

# **CHINA STUDIES IN ENGLISH**

## **SYLLABUS**

### **Pre-University**

### **H2**

Implementation starting with  
2023 Pre-University One Cohort



Ministry of Education  
SINGAPORE

© 2023 Curriculum Planning and Development Division.

This publication is not for sale. Permission is granted to reproduce this publication in its entirety for personal or non-commercial educational use only. All other rights reserved.

# CONTENTS

---

	<b>Page</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	
• The China Studies in English Curriculum	2
• H2 China Studies in English Syllabus Aims	4
• Nurturing the Desired Outcomes of Education through China Studies in English	4
• Developing 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Competencies through China Studies in English	5
 <b>2. CONTENT</b>	
• Key Features of the H2 China Studies in English Syllabus	6
• H2 China Studies in English Syllabus Content	8
 <b>3. PEDAGOGY</b>	
• Issues-based Learning	16
• Type of Information Skills	17
 <b>4. ASSESSMENT</b>	
• Learner-centred and Balanced Assessment	19

# **1. INTRODUCTION**

---

## **1.1. The China Studies in English Curriculum**

### **1.1.1. Curricular Aims**

The CSE curriculum focuses on studying developments in contemporary China from circa 2000 to the present day through an examination of its economy, politics, society and international relations. The curriculum aims to equip students with relevant knowledge on contemporary developments in China, develop their critical thinking and information literacy to understand these developments, and instil in them an awareness of the regional and global implications of China's rise. It also seeks to develop China-conversant citizens who can appreciate Singapore's interests and perspectives in its engagement with China, contribute in their own capacity to further Singapore-China interactions and harness the dynamic opportunities that China can offer. To this end, the curriculum seeks to achieve the following student outcomes:

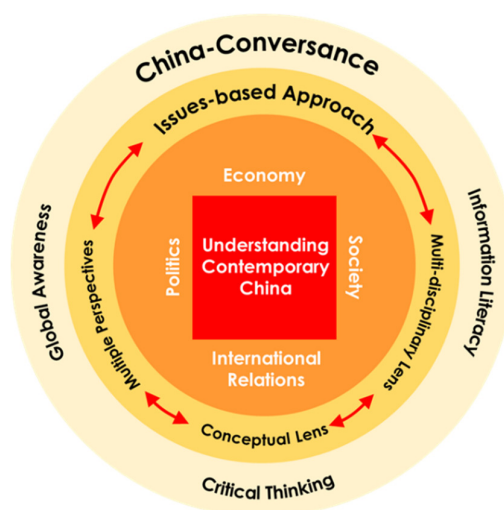
- a. A China-conversant individual who is knowledgeable about contemporary developments in China and sensitive to China's context
- b. A critical thinker who exercises sound reasoning through considering different perspectives and using evidence to understand complex issues in contemporary China
- c. A globally aware individual who appreciates regional and global issues and trends through the study of China's role as a regional and global actor
- d. An information-literate individual who accesses, analyses, evaluates and uses different types of information about contemporary China critically and effectively

The 2023 curriculum emphasises the development of information literacy to equip students with the capacity to make sense of ongoing developments in China. In CSE, students are exposed to different types of information with contending perspectives and differing degrees of usefulness. Information management capacities will enable students to be more sensitive to how information about contemporary China is presented, strengthening their development of China-conversance, critical thinking and global awareness.

### **1.1.2. Curriculum Shape**

Besides reflecting information literacy as a new curricular aim, the CSE curriculum shape has been revised to better explicate the interrelationships between the curricular content, pedagogy and aims.

**Figure 1.1a: H2 CSE Curriculum Shape**



The 2023 curriculum shape (see **Figure 1.1a**) consists of three rings:

- **Content Dimensions and Key Issues (Inner Ring)**

The CSE curriculum aims to develop students' understanding of contemporary China across the content dimensions of China's economy, politics, society and international relations. These four dimensions provide the essential knowledge domains to develop a multi-disciplinary understanding of contemporary China.

The H2 CSE syllabus covers the four dimensions through the study of four Key Issues – China's economic development and its sustainability, governing China and its challenges, Chinese society and its transformation, and China's foreign policy and its implications. Each issue is foregrounded by one dimension. In the course of studying these Key Issues, students will have opportunities to connect knowledge from different dimensions to understand the complexity of issues in contemporary China.

- **Issues-based Approach (Middle Ring)**

The Issues-based Approach is the core pedagogical framework for CSE. Studying contemporary China through issues encourages the use of constructivist pedagogies such as inquiry-based learning to guide students in identifying inquiry questions, exploring different perspectives, gathering evidence and reaching well-considered conclusions. The Issues-based Approach engages students in adopting multi-disciplinary and conceptual lenses to study the Key Issues, exercising critical thinking skills to evaluate and synthesise multiple perspectives, and using information literacy to interpret and evaluate different sources of information.

- **21st Century Competencies and Student Outcomes (Outer Ring)**

The CSE curriculum is aligned with MOE's Framework for 21CC and Student Outcomes. Students have opportunities to hone their critical thinking by considering different

perspectives and evaluating evidence to understand complex issues in contemporary China. The study of China's domestic developments and its international relations in CSE helps students appreciate the interconnections between China, Asia and the wider world from a Singapore perspective, and supports the development of students' global and cross-cultural literacy skills. In the course of studying contemporary China, the exposure to different sources of information allows students to develop information literacy in accessing, analysing, evaluating and using different types of information critically and effectively.

## **1.2. H2 China Studies in English Syllabus Aims**

To support the attainment of the curricular aims, the revised H2 CSE syllabus aims to develop students' understanding of contemporary China by encouraging them to:

- a. Examine key issues related to contemporary China's economic, political and social developments, and its international relations;
- b. Develop skills in the selection, application, analysis and evaluation of information related to contemporary China;
- c. Develop skills in evaluating and synthesising multiple perspectives to arrive at an informed judgement of issues related to contemporary China and to make well-considered recommendations to address these issues; and
- d. Communicate substantiated arguments on key issues about contemporary China in a clear and well-structured manner.

## **1.3. Nurturing the Desired Outcomes of Education through China Studies in English**

CSE seeks to nurture in students the attributes outlined in the Desired Outcomes of Education (DOE) that educators aspire for every Singaporean to possess by the time they complete their formal education. These outcomes establish a common purpose for educators, drive our policies and programmes, and allow us to consider how well our education system is doing. A child schooled in the Singapore education system embodies the DOE. They should possess:

- A good sense of self-awareness;
- A sound moral compass; and
- The disposition, skills, and knowledge to take on the opportunities and challenges of the future.

They should also be:

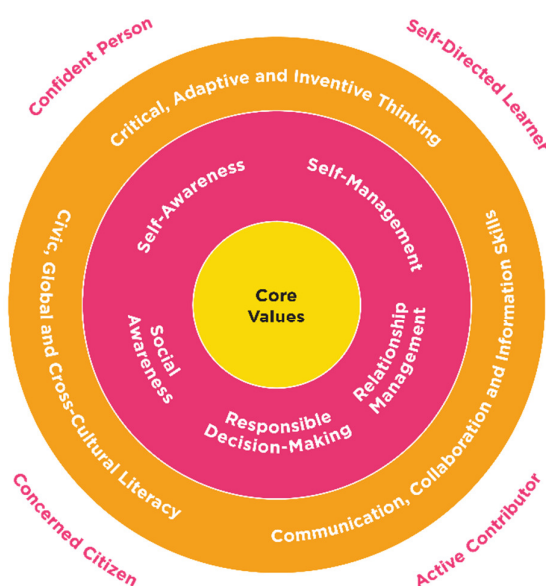
- **Confident persons** who have a zest for life, have a strong sense of right and wrong, are adaptable and resilient, know themselves, are discerning in judgement, think independently and critically, and communicate effectively.
- **Self-directed learners** who take responsibility for their own learning, are curious, reflective, and persevering in the lifelong pursuit of learning, driven by their passion and purpose.

- **Active contributors** who are empathetic and open-minded to collaborate effectively in teams, exercise initiative, have courage to take risks responsibly, are innovative, and strive for excellence.
- **Concerned citizens** who are rooted to Singapore, have a strong civic consciousness, are responsible to their family, community and nation, and take active roles in improving the lives of others.

CSE nurtures the DOE in students by engaging them in an examination of the domestic and external forces that shape contemporary China from a Singapore perspective through issues-based learning experiences.

#### 1.4. Developing 21<sup>st</sup> Century Competencies through China Studies in English

Figure 1.4a: Framework for 21CC and Student Outcomes (as of 2023)<sup>1</sup>



©2023 Ministry of Education, Singapore

The Framework for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Competencies and Student Outcomes (“21CC Framework”) shows how Core Values, Social-Emotional Competencies, and Emerging 21<sup>st</sup> Century Competencies support the realisation of MOE’s DOEs (see **Figure 1.4a**). 21CC underpins the holistic education that schools provide to better prepare students for the future.

##### Core Values

As values form the core of one’s character, they are positioned at the centre of the framework. Values are enduring beliefs, ideals, principles or standards that guide our opinions, decisions

<sup>1</sup> For further information on the Framework for 21CC and Student Outcomes, please access the MOE 21CC website through the link <https://intranet.moe.gov.sg/21CCO/Pages/21st-Century-Competencies.aspx>

and behaviour. The core values of **respect, responsibility, resilience, integrity, care** and **harmony** underpin the acquisition of knowledge and skills in CSE.

### **Social-Emotional Competencies**

Social-Emotional Competencies in the inner ring around the Core Values enable students to enact their values purposefully and demonstrate good character in all contexts of life. They comprise the knowledge, skills and dispositions/attitudes necessary for students to examine and understand their own thoughts and emotions, develop a sense of responsibility and concern for others, and act for the good of self, others, and the society. The Social-Emotional Competencies of **self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship management** and **responsible decision-making** are taught, learnt and applied through learning experiences in the CSE classroom.

### **Emerging 21CC (E21CC)**

The outer ring of E21CC enable students to thrive in and beyond school while living, learning and working in rapidly changing, highly digitalised and interconnected environments.<sup>2</sup> They comprise knowledge, skills and dispositions that enable a person to meet complex demands in specific contexts and are grouped into three domains:

- a. Civic, Global and Cross-Cultural Literacy
- b. Critical, Adaptive and Inventive Thinking
- c. Communication, Collaboration and Information Skills

---

<sup>2</sup> The Emerging 21CC are termed “Emerging” because of their increasing importance, given changes to the life contexts, such as study, work and play, that students will be situated in.

## 2. CONTENT

---

### 2.1. Key Features of the H2 China Studies in English Syllabus

#### 2.1.1. Understanding Contemporary China through Key Issues

The syllabus is focused on studying developments in contemporary China from circa 2000 to the present day through an examination of four Key Issues across the content dimensions of China's economy, politics, society and international relations. Studying the four Key Issues will equip students with the necessary knowledge and understanding to make sense of contemporary developments in China today.

**Table 2.1a** shows the Key Issues and their inquiry questions:

**Table 2.1a: Key Issues and Inquiry Questions**

Key Issues	Inquiry Questions
Key Issue 1: China's Economic Development and Its Sustainability	How sustainable is China's economic development?
Key Issue 2: Governing China and Its Challenges	How stable is China's political system?
Key Issue 3: Chinese Society and Its Transformation	How has social change impacted China?
Key Issue 4: China's Foreign Policy and Its Implications	How effective is China's foreign policy in securing its national interests?

Discussions of these inquiry questions and their corresponding issues will equip students with a holistic understanding of the economic, political, social and foreign policy challenges faced by China today, and the interconnections between these challenges. Students will also develop a critical understanding of the approaches taken by various stakeholders to tackle these challenges.

#### 2.1.2. Making Connections Across Content Dimensions for Multi-disciplinary Understanding

The content dimensions of China's economy, politics, society and international relations provide the essential knowledge domains to develop a multi-disciplinary understanding of contemporary China. These dimensions are covered through the study of the four Key Issues. Each Key Issue engages students in drawing knowledge from one specific dimension and connecting it with knowledge from other dimensions. Drawing and connecting knowledge from different dimensions allow students to develop a multi-disciplinary understanding of the complex developments and challenges facing China today.

#### 2.1.3. Developing Conceptual Understanding

The revised syllabus will encourage students to develop a conceptual understanding of contemporary China as they navigate the four Key Issues. Key concepts are identified for each



Key Issue in alignment with its content dimension, learning outcomes and content topics. The application of these key concepts provides students with conceptual tools to connect knowledge from different content topics to form a deep understanding of the Key Issues. It also supports them in making sense of the complex challenges facing China today and the rapidly changing developments in the country.

#### **2.1.4. Developing Information Literacy**

A key feature of the revised syllabus is its emphasis on information literacy, which is a set of skills to access, analyse, evaluate and use different types of information in a complex, ever-changing information environment. With increasing diversity in how information is represented and communicated, and the flood of data due to growing digitalisation of all areas of life, acquiring information literacy has become even more critical to make sense of the world.<sup>3</sup> In the course of studying contemporary China, students will encounter a large amount of information from different sources and in different forms – textual and non-textual, digital and printed. The syllabus provides students with opportunities to engage with competing perspectives presented by different sources and with data in different forms. By learning how to interpret, evaluate and apply these different pieces of information critically and effectively, students will develop a balanced and nuanced understanding of contemporary China.

---

<sup>3</sup> OECD. “Concept Note: Core Foundations for 2030”. *OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030: OECD Learning Compass 2030*. OECD, 2019.

## 2.2. H2 China Studies in English Syllabus Content

### 2.2.1. Key Issue 1: China's Economic Development and Its Sustainability

Key Issue 1	China’s Economic Development and Its Sustainability		
Overview		Connecting the Dimensions	
Since implementing market reforms and the open-door policy from 1978, China has become one of the world’s largest economies. China’s economic success has contributed to major improvements in the standard of living of its citizens. However, it has led to many challenges, which threaten the sustainability of its economic development. The traditional drivers of China’s economic growth, i.e. dependence on export-oriented industrialisation and rapid growth of labour, have also waned in importance. To address these challenges, the Chinese government has embarked on a reformulation of China’s developmental trajectory as it seeks to sustain the country’s economic development.		To understand the issues affecting the sustainability of China’s economic development, it is essential to consider China’s domestic political and social challenges and their impact on economic development. Some of these challenges were the result of the unintended consequences of rapid economic development. How these challenges are managed would affect the degree to which China can sustain its economic development. With the Chinese economy closely intertwined with the global economy, China’s foreign policy will continue to play a vital role in securing China’s economic interests and sustaining China’s economic development.	
Learning Outcomes	Content (Dimension: Economy)		
Through the study of this issue, students will be able to discuss the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Features of China’s economic development</li><li>• Challenges to China’s economic sustainability</li><li>• Effectiveness of China’s approaches to economic sustainability</li></ul>	Features of China’s economic development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• China’s transition from centrally planned economy to socialist market economy</li><li>• Drivers of economic growth<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Economic reforms</li><li>– Trade and investment levels</li></ul></li></ul>	Challenges to China’s economic sustainability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Structural issues<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Dependence on export-oriented industries</li><li>– Inefficiency of state-owned enterprises (SOEs)</li><li>– Banking debt</li></ul></li></ul>	Effectiveness of China’s approaches to economic sustainability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Economic restructuring<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Increase in domestic consumption</li><li>– Reform of SOEs</li><li>– Expansion of technological and services sectors</li><li>– Reform of banks</li></ul></li></ul>

Key Concepts			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic development</li> <li>• Economic growth</li> <li>• Economic sustainability</li> <li>• Economic liberalisation</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional and local disparities</li> <li>• Energy and environmental issues               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Dependence on fossil fuels</li> <li>– Environmental degradation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing poorer regions               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Infrastructural and industrial development</li> <li>– Urbanisation</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Promoting green development               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Development of renewable energy</li> <li>– Environmental protection</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### 2.2.2. Key Issue 2: Governing China and Its Challenges

Key Issue 2		Governing China and Its Challenges	
Overview		Connecting the Dimensions	
<p>China's post-Maoist political system has remained stable due to its adaptability in responding to changing political, economic and social conditions. Political stability is derived from a combination of the party-state system's responsiveness to the people's socio-economic needs and its authoritarian features. There is growing awareness that for political stability to endure and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to remain relevant, political reforms within the party-state system such as anti-corruption and the rule of law must continue to deliver effective governance. In addition, the party-state system's capacity to deliver sustained economic development and respond to the needs of different social groups remains key to the maintenance of political stability.</p>		<p>To examine the stability of China's political system, there is a need to explore the impact of social and economic transformation on political stability. These changes will test the capacity of the party-state system to manage public needs, implement political, social and economic reforms, and deliver effective governance. The need to maintain political stability also shapes China's foreign policy in supporting domestic economic growth and addressing nationalist sentiments, which will in turn affect the continued relevance and stability of the party-state system.</p>	
Learning Outcomes		Content (Dimension: Politics)	
<p>Through the study of this issue, students will be able to discuss the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Features of China's political system</li> <li>• Challenges to China's political stability</li> <li>• Effectiveness of China's approaches to political stability</li> </ul>		<p>Features of China's political system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Party-state system</li> <li>• Ideological and performance-based sources of legitimacy</li> <li>• Central-local relations</li> </ul>	<p>Challenges to China's political stability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Corruption</li> <li>– Rule of law</li> <li>– Responsiveness to public needs</li> <li>– Ethnic minority issues</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Governing capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Bureaucratic capacity</li> <li>– Relationship between central and local governments</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
			<p>Effectiveness of China's approaches to political stability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Anti-corruption</li> <li>– Legal reforms</li> <li>– Delivery of services</li> <li>– Management of ethnic minority groups</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Governing capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Reform of party and state institutions</li> <li>– Management of central-local relations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Key Concepts			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political stability</li> <li>• Governance</li> <li>• Political legitimacy</li> <li>• Ideology</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political participation               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Political opposition</li> <li>– Online citizen activism</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing political participation               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– State-sponsored participation mechanisms</li> <li>– Surveillance and censorship</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### 2.2.3. Key Issue 3: Chinese Society and Its Transformation

Key Issue 3		Chinese Society and Its Transformation	
Overview		Connecting the Dimensions	
Decades of rapid economic modernisation and globalisation have led to an astounding transformation of Chinese society. Changes to China's demographics and social structure have resulted in a wide range of social issues. In response, the Chinese government has embarked on strengthening social governance as it seeks to manage the impact of social change. Chinese society today has also become more complex and diversified, with shifts in social values and beliefs. This places more pressure on the Chinese government to engage a growing civil society and manage social diversity. Working towards harmonious state-society relations is key to ensuring China's social stability.		To understand Chinese society, it is necessary to consider the economic and political developments taking place within China and China's relations with the world. This is because much of the social transformation taking place within China can be traced to economic modernisation, state policies and the impact of globalisation. Similarly, it is also important to understand the impact of social transformation in shaping the challenges of political stability and economic sustainability, and the Chinese government's responses to them.	
Learning Outcomes		Content (Dimension: Society)	
Through the study of this issue, students will be able to discuss the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aspects of China's social change</li> <li>Challenges of China's social change</li> <li>Effectiveness of China's approaches to manage social change</li> </ul>		Aspects of China's social change: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demographic changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Declining birth rate</li> <li>Increase in life expectancy</li> </ul> </li> <li>Urbanisation and rural-urban migration</li> <li>Changes in social structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased social stratification</li> <li>Changes in family structure</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Challenges of China's social change: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demographic issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impact of population policies</li> <li>Ageing population</li> </ul> </li> <li>Social mobility issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Income and regional disparities</li> <li>Social inequalities</li> </ul> </li> <li>Growing civil society <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)</li> <li>Social movements</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
		Effectiveness of China's approaches to manage social change: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reform of social governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changes in population policies</li> <li>Provision of social security, social assistance and social welfare</li> <li>Household registration system (<i>hukou</i>)</li> <li>Management of NGOs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

Key Concepts			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social change</li> <li>• Social stability</li> <li>• Social governance</li> <li>• Civil society</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diverse social values and beliefs               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Religious revival</li> <li>– Impact of media on traditional values</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing social order               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Use of ideology</li> <li>– Regulation of religious organisations</li> <li>– Management of media</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

#### 2.2.4. Key Issue 4: China's Foreign Policy and Its Implications

Key Issue 4		China's Foreign Policy and Its Implications	
Overview		Connecting the Dimensions	
China's emergence as a global player has given way to a more assertive international posture. With growing international concerns regarding the direction of China's foreign policy, the Chinese leadership has maintained its commitment towards peaceful development, notwithstanding its military spending, more aggressive territorial claims and increased global presence. Furthermore, China has begun to play a larger role in global governance through participation in international institutions and multilateral arrangements. As a rising major power, China's foreign policy acquires an increasing global significance, making it critical to understand the factors that shape it, its implications for regional and international stability, and its future trajectory.		To understand the trajectory of China's foreign policy, it is necessary to consider domestic developments in relation to external circumstances. China's actions on the global stage are increasingly influenced by domestic political and economic developments and public opinion. A consideration of linkages between China's domestic conditions and its foreign policy will contribute to a deeper appreciation of the motivations behind China's foreign policy and its impact on China's national interests.	
Learning Outcomes	Content (Dimension: International Relations)		
Through the study of this issue, students will be able to discuss the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Factors shaping China's foreign policy</li><li>China's bilateral relations with the US, Japan and ASEAN, and their implications for China's national interests</li><li>China's role in global governance and its implications for China's global influence</li></ul>	Factors shaping China's foreign policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>National interests<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sovereignty and territorial integrity</li><li>Security interests</li><li>Economic interests</li></ul></li><li>Ideology</li></ul>	China's bilateral relations and their implications for China's national interests: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>China-US relations<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Bilateral trade and investments</li><li>Geopolitical issues</li></ul></li><li>China-Japan relations<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Bilateral trade and investments</li><li>Security issues</li></ul></li></ul>	China's role in global governance and its implications for China's global influence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>International economy<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>International economic institutions</li><li>Multilateral trade arrangements</li></ul></li><li>International security<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Regional security cooperation</li><li>United Nations (UN)</li></ul></li></ul>



Key Concepts			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sovereignty</li> <li>• Security</li> <li>• Conflict</li> <li>• Cooperation</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• China's relations with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Regional economic cooperation</li> <li>– Regional security issues</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment and climate change               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Participation in international environmental cooperation</li> <li>– Participation in international climate change cooperation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

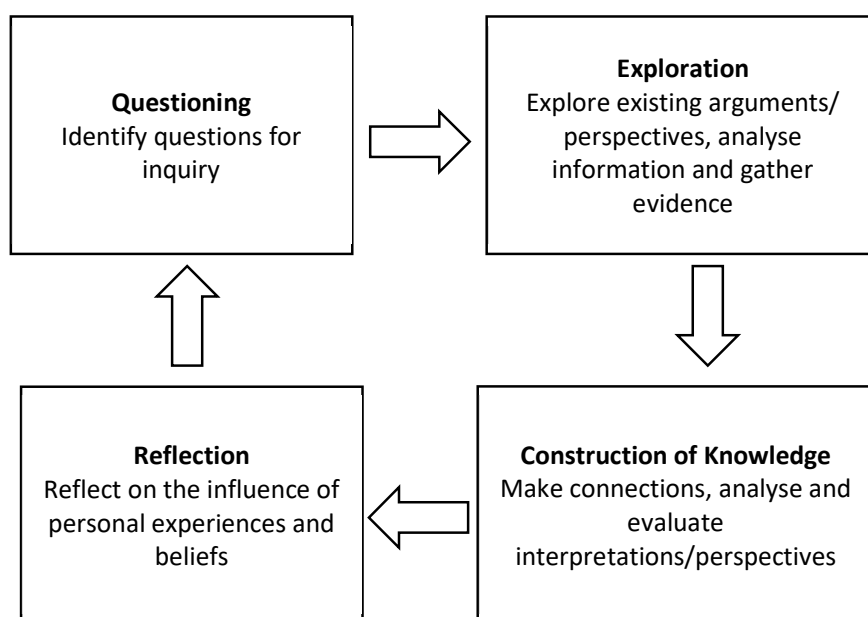
### 3. PEDAGOGY

---

#### 3.1. Issues-based Learning

Issues-based learning seeks to develop in students a deep and critical understanding of the key concepts and skills necessary to understanding issues confronting human society today.<sup>4</sup> Advocates of issues-based learning see the benefits of emphasising the connection between school and real life, linking individual choices to public policy issues and to the ongoing and fundamental dilemmas of human existence.<sup>5</sup> Issues-based learning is enacted through the Issues-based Approach, a four-stage iterative process (see **Figure 3.1a**) that allows students to take ownership of their learning and reach their own evidence-based conclusions. This helps them develop deeper understandings of what they will learn.

**Figure 3.1a: The Issues-based Approach and its Stages**



The Issues-based Approach is suitable as the core pedagogy for CSE as it helps students attain the aims of the CSE curriculum. It allows students to be more China-conversant and globally aware by engaging them in authentic investigations into issues facing contemporary China. Students also explore and analyse perspectives and information drawn from different disciplines during their investigations, which help them make sense of ongoing developments in China. The Issues-based Approach thus equips students with the capacity to deepen their knowledge of contemporary China and its developments.

---

<sup>4</sup> Evans, Ronald W., Newmann, Fred M. & Saxe, David Warren. "Defining Issues-Centered Education". In *Handbook on Teaching Social Issues, NCSS Bulletin 93*, edited by Ronald W. Evans and David Warren Saxe, 2-5. Washington, D.C.: National Council for the Social Studies, 1996.

<sup>5</sup> Ross, E. Wayne (ed.). *The Social Studies Curriculum: Purposes, Problems, and Possibilities*. Albany: State University of New York, 2006.

Each stage of the Issues-based Approach also possesses its own value in helping students attain the aims of the CSE curriculum:

- **Questioning**

The study of issues exposes students to real-life situations and dilemmas facing contemporary China, stimulating their curiosity and leading them to formulate questions to guide their inquiry. Questioning also build students' knowledge of basic policy making by placing them in the shoes of policy-makers, who often ask questions when formulating policies.

- **Exploration**

Exploration broadens and deepens students' understanding of issues facing contemporary China by engaging them in identifying and exploring different perspectives offered by policy-makers, scholars studying China and non-governmental actors in different types of information (digital and print) from official and academic sources.

- **Construction of Knowledge**

The process of constructing knowledge equips students with critical thinking and information skills, as they analyse and evaluate perspectives and interpretations to arrive at informed conclusions about the issues facing contemporary China.

- **Reflection**

Students strengthen their assessment of the issues facing contemporary China through persistent and careful consideration of their beliefs and assumptions in the knowledge-construction process.<sup>6</sup> Such metacognitive awareness will also motivate them to extend their understanding of contemporary China by generating further questions to drive subsequent inquiries.

### **3.2. Types of Information Skills**

A core domain of 21CC is "Communication, Collaboration and Information Skills", which includes skills for managing information. The management of information refers to taking charge of information through the thoughtful identification, analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information, facilitated by the appropriate use of technology.

Based on the information skills stated under this domain, the following have been identified as pertinent to the CSE curriculum:

- Locating, interpreting and connecting information across different sources
- Evaluating the information systematically

---

<sup>6</sup> Dewey, John. *How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process*. New York: D.C. Heath and Company, 1933.

- Integrating the information to draw conclusions and develop new understanding

These information skills help achieve the curricular aim of an information-literate individual who accesses, analyses, evaluates and uses different types of information about contemporary China critically and effectively.

### ***Locating, Interpreting and Connecting Information across Different Sources***

Students are exposed to a wide array of information online, including varied sources with multiple perspectives on an issue. To navigate this sea of information, they need to learn how to locate information effectively in terms of identifying the different types of information available, where they are to be located, and why they are useful.

After locating and gathering information to address an issue, students would need to interpret it for meaning and compare different perspectives provided by different sources. When interpreting information, students need to make sense of multiple perspectives provided by varied sources. It is also crucial for students to learn how to compare perspectives by connecting such information meaningfully across different sources. An important skill for students to acquire is to be able to categorise and sort information meaningfully, to identify the different camps present for an issue.

### ***Evaluating the Information Systematically***

The Internet “has democratised the distribution of information” by offering a cheap and accessible means of publishing information without peer review.<sup>7</sup> Confronted with so much information with contending perspectives, students need to appreciate its strengths and limitations by learning how to evaluate it for accuracy, credibility, currency and relevance. An important skill for students to acquire is to be able to critically evaluate sources they come across to identify those that provide quality evidence to address the issue at hand. Being able to do this will help students to better integrate information to draw conclusions and develop new understanding on an issue.

### ***Integrating the Information to Draw Conclusions and Develop New Understanding***

When students connect information across different sources and assess the strengths and limitations of the information as evidence, they merely understand the information. To give purpose to the information and use it effectively, students need to integrate the information to draw informed conclusions and develop new understandings of the issue being examined. Important skills for students to acquire include knowing how to select information based on prior evaluation that best addresses the issue being studied, reconcile contradictory information or perspectives, and synthesise ideas and perspectives from various sources to put forward balanced and considered arguments and conclusions.

---

<sup>7</sup> Trinkle, Dennis. A & Merriman, Scott A. *The World History Highway: A Guide to Internet Resources*. New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2002.

## **4. ASSESSMENT**

---

### **4.1. Learner-centred and Balanced Assessment**

The Singapore Curriculum Philosophy in the Singapore Teaching Practice envisions that quality learning takes place when assessment is used to address learning gaps. Assessment is learner-centred when it uses assessment information to support learning and gives students opportunities to be involved in their own assessment so that they develop as self-directed learners. Thus, assessment is designed with a clear purpose: to provide learners and teachers with feedback to address learning gaps and improve teaching practices. To check if learning is taking place as intended, assessment serves the central function of getting the best possible evidence of what students have learnt. For learning to be effective and developmentally appropriate, teachers use such evidence to adapt their teaching pace, approaches and assessment practices. Teachers also use assessment to help students understand that by thinking about their own thinking, they can monitor, assess and improve their learning.

A balanced assessment system comprises both formative and summative assessment. Whether implemented in the classroom or examination hall, all assessment should support and lead to meaningful learning.

Formative assessment usually takes place during the instructional process, whether in the form of in-class questioning, group discussion, project work, quizzes, written assignments or topical tests. Effective formative assessment hinges on the provision of timely, relevant and specific qualitative feedback from teachers or peers so that students will be able to self-monitor, self-regulate and improve their own learning. Hence, formative assessment tasks help students develop a synoptic understanding of contemporary China and acquire information literacy skills.

Summative assessment is usually carried out at the end of an instructional unit or course of study for the purpose of providing information about students' mastery of knowledge and skills, assigning grades or certifying students' proficiency. Hence, summative assessment provides data to reflect students' achievement of learning. The A-Level national examinations at the end of pre-university education, as well as school-based preliminary and promotional examinations, are examples of summative assessment. The planning for school-based summative assessment for CSE should take reference from the A-Level H2 CSE assessment objectives and scheme of assessment, which are aligned with curricular and syllabus aims and the learning outcomes of each Key Issue. Please refer to the A-Level H2 CSE (9628) Examination Syllabus on the SEAB website for the assessment details.