Showcase China:

二 Èr - Two: Exploring China today

Curriculum connections	Focus concepts	Effective pedagogy
• Social sciences • English • Languages – Chinese	• Sustainability • Culture and heritage	• Enhancing the relevance of new learning.

Learning intentions

Students will:
• work in jig-saw groups to research one aspect of China today;
• present a summary of their findings to the class;
• collaborate in designing a concept web to link ideas and concepts.

Set up jig-saw groups to explore an aspect of China today.

[2-4 periods in classroom – have materials ready, i.e. print out info from websites listed and allow access to Internet for students to research.]

Some key websites:

• **CHINA TODAY**
http://www.chinaculture.org/gb/en_aboutchina/node_18.htm

• **CHINA IN BRIEF**
http://www.chinaculture.org/gb/en_aboutchina/2003-12/19/content_44611.htm

Each group needs to construct a **rich question** to investigate within a chosen area of research. This could be linked to the initial photo activity questions and needs to meet the overall aim of a focus on China Today. Adapt these suggested areas to meet the interest of your students.

Area of Research	Websites for information	Summary and presentation – oral or visual
Religion and beliefs	http://www.chinaculture.org/gb/en_aboutchina/node_92.htm	
Geographic landforms and resources	http://www.chinaculture.org/gb/en_aboutchina/node_36.htm	
Historical events	http://www.chinaculture.org/gb/en_aboutchina/node_57.htm	
Population	http://www.chinaculture.org/gb/en_aboutchina/node_91.htm	
Enterprise today	Sci-tech http://www.chinaculture.org/gb/en_aboutchina/node_124.htm	
National symbols	http://www.chinaculture.org/gb/en_aboutchina/node_53.htm	

The aim is for each group to contribute to a wall display on **China today** by the collective display of their static images. (See ideas later in this unit on contributing to an installation with visual arts and language.) Groups will also present a summary of their findings to their class so others can learn from their research.

Research Process Depending on the focus of your inquiry and the intended outcomes, design a student-based inquiry using one of the two following options. Option A has an English language focus. Option B is a social inquiry approach, as used in the social sciences.

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Option A:
Students frame question, gather information (note-taking/summarising information), analyse, and re-write in their own words (choosing the most important points, using appropriate language for audience [other students], considering layout and design and use of font and colour to convey meaning).

Evaluation of learning: Students then summarise their learning to present to class; applying critical thinking about their process of research (e.g. which text was the most useful; how could they improve their research).

Option B:
Students use the template provided in Appendix 10 and in their groups choose a focus for their research and social inquiry. For example, the choice of population issues in China will lead to consideration of the beliefs of the government, parents and interest groups. The group may develop a rich question such as "Why did China introduce a one-child policy?

Consider the social action people make in response to this focus and the values that inform their actions and decisions. Use the prompt question in each section of the social inquiry template to guide the research process.

Present to class. The box below provides some ideas about what to look for as the groups do this.

What to look for:

- Links between layout, design and language in the static image – how well these have been used to convey meaning.
- The selection and development of purposeful ideas and relevant meaning information (i.e. that work toward the aim)
- The use of increasingly comprehensive ideas in their research and effective communication of these for their audience.
- The development of key ideas.
- The exploration of values and social actions in reference to the focus of the inquiry.
- The development of conceptual understandings about culture and heritage.

Key questions:

- What are the really important ideas we have come up with?
- What are the connections between the findings? E.g. the link between population and historical events?
- How have historical events influenced all the other categories?

Using the findings of the group mini inquiry, develop together (either in smaller groups or as a class) a concept web. To prompt student thinking, consider using at the centre of the web concepts such as heritage, China now, sustainability .

Webs – spider, attribute or concept

Source: Cubitt, Irvine, Dow (1999)
A spider web map shows all the main ideas (concepts and conceptual understandings) emerging from a central spot (the centre of the web). Subheadings go along the 'spider web branches' and can show linking concepts. These links could also be colour-coded. For example, a spider web diagram on focus concepts for a unit on a special place might look like this. The words in italics express how the concepts connect.