China and the 21st Century

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PURPOSE
To review the most important facts about China and to gain an understanding of the importance of studying China on the brink of the 21st century.

THEME STATEMENT
Humans create spatial views and geographic perspectives of the world to make informed and critical decisions about relationships. Throughout time human beings have sought their historic roots while creating, learning, and changing their cultures. Institutions control and influence individuals and culture through power, leaders, and government. Decisions revolving around exchange and economic policies, production, technology, and consumption are global in scope. Realities of local and global interdependence require understanding of diverse global connections for possible solutions to global issues.

SUGGESTED TIME:
Teacher's discretion (Ideal to present as a unit, to study one or two themes at a time, and to integrate all five themes in the end by having students write a final essay).

KEY VOCABULARY & CONCEPTS
Compass Rose, relative and absolute location, cardinal and intermediate directions. Actual growth, almanac, animal depopulation, artifacts, autonomous regions, biotic community, birthrate, climates, communism, country, culture, China proper, China outer, China's sorrow, civilization, cultural diffusions, Confucianism, database, death rate, delta, dialect diseases, desertification, deforestation, direction: cardinal/intermediate, diversity, doubling time, dynasty, ecoscape, ecology, forestation, emperor, environment, ethnicity, ethnic group, ethnic identity, feuding, globe, global issue, grid, growth rate, hemisphere, hydrol- ogy, immigration, infrastructure, infant mortality rate, international dateline, literacy rate, location: absolute/relative, loess, meso thermal, micro-climate, migration, monosyllable, monsoon, municipalities, nation, nationhood, nationalism, nation states, nomads, over-population, ozone depletion, per capita gross domestic product, perceptual region, peninsula, philosophy, phonetics, physical features, physiography, places, plateau, pollution, population density, population policy, prime (?) city, prime meridians, principle meridians, principle parallels, projected population, region, relationship, rural population, saltwater wedge, sediment, starvation, steppe, tectonic plates, totalitarianism, typhoon, urban population, volcano, world view.
MATERIALS NEEDED
For the whole class: globe; floor map of world or small outline maps of East Asia, China, USA, and world; map of China; yarn; tape; compass (optional); place cards; direction folders; data handouts on population, geographic, and production distribution. For small groups: atlases, inflatable globe, yarn, scissors, tape, paper, and pens. For in-depth study: overhead transparency machine, four overhead transparencies of East Asia, marking pen for transparencies.

INITIATION (Inquiry, Preview, Involvement)
1. Suggest that the classroom is a world map where in we must locate the country, state and city we live in before embarking on a trip to China. Discuss confusion on direction and distance from having only relative location.
2. Lay out a large floor map. Using known reference points, a local map and compass, determine the position using cardinal directions.
3. Form a human Compass Rose by orienting direction folders. On the floor map position colored yarn and vocabulary labels to review major location references. Ask students to illustrate and describe destinations in precise terms like relative and absolute, cardinal and intermediate. Indicate need for precision and knowledge.

DEVELOPMENT/DATA COLLECTION AND ORGANIZATION:
1. Form small groups for traveling to different destinations. Using inflatable globes and yarn ask each group to measure the distance to be traveled by marking the yarn onto the globe. Use known reference points.
2. Ask the group to explore and research other options for traveling the same distance. Use data base sheets to record data from atlases, handouts, vocabulary sheets, etc. for terminology to assist in making records. Keep the assigned tasks within groups. Then compare and contrast all groups’ findings.
3. Repeat #1 and #2 for determining population density, resource distribution, geographical layout, arable land availability, etc. by handing out data sheets. Lie overhead map of China and overlay map of other world countries or parts of continents (e.g., compare size of USA and Indiana with China. Compare Europe with China, Africa with China, etc. Do the same with population density, production of country, and arable land available. What does the picture show?

EXTENSION:
An alternative or addition to Development #3 can be accomplished by using our floor world map (c.f. Initiation #2) and lay out on the paper the worlds’ continents. Using population density and arable land availability data sheets determine the percentage of water and land. Use the string to border the percentages. Ask the students to stand in their piece of the world pie and find out how they are encroaching themselves upon their land in their country/continent. You may separate groups into different continents by students drawing an identifying marker which % has been predetermined by the teacher. The same concept can be accomplished, but in a shorter amount of time by using an apple representing the world and cutting away the percentage of water, mountains, deserts, etc. on the globe until...what is left?
ASSESSMENT:
1. Using data sheets, maps, etc. students will research patterns of indicators and make statements to be further researched throughout the term about China in particular as well as China and the world.
2. Students compare and share conclusions using proper terminology and key questions for guidelines.
3. Have students assess their own work/performance individually as well as their group work according to set criteria and rubrics.

KEY QUESTIONS:
1. What patterns do you notice about directions, features of people, environment, geophysical, population, resources and technological distributions, climates, etc.?
2. Describe the differences and similarities of the above mentioned characteristics in China, USA, Latin America, Europe, Africa and Australia?
3. What causes these changes?
4. How does this compare to USA, Indiana, Bloomington or your hometown? (Can you use Bloomington instead of Indianapolis, Goshen, or Logensport? Why or why not?)
5. Why do you think we should or should not study China?
6. How different and similar is China compared to USA?

ALTERNATIVES:
Use above guidelines to make a term unit by using each week a different theme. Make a timeline on a wall in the classroom and have students mark down events of importance throughout the semester. Expose students to reading news about China and global issues to be shared each day before class starts. Students will discover and receive additional clues as to ways of governing (dynasties vs. kings vs. presidents), how institutions work, how their philosophies differ, macro- vs. micro-environments, what ethnicity is, how nation-states are formed, etc. And finally, we can now answer the question: Why is it important to study China now that we are at the brink of the 21st century.

REFERENCES:

For students: library, current world atlases, almanacs, etc.