Asian Education Media Service (AEMS) presents

Teaching Asia Using Film and Technology
Why use film as a teaching aid?

• When used in conjunction with texts and lectures, it is an effective teaching tool.
• Images can drive home a message that words cannot.
• Documentary films often tell engaging stories, generally from a “local” perspective, that students will remember.
• Films are often interdisciplinary and can be used to serve very specific units or courses.
Images can drive home a message that words cannot

Example: consider the December 2004 tsunami. Which is more effective?

Text only:

“The provincial Sumatran capital was desolated by the tsunami.”
Or this?

Photo: © SUPRI/Reuters/Corbis
Social studies and the nature of learning

Social studies should be taught using methods that are consistent with:

- Constructivist Learning – Intellectual process where the learners fit new ideas together with ideas that they already know

- Characteristics of “powerful social studies”

What are “powerful social studies?”

According to NCSS’ *National Standards for Social Studies Teachers*, social studies teaching and learning are powerful when:

- They are meaningful
- They are integrative
- They are values-based
- They are challenging
- The learning is active

Ibid, 11 - 12.
Integrative teaching

Students retain:

• 10% of what they read
• 20% of what they hear
• 30% of what they see
• 50% of what they see and hear [media/film]
• 70% of what they say
• 90% of what they say and do

Sample topics that can be taught through film

- Legal system in China - “The Story of Qiu Ju”
- Urban development in Southeast Asia - “Golf War”
- Jane Austen - “Bride and Prejudice,” “I Have Found It”
- Water as a global commodity - “Thirst”
- Cross-cultural communication/theater production - “A Dream in Hanoi”
Common types of films

• Feature films
  – Pros: High quality footage, accessible, interesting
  – Cons: Accuracy?, Stereotypes?

• Documentary films
  – Pros: Contextualized, specific topics
  – Cons: Pricey, less accessible, dry?

• News programs
  – Pros: Timely, interesting, shorter chunks of info
  – Cons: Limited topics (newsworthy), US-bias?
Some things to remember before teaching with film

• Review concepts of media literacy with your students.
  For more information, visit these websites:
    Center for Media Literacy
    PBS Teacher Source
• Films are not “primary” sources - consider how and why the film was made
• The difference between teaching film and teaching through film
Steps to using film in your classroom

1. Search for titles in a film database => www.aems.uiuc.edu
2. Read the summary of each title, and pick 3 to 5 that sound most interesting
3. Borrow the films
4. Watch the films & critically evaluate them
5. Select and purchase desired film(s)
6. Show the film
1. Start with a search of titles in a film database
   => www.aems.uiuc.edu Example: Search for “Hanoi” on AEMS results in 4 hits – all films
2. Read the summary of each title, and pick 3 to 5 that sound most interesting.

### Dream in Hanoi, A

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**Abstract:**

Twenty five years after the end of the Vietnam War, Vietnamese and Americans join forces in a unique collaboration. Two theater companies, one American and one Vietnamese, come together to stage the first performance in Vietnam of Shakespeare's play A Midsummer Night's Dream. This spine-chilling tale follows the actors, directors, producers and technicians from both countries as they struggle to overcome the huge obstacles of language, culture, ideology, and a history of war on their journey to opening night at Hanoi's famous Opera House. The film features Vietnam's renowned theater, the Central Dramatic Company of Vietnam, and actors and staff from the Artists Repertory Theater in Portland, Oregon. Music is performed by artists of Vietnam's National Theater of Music and Dance and the Civic Theater of Hanoi. A DREAM IN HANOI is the first American documentary about American/Vietnamese relations that does not focus on the Vietnam war or its legacy of human suffering. In English and Vietnamese with English subtitles.
3. Borrow the films. Search WorldCat or ask a librarian to locate item and borrow the films through inter-library loan.
4. Review the films & critically evaluate them

It is important that (a) the film not be shown “blind;” in other words, screen the film before you consider showing it in the classroom, and (b) teachers look to see if there are any reviews available on the film.

• Did you enjoy the film?
• Would your students enjoy the film?
• What type of lens (or point-of-view) was used to tell the story?
• Were any stereotypes used?

5. Select and purchase desired film(s)

- Return to AEMS database and pull up record

- Under the film’s title, it says “Available from: [Distributor’s name].” Click on the name.
5. Select and purchase desired film(s) [cont’d]

- The “Distributor Information” page has the phone number and website for the film’s distributor. Contact them directly to purchase the film(s).

- Be sure to check on performance and viewing rights.
6. Showing the Film

1. PRE-VIEW: Engage students. Discuss key concepts and themes before showing the film.

2. VIEWING: Show entire film or selected segments. Pause the film if there is a scene to discuss. Consider giving students a task to complete while viewing.

3. POST-VIEW: Discuss the film. Have students relate film to their own lives or to the world in general.

FAQ’s

• Where can I get more information about Asian or Asia-related films in general?
• How do I know if a film is culturally sensitive?
• What if I have trouble borrowing the item through inter-library loan?
Closing comments

• Look to film festivals and film associations for new titles
• There are many excellent films and documentaries available. Keep searching until you are satisfied.
• Utilize film reviews – Education About Asia or AEMS’ News & Reviews (available online).
• Talk to others about their successes.
• Questions & Discussion?