NARRATIVE:
The purpose of this unit is to analyze what causes certain groups, specifically migrant workers and poor women, to be marginalized in Chinese and American society. After exploring several news articles and primary sources, students will then determine who is responsible for lifting these marginalized people out of their current situation. They will evaluate how effective governments and individual advocates have been in alleviating suffering and injustice for these people by analyzing several case studies. Students will use this material as inspiration to create public service announcements (PSAs) in which they advocate for causes that they care about in their own communities.

In both Chinese and American society, education is posited as a surefire vehicle to escape marginalization and poverty. Students will determine whether the Gaokao and standardized tests, such as the new Common Core Exams and SAT, in America provide ample opportunity for advancement. They will then analyze how pressure from standardized testing contributes to stereotypical Chinese-American expectations about education and the “Tiger Mom” mentality.

The majority of my students are first and second generation Chinese-American immigrants. These lessons were created to meet the academic and social needs of my 8th graders, but they can be scaled up and down to meet the needs of secondary students (7th through 12th). When discussing social change issues, my students have previously expressed ambivalence about such issues, because they feel disconnected from issues that are happening across the globe thousands of miles away. By making direct connections to China, their home country, it is my hope that they will see effective models of advocacy and change. As a result, they will be able to tangibly see how they also have the power to become advocates for change in their own communities.

Many of my students have expressed that they feel overwhelmed by academic pressures and have personally experienced the “Tiger Mom” stereotype, as their parents, often first generation immigrants, want their child to attain the American Dream, academic success and financial independence. Students will reflect on and explore the effects of this parenting style and come to understand where it originates. These lessons could be used by a teacher who wants her students to see themselves as vehicles for change in their communities; alternatively, they could also be used for students who feel overwhelmed by academic pressures.

ESTABLISHED GOALS:
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.1
Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.2
Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.6
Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.8
Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1
Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1.a
Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1.b
Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.3
Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.3.a
Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.3.b
Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

UNDERSTANDINGS:
1) Students will identify characteristics that cause certain groups to live on the “margins” of both Chinese and American society, with a specific focus on social class and gender.
2) Students will analyze the strategies that both Chinese and American governments are using to aid these marginalized peoples, specifically the children of migrant workers and poor women, and evaluate their effectiveness.
3) Students will determine whose responsibility it is to lift these marginalized people out of their circumstances, and evaluate whether or not enough is being done to aid them.
4) Students will identify how individuals act as advocates for change when they see a gap in services. They will determine what components need to be in place for change.
5) Students will determine whether education and consequently standardized testing provide real opportunities for advancement to the millions who live on the margins.
6) Students will evaluate the success of the Gaokao in providing opportunity for social mobility.
7) Students will understand how high-stakes testing in China could influence Chinese-American perceptions of education as well as the so-called “Tiger Mom” stereotype.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
1) Does the Chinese government support some of the most historically oppressed segments of its population, specifically the children of migrant workers and poor women? If so, how? How effective is this support?
2) Who should have access to an education? What criteria should be used to determine which schools students go to?
3) In China and America, how is education used as a tool to combat suffering? How effective is education in altering circumstances? Identify specific examples. Are these the exception or the rule?
4) How can American students become advocates for change?
5) How realistic are the opportunities provided by the Gaokao examination? How do these academic and career expectations translate when students immigrate to the United States?
6) What realistic changes could be made in education and standardized testing to meet the needs of those on the margins to propel them out of poverty?

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

**Lesson #1 - Migrant Workers and Access to Education**
*Aim: In China and America, who is entitled to an education?*

*Do Now: What do you think it would like to be a student in this school? Explain using details from the photographs below.*
Mini-Lesson: Background information on migrant workers and policy about how students are assigned to schools

The Dandelion School is the first middle school built especially for children from poor migrant families in Beijing. Some experts suggest that there may be as many as 20 million migrant children of school age, most without access to education.

At the Dandelion School, it’s important to note that many of the teachers were migrant workers or the children of migrant workers. This is a clear example of how one could use education to alter one’s situation and give back to your community.

Questions for Discussion:
1) If all school-age children are legally entitled to an education, does this mean that they receive the same quality of education? Which factors could contribute to the quality?
2) The Dandelion School provides amazing opportunities for over 650 children. However, reports suggest that there may be as many as 20 million migrant school-age children. Whose responsibility is it to ensure that all of these children are educated? (parents, government, etc.) Should the government do more to support these children?
3) Should education be free for all students?
4) How does the United States support and educate students who are not assigned schools (i.e., students in temporary housing, children of illegal immigrants, etc.)?
5) Do all schools provide the same level of education?
Your Task: Write a letter to a government official from the perspective of the child of a migrant worker. Use at least two details from the primary sources provided to support your writing.

Potential Resources:
1) “New School For Migrant Children”
   http://www.dandelionschool.org/_old/e_gi/e_gi_news/e_gi_news_0003.htm
2) “Volunteer--Jessica Gordon’s Diary in Dandelion School, Beijing China”
   http://www.dandelionschool.org/_old/e_gi/e_gi_news/e_gi_news_0006.htm
4) “Educating China’s Migrant Children,” Gloria S. Rivera (World Affairs)
5) Photos of Dandelion School students, campus, and schoolwork

Lesson #2 - Advocates Who Use Education as a Vehicle for Change
The inspiration for this lesson springs from the Professor Wu Qing’s lecture, “How I Became a Delegate of Beijing Municipal People’s Congress”

Aim: How do people successfully advocate for real, tangible change?

Do Now:
1) Analyze the following quote in your own words.
2) Agree or disagree with the quote.
3) Make a connection.

“There are many obstacles, of course. But, in a way, they are nothing. Life is not meant to be easy. And even in most difficult times there is hope, when there is rule of law.” –Wu Qing

Mini-Lesson: Examples of how Wu Qing has advocated for change as a member of Beijing Municipal People’s Congress as well as what strategies she used:
1) Compiled data to support her case
2) Relyed on the Constitution/law
3) Fearlessly persevered despite obstacles
4) Created an organization to serve the needs of her community
   Nong Jia Nü School- The Beijing Rural Women’s Training School provides education and skills training for rural women.

Questions for Discussion:
1) What characteristics must an advocate for change embody?
2) What steps should an advocate take when attempting to make a change?
3) What resources should he/she use?

Lesson #3:
Aim: Do the education systems in the United States and China provide opportunities for advancement for all students?

Mini-Lesson: What is the Gaokao [College Entrance Examination]?
According to Professor Wang Yong, China is currently dealing with the issue of how to make the *Gaokao* more equitable for all students, taking into account geographic location and minority status.

Excerpted from his lecture:

- To date, *Gaokao* remains the fairest way to give qualified candidates their best shot at higher education.
- “If there is no *Gaokao*, how can you compete with the rich second generation?”
- “Surpass the privileged ‘tall, rich and handsome,’ beat the official’s offspring through *Gaokao*.”

Questions for Discussion:

1) How true are the aforementioned statements? How likely are students to beat “the official’s offspring”?
2) Based on what you learned about the *Gaokao*, do all students have equal opportunities to succeed on the exam? If not, which students are at a disadvantage and why?
3) How can the Chinese government make the *Gaokao* more equitable?
4) How can you compare the *Gaokao* to the Common Core exams that you take? Do the exams impact students in both countries similarly?
5) Does a high score on the *Gaokao* or the SAT guarantee professional and financial success? If not, what other obstacles could get in the way?
Writing Prompt: Can education and testing move marginalized people out of poverty? If so, how long will this process take? Cite textual evidence from the lecture or primary sources. Explain.

Lesson #4:
Aim: How do perceptions of testing/education influence stereotypes and expectations in the United States?

Resources:
“Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior,” Amy Chua

“The Battle Hymn of the Tiger Child,” Jason M. Nagata

Questions for Discussion:
1) Do you see such “Tiger Mom” expectations playing out in your life or the lives of your friends? How does it affect you or your peers?
2) Is this style of parenting more helpful or harmful to a child? Explain.
3) After reading about the role of education in China, where do you think this parenting style originates? Explain.
4) How do gender roles come into play here? What is the role of the father in Chinese-American culture?

PERFORMANCE TASK:
Summative Assessments:
1) Interview: Students will interview a family member or friend of Chinese descent about their perceptions of education as a “great equalizer.”

2) Argumentative Essay: Students will write an argumentative essay about who is responsible for addressing the plight of marginalized citizens. Is it the government, local advocates, the upper echelon, or the marginalized themselves? How should those responsible go about advocating for change? Students will cite and analyze textual evidence from at least two sources.

3) Vocabulary quizzes

4) Advocate project: Students will create a public service announcement (PSA) for a cause in their community that they feel passionately about. This will be in the form of a PowerPoint or Prezi. Students will interview at least two members of the community for this project. They will then apply the steps that Wu Qing used to advocate for change.