamberlain
Jill Conrad
Zaretta Hammond
Dawn Hanson Smart
Pat Jessup
Karl Johnson
Vonda Kiplinger
Carolyn Kissane
Carol Lingenfelter
Carolyn Lupe
Beverly Parsons (team leader)
Rosemary Reinhart
Kathy Wyckoff

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Case Study Seven — High School Series Montview High School: Teachers Include Asia in Revised English and Social Studies Curriculum

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.

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.

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

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