**Huang Ho Unit Rationale**

This unit began through the use of backward design. I first identified the OCS and Common Core objectives to be used.

**OACS**

**Standard**: 6th Grade Social Studies

**Strand**: History

**Topic**: Early Civilizations

**Content** **Statement**: 2 – Early civilizations (India, Egypt, China and Mesopotamia) with unique governments, economic systems, social structures, religions, technologies and agricultural practices and products flourished as a result of favorable geographic characteristics. The cultural practices and products of these early civilizations can be used to help understand the Eastern Hemisphere today.

**Standard**: 6th Grade Social Studies

**Strand**: History

**Topic**: Historical Thinking and Skills

**Content** **Statement**: 1 – Events can be arranged in order of occurrence using the conventions of B.C. and A.D. or B.C.E. and C.E.

**Standard**: 6th Grade Social Studies

**Strand**: Geography

**Topic**: Human Systems

**Content** **Statement**: 6 – Variations among physical environments within the Eastern Hemisphere influence human activities. Human activities also alter the physical environment.

**Standard**: 6th Grade Social Studies

**Strand**: Geography

**Topic**: Spatial Thinking and Skills

**Content** **Statement**: 4 – Latitude and longitude can be used to identify absolute location.

**Standard**: 6th Grade Social Studies

**Strand**: Geography

**Topic**: Places and Regions

**Content** **Statement**: 5 – Regions can be determined, classified, and compared using various criteria (e.g. landform, climate, population, cultural, or economic).

**Standard**: 6th Grade Social Studies

**Strand**: Government

**Topic**: Roles of Systems of Governments

**Content** **Statement**: 10 – Governments can be categorized as monarchies, theocracies, dictatorships or democracies, but categories may overlap and labels may not accurately represent how governments function. The extent of citizens’ liberties and responsibilities varies according to limits on governmental authority.

**Standard**: 6th Grade Social Studies

**Strand**: Economics

**Topic**: Scarcity

**Content** **Statement**: 14 – When regions and/or countries specialize, global trade occurs.

**Common Core**

**Standard**: 6-8th Grade English Language Arts (Common Core)

**Strand**: History/Social Studies

**Topic**: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

**Content** **Statement**: 6-8.8 – Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

**Standard**: 6-8th Grade English Language Arts (Common Core)

**Strand**: History/Social Studies

**Topic**: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

**Content** **Statement**: 6-8.7 – Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

**Standard**: 6-8th Grade English Language Arts (Common Core)

**Strand**: History/Social Studies

**Topic**: Craft and Structure

**Content** **Statement**: 6-8.4 – Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

I then considered the essential questions I want students to think about that would guide our unit.

**Essential Questions**

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| How can something so long ago affect us today?  How much do things change over time or do they stay the same?  How does geography influence a civilization?  How does family play a role in ancient Chinese culture?  How much do beliefs influence humans’ choices?  How does being alone make a culture unique?  What influence did the opening of the Silk Road have? |

After identifying the OACS and Common Core objectives being used, I then conducted research to gather more information about different aspects of the Huang Ho river civilization. I found the major concepts, themes, and ideas that students should know from this unit

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| **Enduring Understandings** Ancient China’s geographic isolation led to many of its unique cultural aspects.  The Huang Ho river was where much of ancient China originiated.  The opening of the Silk Road impacted the culture of China and the rest of the world.  Family is an important theme throughout many aspects of ancient Chinese culture. |

**Important to Know/Do**Understand what dynasties are and how they relate to government.

Understand what feudalism is and how it affected social structure.

Know the role of men and that impact on government and social structure.

Know the role of family and its impact on government, social structure, and religion.

Understand major technologies, including bronze, their writing system, advances in astronomy, etc.

Know how trading and eventually money played roles internally and between China and other places and how the rarity of silk affected trade.

Understand the role of ancestors in religion and other religious influence, including Confucianism and Buddhism.

Know where China is located on the globe and the different regions within it.

Understand and explain how the geography of China affected its culture.

Make connections from ancient China to China today.

Conduct research to find relevant factual information.

Create representations of important themes in ancient China and connect them to the geography.

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| **Worth Being Familiar With** Know some of the major dynasties’ names.  Know some major crops.  Know some exports and traded items.  Know about flooding of the Huang Ho river and its effects on people in ancient China. |

Once I identified major themes, concepts, and vocabulary within the categories of government, economics, social structure, religion, agriculture, technology, and geography, I was able to create a list of concepts that students should know and understand after the unit. Coupled with research and written expression, this began to tie into the Common Core standards, as well. For assessments, I created a rubric of ideas that students should know, as well as how to connect ideas to geography concepts. The rubric was going to be divided into two separate assessments: a group project and a reflection, with several more informal mini assessments along the way.

**Assessments**

Group project with rubric - formal

Personal reflection with rubric - formal

Mini-assessments daily - informal

The basic design of the unit is that students will be working together to conduct research and represent ideas of ancient China in a project. Collaboration is a best practice, as it allows students to learn how to work together, gives them a place to think together, and give the teacher a way to facilitate instruction. Students will be asked to pretend to be a time-travel travel agency and that they need to gather more research to show people the highlights of their trips. The assessment will be to create a mural, advertisement, commercial, or other representation to show people what they think are the most important things that will be on their trips, trying to connect it to the unique geography of China. This represents an authentic assessment where students are researching and then evaluating what they think is most important. This will also be challenging, allowing students to research deeper into areas of interest and by answering the opened ended question of what are most important, asking students to evaluate, a higher level thinking skill. Additionally, students will be asked to reflect on how ancient China can be seen today in current China. This asks them to draw connections, reflect, and helps them in the construction of their knowledge.

Because this is probably a new topic for many students it was important to scaffold their learning experience. Firstly, they would need help in the understanding and comprehension levels of Bloom’s taxonomy, so I felt it was important to do mini-lessons each day identifying key concepts within the main categories of economics, government, etc. The mini-lessons will be experiential and let kids get some insight into the concepts they might further research about China. During the unit, students will keep a learning log, in which they will define and create examples or images for different concepts about ancient China, collect research, and reference. This will help them construct knowledge, which is a best practice.

From these mini-lessons, students would gain the information that they need to help them extend their thinking to higher levels. After each mini-lesson I plan to do an informal mini-assessment to see if students have the main ideas from each mini-lesson. During each mini-lesson, students will take notes and process them to show understanding, which I will informally monitor and keep track of who shows understanding and who does not. For those students who grasp the concepts, they will continue to research, brainstorm, and work on their group projects. For those students who struggle with the daily mini-lesson, they will get some guided research assistance from the teacher to support their understanding of the concepts.

The five geography themes will be embedded in the mini-lessons and during the projects. Initially, students will be introduced to modern China to get them thinking about where China is, what it is like today, and just to frame the project. Following that will be the introduction of the project with a study in maps, using exact location, place, and region. When we look at economics and the Silk Road, the concept of the movement of people and ideas will be included. In studying agriculture, the interaction of people and land will be included. Additionally, though they may not be a focus, students will be drawing on regions and place frequently as they try to tie ideas of economics, etc. to geography.