

Ed Swope
Granville High School
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Lesson on China

- I. **Rationale-** One of the struggles facing modern China today is the struggle that it faces between modernization and traditional Confucian values. This struggle between the past and the present was brought to life brilliantly in the film we watched in class on the Three Gorges Dam. This documentary film sharply sets China's desire to modernize its country against age-old living patterns and values. I hope to explore these ideas and examine the idea of progress and the price that countries are willing to pay in order to achieve it. Certainly, students will have some background into discussing this topic as we explored the price the United States paid to industrialize at the end of the nineteenth century. By using the documentary film on the Three Gorges Dam, I am hopeful that students will gain some insights into the transformation that is occurring in China, but also aware that these changes do not come without problems. This lesson will take place over three days in a freshman American history class.

- II. **Goals and Objectives*-**
 - A. Students will become aware of the tremendous progress that is occurring in China today.
 - B. Students will begin to understand that a country's progress is accompanied by many problems associated with growth.
 - C. Students will examine traditional Chinese values as set against a more modern China.
 - D. Students will analyze the characters in the documentary and be able to discuss them in relationship to traditional thought and more modern ideas.

- III. **Ohio Academic Content Standards for Social Studies**
 - A. **People in Societies- Grades 9-10**
 1. **Benchmark A- Analyze the influence of different cultural perspectives on the actions of groups.**
 - a. **Analyze examples of how people in different cultures view events from different perspectives. (p.259)**
 - B. **Geography- Grades 9-10**
 1. **Analyze geographic changes brought about by human activity using appropriate maps and other geographic data.**
 - a. **Human Environmental Interaction- Explain the causes and consequences of urbanization including economic development, population growth and environmental change.**

- IV. Essential Questions-** Some questions are of a universal nature and apply throughout the teaching of history. In this lesson several universal questions are applicable:
- A.** Should basic human rights be sacrificed in the name of industrial and technological progress?
 - B.** Does the “end justify the means” when a country begins the process of modernization?
 - C.** Should traditional values give way to more modern views of the world, or is it possible to maintain a balance between the old and the new?
 - D.** How should progress be measured when viewing it through the lens of a country?
- V. Strategy-** Days one and two of this lesson will be set aside for the viewing of a documentary film on the building of the “Three Gorges Dam” in China, a major project designed to bring hydroelectric power to a large region of China. Students will be given a list of response questions to the film that they will be required to reflect upon as they view the film. Also, students will be given a handout of traditional Confucian beliefs and will be asked to compare these beliefs to what is happening in the film. Are there contradictions? Which characters in the film represent a more traditional, Confucian China? Which characters represent a more modern China. What happens when these two extremes intersect in the movie? These are some of the questions I want students to answer as they reflect upon the movie. On the third day of this lesson, we will have a class discussion over the movie questions and the essential questions listed above. Hopefully, this discussion will enlighten students as to what is currently going on in China. I will bring out other relevant information such as The Great Leap Forward, and Mao’s Cultural Revolution and the impact of these two movements upon China’s march to modernity.
- VI. Materials-** Student copies of Confucian beliefs, the documentary film on Three Gorges Dam
- VII. Evaluation-** Students will be evaluated on the questions they reflected upon and wrote out after watching the documentary on Three Gorges Dam. They also will be given a brief paper assignment comparing and contrasting the growth of China today with the industrial growth of the United States at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. What are the similarities and differences?
- VIII. Follow-Up Lesson-** This series of lessons will occur after we have studied the Industrial period in the United States. I would like to follow up this lesson in the future with a lesson in which students look at the Progressive Era in the United States, which was a reaction to the abuses of the Industrial period, and predict whether China will possibly go through a more Progressive Era in a similar fashion.