

The Development and Implementation of a Short-Term International Practicum for Pre-Service Educators

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Abstract

This paper describes the design and initial implementation of the International Leadership in Education Assessment and Pedagogy Practicum (I_LEAP), a short-term experience for preservice educators. The program's design and implementation goals were embodied in two questions. What experiences should be included in a short-term international practicum for preservice educators? How did the implementation unfold? Six participants, five pre-service administrators, and one pre-service teacher participated in the 2016 pilot program in China. The meeting of program learning objectives and gains in global competencies and cultural responsiveness were evident from language test pass-rates and post-experience reflections. The program's creation and implementation resulted primarily from employing university-based Educator to Educator resources. This paper provides a blueprint for leveraging similar resources and partnerships to create and implement valuable and meaningful learning experiences in which students can explore their world beyond the classroom.

Keywords: Educator to Educator, international experiences, preservice educators, global competences, cultural responsiveness.

The International Leadership in Education Assessment and Pedagogy Practicum (I_LEAP) has its roots in the author's professional interests and her own initial experience in China as a member of an Educator to Educator (E2E) delegation in 2014. E2E delegations are one of several ongoing efforts to build relationships and improve collaboration between a group of participating institutions: The University of Toledo (UT), Yanshan University (YSU), and the UT Confucius Institute (UTCI). UTCI programs support collaborative exchanges between the faculty, staff, and students of UT and YSU. Among the program's stated cultural exchange goals are learning Chinese language and culture, building partnerships, and making connections with other educators (UTCI, 2016). Both UT and YSU, as well as their respective cities of Toledo, Ohio and Qinhuangdao, Hebei Province have "sister relationships." President Dwight Eisenhower's 1956 Conference on Citizen Diplomacy is credited with the origins of the "Sister Cities" and "People-to-People" movements that seek to build lasting peace through citizen diplomacy (Sister Cities International, n.d.). These relationships are informal, people-to-people, transitional cultural exchanges in which mutual understanding, friendship, and intercultural awareness are affirmed (Smith, 1990).

Though I am a fairly well-traveled and self-identified "multi-international" individual, this was my first visit to China and Asia. I had turned down similar opportunities in the past

partly because of logistical and timing issues related academic duties. However, a new opportunity to be a member of a delegation that included university faculty and staff from several colleges (Education, Law, Medicine, Music, and Visual Arts) and support entities (Study Abroad, Computer Operations, and the Registrar) presented itself in the summer of 2014. The summer travel meant minimal scheduling conflicts and therefore no real excuses. So, I traveled with the delegation in July 2014 and had a life-changing experience that has influenced my professional trajectory and changed my outlook. As I later reflected on my own personal and professional growth from this education abroad experience, two thoughts came to mind. The first was the potential value of a global, cross-cultural experience for pre-service educators, especially teachers. The second was the logistics of developing and implementing a similar experience for them. Such an experience could further support pre-service educators' preparation to work in diverse schools and educational settings.

The demographic paradox of America's P-12 schools – an increasingly diverse population (includes race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, economic, and other categories of difference) prekindergarten through 12th grade (P-12) taught and overseen by a primarily White, non-diverse teaching force – has been the subject of a decades-long conversation (National Summit on Diversity in the Teaching Force, 2002; National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force, 2004; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The 2017 Conditions of Education report from the United States Department of Education (McFarland, et al., 2017) shows a continued trend of an increasingly diverse prekindergarten to Grade 12 (P-12) student population in both public and private schools. Non-white student public school enrollment is projected to increase from 49% in 2011 to 52% in 2024. English Language Learners (ELLs) accounted for 9.4%, and, in public schools, ranged from 1% to 22.4% in some states. As at 2011, the enrollment of White students in Catholic, other sectarian, and non-sectarian private schools was 40%, 40%, and 20%, respectively. Contrary to the student demographics, the P-12 teaching force is expected to remain largely White, middle class, female, and monolingualistic (English speaking). In the 2011-2012 school year, approximately 81% of public school teachers were White and 76% female. Similarly, approximately 88% of private school teachers were White and 93% female. Public school leadership was also mostly White at 80% in 2011. Moreover, the newer generations of graduates will also be working in a context that is increasingly economically segregated (Fry, 2007; Musu-Gillette, et al., 2016; McFarland, et al., 2017).

The College's programs' field experiences and internships are in alignment with State licensure (Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2018) and national accreditation requirements (CAEP, 2013). Providing an additional short-term global experience, much like the one I had, if within alignment with certification requirements, might support participants' personal and professional growth as they experience first-hand another culture that is vastly different from their own. In fact, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU, 2019) has identified Global Learning, in which students interact and engage with a variety of cultures, as one of several high impact practices that are beneficial to college students' retention, learning experiences, and learning outcomes. Therefore, for pre-service educators, especially those with

limited exposure to diverse contexts, the resulting authentic and personal experiential insights into issues of race, language, culture, diversity, and “difference”, should further support their learning and professional disposition including cultural responsiveness (Gay, 2002. 2013, 2018). Moreover, the experience would also be alignment with the larger push for internationalization in higher education including teacher education (National Education Association, 2010; Mansilla & Jackson, 2011), as well as the E2E movement (Sister Cities International, n.d.; Smith, 1990; UTCI, 2016). As a former National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) coordinator and a member of the Educational Foundations and Leadership faculty, I am intimately aware of academic program and licensure requirements. I am therefore qualified to determine how a short-term international field experience could align with and complement existing program offerings and licensure requirements.

Though the constraints such as cost, time, and logistics for such a program were not lost on me, my enthusiasm for developing a short-term international practicum grew throughout my own 8-day experience. Thus, the initial design for the I_LEAP program began in earnest in 2014 and was completed the following summer during a second trip to China as part of another delegation. My participation in 2015 served both an institutional and a personal purpose, the latter being moving from cultural explorer to academic program designer. My specific program designer goal was designing and implementing a short-term practicum that would bring the many faces of China to my students’ educator preparation experience. The funding opportunities, my own experiences and growing connections with Yanshan University, the diversity of the Chinese people in terms of ethnicity, economics, setting, and historical significance of the country itself, made China the ideal choice for initial implementation. Figure 1, shows the roughly 6,600-mile journey from Detroit to Beijing. It reinforces the notion of separation from one’s familiar context and culture for an adventure across the world in different space, beginning with a 13-hour flight.

Figure 1
Map of flight from U.S. to Beijing, China



This larger program design goal was embodied in two sub-questions. 1) What experiences should be included in a short-term international practicum for preservice educators? 2) How did the implementation unfold? The remainder of this paper will describe the initial creation of I_LEAP, its 2016 pilot implementation, an evaluation of learning outcomes, and challenges faced. While the context is educator preparation, the program design and the

application of theoretically-supported strategies and design frameworks are pertinent to any discipline, making this work significant for a broad spectrum of multidisciplinary readers interested and/or already engaged in providing short-term E2E-supported global and cross-cultural experiences.

Literature Review

International Experiences

International experiences are pathways to engaging in diverse perspectives and confronting misconceptions (Bloom, 1998). These professional and personal development opportunities support increased pedagogical knowledge and cultural competences, and promote cross-cultural sensitivity, including checking assumptions about one's own and other cultures (Alfaro, 2008; Chacko & Lin, 2015; Henry & Constantino, 2015; Lopes-Murphy, 2014; Lopes-Murphy & Murphy, 2016; Malewski, Sharma, & Phillion, 2012; Mahon & Cushner, 2002; Mahon & Stachowski, 1990; Sharma, Phillion, & Malewski, 2011; Stachowski & Spark, 2007; Quezado, 2004). International field experiences have also been described as transformative as preservice teachers leave their comfort zone, learn to adapt, solve problems and become more confident (Mahon & Cushner, 2002). Pre-service educators experience what it is like to be the outsider, which leads to a greater understanding of how cultural and other differences can affect the teaching and learning dynamics of diverse American classrooms (Quezado, 2004). The increasingly diverse student population is one of many topics of discussion concerning American elementary and secondary schools.

Educations' Demographic Challenges

The importance of an available and ready teaching force, teacher shortages, and the America's P-12 demographic shifts have been part of a national conversation for decades (National Summit on Diversity in the Teaching Force, 2002; National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force, 2004; U.S. Department of Education, 2016; Warner-Griffin, Noel, & Tadler, 2016). Various national reports (Fry, 2007; Musu-Gillette, et al., 2016; McFarland, et al., 2017) reflect the continued paradoxical trend of a demographically stagnant teaching force and administrative leadership that are largely White, middle class, monolingual (English), and female (teachers)-- but overseen by male administrators. These teachers and administrators themselves are products of the school systems that produce and hire them, many of which continue to be segregated along socioeconomic and racial lines (Fry, 2007). Despite these historical and situational challenges, the reality remains that university-based education programs that also lack diversity (National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), 2017a; Myers, 2016a, 2016b) will likely continue to produce mostly White graduates (NCES, 2017b). Cultural competence has a long history of being linked with school and teacher quality, as well as student achievement, especially for students in most minority groups (Coleman et al., 1966; Goldhaber, 2016). Therefore, these programs must continue to prepare culturally responsive

(Gay, 2002) candidates for diversity in all its forms such that these educators can support the learning of all students they may encounter in their classrooms and schools (CAEP, 2013, 2017; CCSSO, 2013; Sleeter & Thao, 2007). This includes providing as many diverse and cross-cultural experiences for its preservice candidates as possible. And to do that requires developing innovative programs and experiences that supplement prescribed licensure-based content and field experiences to include global experiences where feasible (CAEP, 2013).

Culturally Responsiveness and Global Competences

Educators and schools engaging in culturally responsive teaching, also known as culturally responsive pedagogy, recognize the power of teaching and draw on the cultural and linguistic strengths of communities and students (Gay, 2018). Culturally competent and responsive educators are practitioners who are able to connect knowledge, skills, and instructional strategies to navigate cultural borders (Gay, 2013) to support the academic growth and success of students (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Gay, 2002, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Culturally responsive teaching uses cultural characteristics knowledge and experiences, and diverse student perspectives, to support effective teaching and make learning experiences more relevant (Gay, 2002, 2013). In addition to traditional coursework, cultural responsiveness and competence development can be achieved as part of educating for global competence, defined as “the capacity and disposition to understand and act on issues of global significance” (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011, p. xiii). This is aligned with core educator preparation values as reflected in CAEP standards that articulate the importance of “developing an educator workforce that can effectively motivate and support P-12 student learning and development at globally competitive levels” (CAEP, 2013, p.6).

Global competence is essential for a multicultural society and for competing in a global world (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011; CAEP, 2013; CCSSO, 2013; NASFA, n.d.; NEA, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, 2012), and recognition of this necessity has led to an increased focus on international and global perspectives in educational systems in recent years (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Gay, 2018). Having the capacity to work, communicate, and collaborate across cultural and even national boundaries is a reality for 21st century graduates. Globally competent graduates can be prepared through disciplinary and interdisciplinary study to investigate the world beyond their immediate environment, recognize their own and others’ perspectives, translate ideas into appropriate action to improve conditions in their respective settings, and communicate effectively with diverse audiences (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011). Educating for global competency extends the ideas of diversity and cultural competency by incorporating effective communication and collaboration, as well as the development of global awareness that supports social responsibility (ESG, 2015; Lumina, 2014; UNESCO, 2009; NAFSA, n.d.). Culturally responsive pedagogy extends beyond national boundaries and is relevant to all aspects of the educational system (Gay, 2018). American education accreditation also recognizes the need for educators to be globally competitive (CAEP, 2013) and to connect content knowledge to local, state, national and global issues (CCSSO, 2013). All of these emphases show that the

importance of cross-cultural experiences for pre-service educators is broadly recognized. International experiences such as study abroad programs enable participants to have authentic, first-hand experiences of other cultures that help to fulfil this need.

Barriers to Traditional Study Abroad

Traditional study abroad experiences including international student teaching require students to go abroad for periods ranging from one or more weeks to several months. The typical study abroad experience occurs during the summer (38%) and is a semester long (31%); fewer than 11% are two weeks or less (Institute of International Education, 2017a, 2017b). These opportunities are oftentimes out of the reach of most students, including preservice educators, for a variety of reasons including cost and selectivity (Knight, 2005). Additionally, personal and family obligations and issues including work and, for some, fear and limited international travel exposure likely contribute to limited participation. These barriers have resulted in study abroad participants, much like the American teaching force, being relatively homogenous in terms of gender (65% female), race (74% White) (NCES, 2015, Table 310.10), and socioeconomic status (Destoff, 2006). Compounding this already skewed pre-service educator demographic is the reality of Education students having among the lowest rates of participation in study abroad experiences. Participation rates range from a high of 4.2% in 2011-2012 to 3.4% in 2015-2016 (Institute of International Education, 2017c), placing Education students near the bottom of the 12 fields reported. Thus, it is highly unlikely that the majority of pre-service educators, will develop global and cross-cultural competences through traditional study abroad programs. Therefore, it is incumbent on faculty and administrators to leverage available resources to develop additional pathways to bridge this participation gap. One such innovation is I_LEAP, a short-term, co-curricular global experience specifically designed with upper-division pre-service teachers in mind.

Methods and Procedures

Participants

The initial goal for this study was to attract at least eight students, which felt like a reasonable number for a pilot implementation. Of the 45 eligible pre-service teachers, four showed interest and one fully committed. This unfortunately reflected the previously mentioned trends (Institute of International Education, 2017c, Destoff, 2006, Knight, 2005). This low interest created an additional problem related to UTCI funding. This critical resource upon which I_LEAP depends for in-China expenses and logistics, typically requires enrollment numbers between 15 and 20. While an argument could be made for a lower pilot cohort size, one student would not meet this standard. Therefore, it became necessary to recruit additional participants beyond those for whom the practicum was initially intended. Enrollment was opened to graduate-level pre-service educators and non-UT undergraduates of any discipline. Five additional participants were recruited from the extended pool of 9 that included three out-of-state non-Education undergraduates and six UT pre-service administrators. The final cohort of six,

five pre-service administrators and one pre-service teacher (three males and three females), received UTCI funding, making the 2016 pilot I_LEAP viable. The final delegation of 8 included two faculty members, one of them the author.

Learning Design Framework and Context

I_LEAP's design is contextualized within a larger competency-based curriculum and course design model, as shown in Figure 2. Haughton's Ready Develop Integrate Perform (RDIP) Model describes a competency-based approach that informs course and program designs and related assessment activities, processes, and decisions (Haughton, 2017). The model is an integration of several learning frameworks: Bloom's Cognitive Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Bloom & Krathwohl, 1956); The Conceptual Learning Model (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.; Voorhees, 2001); cross-functional competences (Rothwell & Graber, 2011); The Bologna Process and the Dublin Descriptors (ESG, 2015); and, Degree Qualifications Profiles (DQP) (Lumina, 2014). The inverted pyramid reflects growth in mastery and learning and the adjoining table relates learning experiences, types of performance, and assessment through the lens of the Bloom's Cognitive Taxonomy. The progressions from readiness (*Ready*) to mastery (*Perform*) describe performances at each progression. *Communication and Collaboration* are cross-cutting competences that are engaged before and developed throughout the learning experience. Learners must develop the ability to communicate in a variety ways and contexts, to a variety of stakeholders, and must also be able to engage in successful collaborative work with others including domestic and international peers, in multiple settings including field experiences.

I_LEAP is a structured, short-term, co-curricular, non-credit, global experience that was designed to build on learning outcomes in a required Assessment of Learning (ASMT 4666) course (micro-level experience). The non-credit decision spared potential participants from additional tuition and fees, which in turn, limited their practicum-related costs to travel expenses such as passports, airfares, and visas.

The two broad learning goals were: 1) develop global competence in a non-Western culture through the acquisition of language and cultural skills (LO1), and 2) integrate global competences in the instructional and assessment process (LO2). The relationship between I_LEAP, the ASMT4666 course, and the course's culminating experience are also described in Figure 2. The course is required for pre-service education juniors (upper division) as part of the preparation for the student teaching internship the following year, which also included their final short-term field placement in local schools. Both the assessment course and the short-term field experience occur at the *Integrate* level of the pre-service education degree program. The assessment course's goals and learning objectives complement the students' work in their field experience as they learn about and engage in a cycle of assessment planning. The course's *Perform*-level culminating experience is a comprehensive unit assessment plan that includes academic standards, learning objectives with Bloom taxonomy levels, test items, evidence of student learning from test results, and a reflection of how data should be used for further

instructional planning and supporting their students' learning. These are necessary experiences that prepare pre-service teachers for their program's culminating *Perform*-level experience, the student teaching internship.

The I_LEAP practicum is also an *Integrate*-level program experience because it is meant to be offered to preservice teachers who are completing requirements for student teaching the following academic year. I_LEAP in this context is a supplemental, carefully crafted and scaffolded integrative learning experience that enables participants to learn about the culture and academic practices of schools (higher education and P-12) in a non-Western context, in this case, China. This authentic experience should enhance their development of cross cultural and global competences, which, in turn, should further their engagement of culturally responsive teaching practices. The addition of preservice administrators required minimal changes to the I_LEAP design. All were licensed teachers who were employed in local schools. Like preservice teachers, the five preservice administrators were also in the advance stages of their respective programs in Educational Leadership. These preservice administrators were to apply content knowledge and develop school-based professional leadership skills. All were completing their second required field experience for a school administrator licensure. The goals of the administrative field experience were similar in intent to those of student teaching for preservice teachers, but different in terms of lens and focus at the school level rather than the classroom. Hence the I_LEAP experiences would engage ideas around education, assessment, and pedagogy at the school leadership level. Moreover, the objectives of I_LEAP aligned with multiple dimensions of the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC, 2011) accreditation standards (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, NPBEA, 2011).

Data Sources and Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative data sources were examined. The quantitative data source was the Chinese language and culture test pass rates. All I_LEAP delegates including the two faculty leaders took a basic Chinese language and culture course at YSU, which was followed by a post-course test. UT faculty had no input in either the course or the test. The qualitative data sources included student post-practicum reflections, and field notes including photograph records. Students were asked to submit reflections to describe their respective experiences. Data analysis and visualization used the ATLAS.ti knowledge workbench (Scientific Software Development (Germany), 2013-2018). The thematic analysis (Creswell, 2013) of the student reflections was themed within two related frameworks.

The first framework is Gay's (2002) five essential elements of culturally responsive teaching. In element one, educators *develop a cultural knowledge base* by learning about diverse students' values, traditions, communication styles, other characteristics, and contributions, and examine how these influence performance, behavior, equality, and other issues. In element two, *design culturally responsive curricula*, educators integrate their cultural knowledgebase into curriculum planning through effective instructional design and strategies. They also recognize how diverse groups are portrayed beyond the classroom and build this knowledge into their curricula to

support their own and their students' information literacy. In element three, *demonstrating cultural caring*, educators develop partnerships and learning communities, including with members of ethnically and culturally diverse communities, to support their students' learning including having high expectations. In element four, *cross cultural communication*, educators recognize the communication styles of different sub-groups, and modify interactions and expectations to accommodate all students. In element five, *cultural congruity*, educators align instructional setting and delivery with their students' cultural characteristics, including content, tasks, assessment, motivation strategies, and communication styles.

The second framework is Global Competences (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011), which has four related dimensions. In dimension one, *Investigate the World*, students investigate the world beyond their immediate environment by identifying significant issues, using a variety of languages, sources, and media to identify relevant evidence, analyzing and synthesizing evidence, and developing arguments with defensible conclusions. In dimension two, *Recognize Perspectives*, students recognize their own and others' perspectives, as well as related influences on those perspectives, and are able to understand the impact of cultural interactions. In dimension three, *Communicate Ideas*, like element 4 of *cultural responsiveness*, students recognize how communication styles vary and communicate their ideas effectively with diverse audiences by attending to audience perceptions, listening and communicating effectively, and reflecting on the impact of the communication in an interdependent world. In dimension four, *Take Action*, students seek to improve the human condition by, among other things, identifying, creating, and pursuing collaboration opportunities.

Findings

The findings will be presented in an order that answers the two questions posted. The foundations of Question 1, *what experiences should be included in a short-term international practicum for pre-service educators*, has been partially presented as part of the theoretical and design frameworks described in the preceding sections. What follows is a description of the pilot program's schedule as in 2016, which completes Question 1. Question 2, *how did the implementation unfold*, will detail the implementation phases of, first, pre-departure activities, and then the actual I_LEAP experiences. These elements will then be followed by a program evaluation based on both data sources and a discussion of limitations, lessons learned, and conclusions.

Figure 2.
 Haughton's Ready, Develop, Integrate, Perform Competency Model
 Competency Model (RDIP)

	Competency Level	Performance Type Cognitive Taxonomy Level	Program (Macro) Level Performances & Assessment	Course (Micro) Level Performances & Assessment
	Perform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make Judgments • Create (Synthesis) • Evaluate (Evaluation) 	completion of culminating experiences sample assessments: dissertation; thesis; culminating project; long-term field experience (<i>e.g., Student Teaching</i>)	completion of advanced learning objectives sample assessments: real-world focused project (<i>e.g., Unit Assessment Plan</i>); presentation; internship
	Integrate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply Knowledge & Understanding • Analyze (Analysis) • Apply (Application) 	completion of advanced curriculum sample assessments: advance coursework; comprehensive exams; short-term field experiences (<i>including the LEAP practicum</i>)	completion of mid-level, integrative learning objectives sample assessments: module assessment; project components; concept maps
	Develop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Knowledge & Understanding • Understand (Comprehension) • Remember (Knowledge) 	completion of core curriculum sample assessments: core requirements, exams, introductory field experiences	completion of low-level learning objectives sample assessments: chapter tests/quizzes, preliminary project ideas
	Ready	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for Curriculum and/or Course • Demonstrate Prerequisite Knowledge, Skills, Traits, etc. 	completion of program entry requirements sample assessments: prior studies & credentials, test scores, essays, & other competences	completion of course prerequisites sample assessments: prior course work, software skills, technical skills, & other competences

I_LEAP Design and Experiences

The initial program’s overview, structure, and alignment with LOs are reflected in the itinerary shown in Table 1. Two types of experiences, academic and cultural, were needed to align with and support the two learning objectives. Academic events were school- and university-based and required engagement with university and P-12 learning environments. Events included university-based activities (campus tour, classroom activities, and observations) and elementary and secondary school site visits and observations. Cultural events included visits to important historical and cultural sites such as The Great Wall, The Forbidden City, and the Summer Palace. Two events – the welcome banquet (Day 3) and the interview with parents (Day 5) – were labeled as academic and cultural. The opening events included presentations by the delegates, including students, about the academic purposes and goals of the practicum. The visit and interviews with parents during the national college examination week (the Gāo Kǎo) reinforced academic differences and similarities between the American and Chinese education systems, including issues of social class and testing in China (Wang, 2014).

Table 1
*Practicum 1: International Leadership in Education, Assessment and Pedagogy,
China Summer 2016*

Day	Location and Activity
Day 1	Depart USA for Beijing
Day 2	Arrive in Beijing; travel to Yanshan University (YSU)
Day 3	academic and cultural event: YSU Welcome Banquet <i>LO1; LO2</i>
	academic event: YSU campus tour; visit the College of Foreign Languages and meet with administrators and faculty and staff exchanging experiences on college level academic affairs and administration; present of student projects and practicum goals <i>LO1; LO2</i>
Day 4	academic event: observe and participate in Intensive English class for English majors at the College of Foreign Languages <i>LO2</i>
	cultural event: participate in Chinese culture and language class <i>LO1</i>
	cultural event: visit Pigeon Nest Park, Beidaihe beach <i>LO1</i>
Day 5	academic event: visit and observe teaching activities at Kindergarten <i>LO2</i>
	cultural event: Chinese culture and language class <i>LO1</i>
	academic event and cultural: observe and interview parents and teachers at local high school during National College Entrance Examinations (gāo kǎo) <i>LO1; LO2</i>
Day 6	academic event: observe and participate in writing or oral English class for English majors at the College of Foreign Language Studies <i>LO2</i>
	academic event: conference with the College of Foreign Language Studies professors, debrief and presentation to YSU professors <i>LO2</i>
Day 7	cultural event: visit Old Dragon Head, the Great Wall Museum, Shanhai Pass <i>LO1</i>

Day 8	Travel to Beijing; cultural event: visit Tiananmen Square and Forbidden City <i>LOI</i>
Day 9	cultural event: visit Summer Palace <i>LOI</i>
	Depart Beijing for USA

These events also included cultural components such as formal dining, dining etiquette, and friendship toasting (Huo, 2004; Parkinson, 2014) and cultural influences and pressures associated with the all-important Gāo Kǎo (Fischer, 2013; Wang, 2014).

I LEAP Pilot Implementation

Pre-Departure Activities. Prior to actual travel, three pre-departure meetings were held. The first meeting was mostly an introductory question and answer session about the practicum itself. Matters related to requirements, expectations, location, and initial travel-related issues and logistics were discussed. The remaining two meetings focused on travel documents, visa applications, currency, and setting up group communications with mobile technologies such as WeChat. WeChat is a multi-platform mobile communication service that is used extensively in China and other Asian countries. Its many communication features, such as video chat, voice calling, and SMS, made it an ideal method for delegates to communicate with each other and with loved ones while in China. Additional information about WeChat is available at <https://www.wechat.com/en/>. Also addressed were introductory cultural topics such as general behavior, gift giving, and gifts to avoid giving because of negative subtle meanings. Examples to avoid include umbrellas (wanting to ending relationships) and green hats (man’s wife is unfaithful).

Being Welcomed. The practicum’s program began with a tour of Yanshan University, hosted by Deputy Director, Division of International Cooperation and Vice Dean, College of International Exchange. We were also provided with student hosts (mostly Engineering students) who accompanied us throughout the practicum, serving as translators. The tour was followed by a luncheon hosted by YSU’s Vice President. Luncheon was followed by another very warm welcome by the Dean of the College of Foreign Languages, our program hosts. This was followed by a formal presentation attended by the administration, faculty, and students of the College of Foreign Languages. Each student delegate also introduced herself/himself, described her/his professional contexts and expertise, and discussed individual educational and professional goals. These presentations and discussions of educational experiences and professional goals aligned with LO2 and also reflected real-world performance expectations including effective communication (Haughton, 2017) with an audience that was diverse in multiple ways, including language and culture (Gay, 2002; Mansilla & Jackson, 2011). The presentations and the opening banquet simultaneously pushed students out of their comfort zones and built their confidence as they navigated through a variety of inter-personal and professional conversations (Mahon & Cushner, 2002; Quezdao, 2004). Two examples are quoted below:

Although it was a little unclear exactly where we staying, and the plans for the first day, I was very comfortable 'going with the flow' as our trip unfolded. (Student 4).

Once in Beijing, and Qinhuangdao I began to relax. My entire experience at Yanshan University and in the city of Qinhuangdao was beyond my expectations. (Student 3).

These sentiments generally reflected how each participant moved through the remaining experiences.

College Experiences. The delegation had two immersive higher education classroom experiences in intensive English classes for English majors (sophomores), captured in Figure 2. Many of these majors are preparing to be translators or teachers of English in Chinese elementary and secondary schools. The first experience was in “Ms. Queen’s” (pseudonym, YSU faculty member) class. Her students prepared two topics: 1) the role and value of long weekends, and whether they should be kept or be abolished, and 2) a discussion about Dr. Martin Luther King’s work and the Civil Rights movement. Students used a variety of interactive and creative formats to demonstrate their English language skills and present their points of view, including debates and discussion panels. The I_LEAP delegates quickly moved from being observers to becoming participants, with members joining collaborative groups. As native English speakers, we provided additional English language support such as interpretations and different meanings of various English words. We also contributed to the discussion about the meaning of Dr. King’s work in both the American and Chinese contexts. Our second observation was with the same class under the leadership “Mr. King” (pseudonym, YSU faculty member), who was preparing the students for their final English Orals. I_LEAP delegates again provided English-language support and insights through direct engagement with Mr. King, the students, and the topics. We also observed another student-centered educator who had a great rapport and relationship with his students and used innovative strategies to support their English language learning. One such strategy was the use of scheduled, off-campus “coffee” meetings where students received additional opportunities to practice their conversation English in social settings.

Both college experiences addressed LOs 1 and 2. Participants broadened their language and cultural skills and global competences through cross-cultural collaboration and communication (Gay, 2002; Haughton, 2017; Mansilla & Jackson, 2011). They examined their own assumptions about Chinese education while exploring commonalities with American education (Alfaro, 2008; Chacko & Lin, 2015; Henry & Constantino, 2015; Lopes-Murphy, 2014; Lopes-Murphy & Murphy, 2016). Participants reflected on the kindness and friendliness they encountered, the pedagogical excellence, students’ effort to learn, and having insight into the life of a student in China.

The university representatives treated us like dignitaries. I was impressed with their ambition to practice their English as we discussed schools, culture, and recreation. (Student 6).

.... and just as equally impressive was with the depth of conceptualization happening in the Foreign

Language class at Yanshan University. (Student 2).

From an educational perspective the conversations with the college students were insightful to what it is like to be a student in China. (Student 1).

Elementary and Secondary School Site Visits. Our first site was at a local elementary school where we observed multiple classrooms serving different age groups. We presented gifts to the principal including books, UT souvenirs, and treats for the children. Again, we were welcomed with open arms by the school leadership and the children. The warm welcome was a theme we experienced throughout the practicum.

I found myself feeling overwhelmed by the kindness, thoughtfulness, and the types of excellence we witnessed in the visited classrooms. (Student 2).

I felt honored to be treated with such respect and kindness. (Student 4).

The outpouring of care, respect, and kindness was overwhelming. (Student 3).

Our delegation included two former kindergarten teachers. Each took the chance to read a story to the children in a kindergarten class, who were delighted with *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and *Brown Bear, Brown Bear*, also captured in Figure 3.

Our second site visit was at a local high school on the second day of the Gāo Kǎo, a major event in Chinese education and society, as described above. Related stories dominated the local TV news, including a segment in which the late Stephen Hawking sent his good wishes to the test takers. Many communities diverted traffic away from the high schools and instituted short-term parking policies such as special parking permits and tents for parents of test takers. Parents literally spend the two days outside the school waiting for their children, also captured in Figure 3. Additionally, stringent precautions are taken to prevent cheating, which carries harsh penalties including jail time. The areas surrounding the high school were literally under lockdown. Even though the Gāo Kǎo prevented in-class observations at the high school, it provided a perfect opportunity to learn about important similarities and differences surrounding national standardized exams from other stakeholders including our hosts, teachers, and parents, most of whom took this exam during their own high school years.

I_LEAP delegates interviewed teachers and parents with the help of student host translators. Feelings were decidedly mixed about the role and value of these high-stress, high-stake examinations. Many accepted the examination as a rite of passage. Others thought an alternative was needed to ensure opportunities were available for their children. Some who could afford it bypassed the Gāo Kǎo entirely by sending their children to universities to study abroad. This is not an option for most Chinese families, especially those from rural schools.

In writing, I_LEAP students reflected on both LOs 1 and 2 in terms of their development of a cultural knowledge base and the meaning of assessment practices and policies in both the American and Chinese contexts.

The take away message for me was that both countries are struggling to reform their educational systems and do what is best for their students. (Student 1).

Figure 3
University and P-12 Academic Experiences.



Ms. Queen's sophomore English class: YSU

Mr. King's sophomore English class: YSU

Brown Bear, Brown Bear story time: elementary classroom

Conversations about the Gāo Kǎo: outside high school

The challenges that we face in American Education are the same challenges they are facing in Chinese Education. I believe that if we work together as a people, we can better the education and livelihood for all children across the world. (Student 3).

These comments share a concern for what is best for the student in terms of both cultural competence and effective reforms that advances education in both countries.

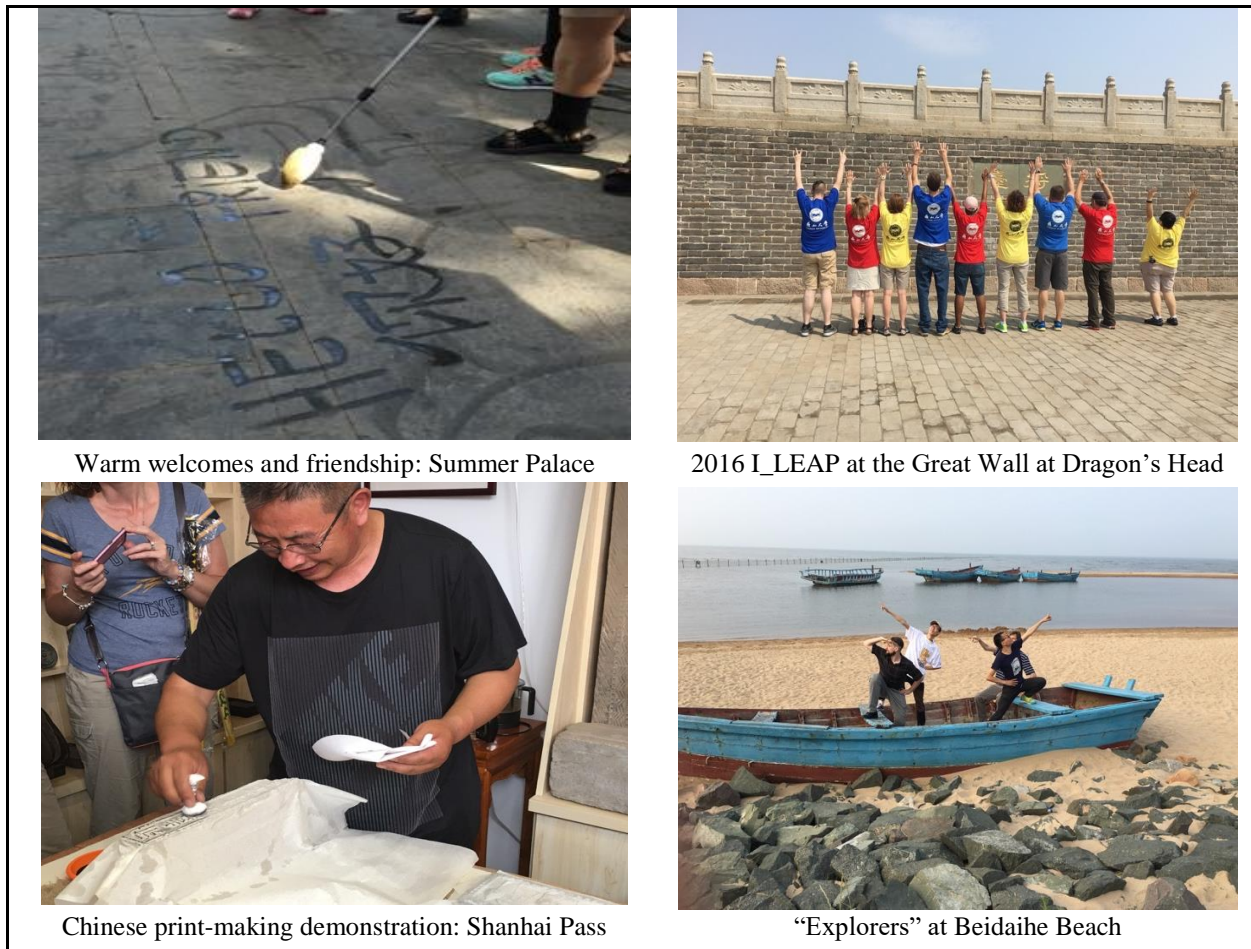
Cultural Experiences. The delegation was treated to a number of formal (classroom-based) and informal cultural events and experiences. The classroom-based experiences included two sessions on Chinese language and culture that included a dreaded language and culture test. We learned basic Chinese language, basic calligraphy and paper cutting, and the history of many of traditions and cultural practices such as the Dragon Boat Festival. We visited several

important cultural sites in Qinhuangdao and Beijing including Beidaihe Beach, Old Dragon Head, the Great Wall Museum, Shanhai Pass, Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City, and the Summer Palace. We also had an unplanned print-making demonstration using centuries old stones. Some highlights are captured in Figure 4.

The delegation attracted quite a lot of attention throughout our travel. Curiosity ranged from smiles to stares. We were the subject of many photographs including poses with children and their families. This was especially so at the cultural sites that attracted Chinese tourists from all over the country. Areas outside of big cities are less likely to have foreigners, hence the need to memorialize sightings. The interest was very pointed at times and, in some instances, might be considered invasive in American culture. However, we realized the context of the curiosity and never felt unwelcomed and unsafe.

Figure 4

Cultural Experience Highlights



Warm welcomes and friendship: Summer Palace

2016 I_LEAP at the Great Wall at Dragon's Head

Chinese print-making demonstration: Shanhai Pass

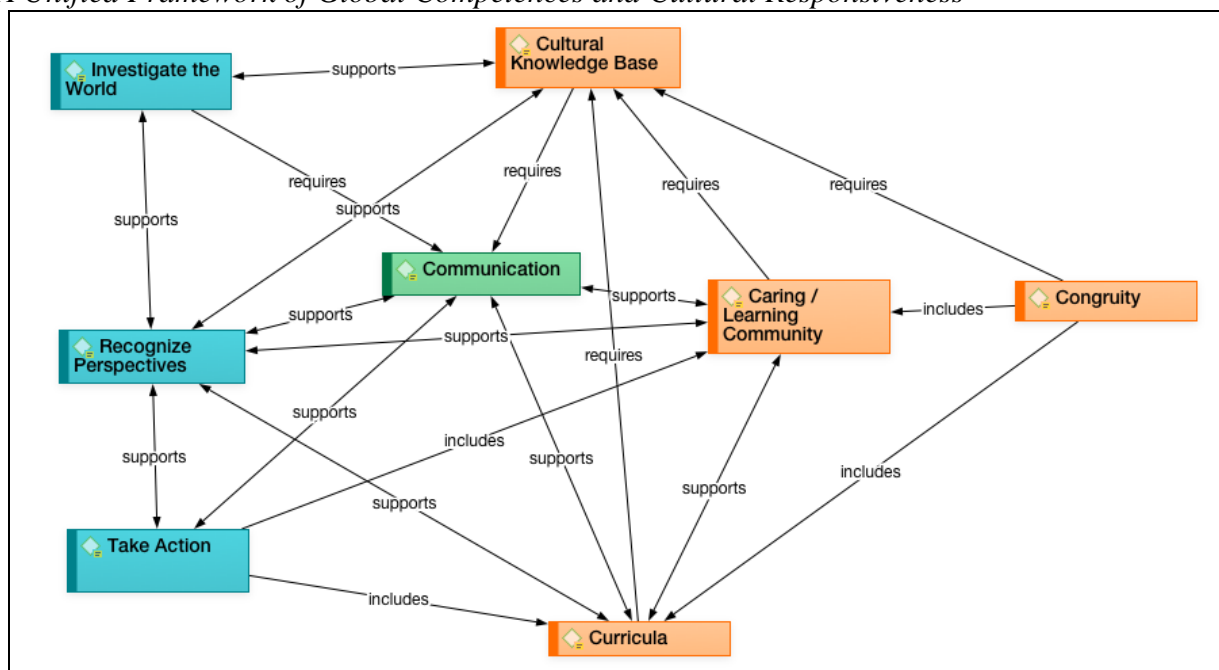
"Explorers" at Beidaihe Beach

Outcomes Evaluation: Culturally Responsive Teaching and Global Competences

Figure 5 offers a unified framework of Culturally Responsive Teaching (Gay, 2002) and Global Competences (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011) that supports understanding and interpreting I_LEAP academic outcomes. Both frameworks share center ideas on Communication, which is central to each framework as well as the curriculum’s RDIP-based design. The four dimensions of Global Competences are interrelated with the five dimensions of Cultural Responsiveness. Investigating the World beyond one’s immediate environment leads to broader set of experiences that support Recognizing Multiple Perspectives.

Figure 5

A Unified Framework of Global Competences and Cultural Responsiveness



The ability to examine one’s own and others’ perspectives supports identifying and creating opportunities to Take Actions that lead to the improvement of the human condition and related contexts. Each dimension is facilitated by Communication, which also integrates the whole. In connecting dimensions of Global Competency to Culturally Responsive Teaching, Investigating the World, Recognizing Perspectives, and cross-cultural Communication (and collaboration) broadens the Cultural Knowledge Base, which is foundational to taking culturally responsive action. Taking Action can lead to establishing Culturally Congruity with instructional delivery and Curricula practices that recognize and honor multiple perspectives, and establishes Caring and supportive Learning Communities. Preliminary quantitative and qualitative data indicate that I_LEAP participants developed both Cultural Responsiveness and Global Competences by meeting the practicum’s learning objectives.

I_LEAP provided preservice educators with the opportunity to experience education policies and practices in a non-Western culture. We were informed that all delegates passed the basic language and culture test, a 100% pass rate. This is objective evidence that participants met

LO1, *develop global competence in a non-Western culture through the acquisition of language and cultural skills* and thus broadened their respective cultural knowledge bases. Each participant expressed how much they learned about Chinese culture and the Chinese educational system.

My experience in China was amazing. I not only got to learn about the educational system, I also learned a great deal about the Chinese culture. (Student 1)

It wasn't the drill-drill-drill format of education I thought we'd see; rather, there was a liveliness and hunger for learning in each classroom, mixed with trust and accountability. I was pleased to see a music component in each of the elementary school classrooms. (Student 2)

I learned that no matter where you are in the world, people are still people, children are still children and many of my preconceived notions about China and its people are forever changed. (Student 3)

Participants were able to build on LO1 and demonstrate their meeting of LO2, *integrate global competences in the assessment process*, in multiple settings and ways. The first setting was at the practicum's closing ceremony attended by the faculty and staff of the School of Foreign Languages. Each student delegate presented her/his findings and experiences and was able to engage in discussions around educational leadership, assessment, and pedagogical themes. Themes included: best methods for assessing student learning; reforms to support alternate pathways and assessment; helping students thrive "beyond the test"; and the value of the college degree – is it worth it, and what other post-high school experiences are equally valuable. These presentations reflected broadened pedagogical and cultural knowledgebases (Gay, 2002), a recognition of multiple perspectives (Bloom, 1998; Chacko & Lin, 2015; Stachowski & Spark, 2007; Quezado, 2004), the types of action needed (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011), and the ability to communicate effectively and confidently with diverse audiences (Gay, 2002; ESG, 2015; Haughton, 2017; Lumina, 2014; Mahon & Cushner, 2002; Mansilla & Jackson, 2011; Rothwell & Graber, 2011). The presentations and discussions also demonstrated successful synthesis of the academic content in educational leadership, assessment, and pedagogy that is taught in the preservice teacher and administration programs. Finally, the presentations and discussions framed ideas and issues of importance that have real-world educational implications for both countries (Haughton, 2017; U.S. Department of Education, n.d.; Voorhees, 2001).

Further evidence of learning outcomes related to Global Competences and Cultural Responsiveness were voiced in the participants' reflections, beginning with their initial thoughts and feelings about the practicum experience, their growth in cultural knowledge and awareness throughout the experience, and linkages to professional development and promised actions as a result of their China experiences. The willingness and ability to investigate the world through I_LEAP initiated the journey for each participant, all of whom were excited to make this trip. The excitement was tempered with some anxiety related to being away from home but one student seemed to speak for the others in explaining: "...I would not let my fears and anxiety hold me back from this experience" (Student 3). Preservice educators described life-changing

experiences that developed throughout the practicum. In a personal communication with the author, Student 5, the lone pre-service teacher, summarized the richness of the experience as follows: “Where do I begin. This experience changed my life. I am sad that I am leaving.” The idea of lives changed connects with the goal of expanded cultural knowledge, which in turn, will influence future practice and demonstrate congruity between curricula and community (Gay, 2002). Student 1 felt professionally invigorated, expressing and describing actions in terms of Global competencies:

... On the perspective of Global Competencies, my experience in China has helped me to gain new ideas on ideals and goals to focus on as a potential future school leader. The organization of a campus and the expectation that every student is given the opportunity to excel was invigorating, and learning more about Chinese culture will help shape my perspective as an educator. (Student 1).

Student 4 built bridges through conversation and recreation, and posed broader questions regarding the goals of educational systems across the world.

It was easy to connect with Sam (pseudonym). He was friendly, anxious to participate with our group, and open to conversation. It was clear he wanted to make us feel at home on his campus. Sam and I had several conversations ranging from academic rigor to badminton. He displayed a sincere interest in listening to my comments and paused to think before responding. I felt his greatest quality was showing empathy. (Student 4).

How would we define a universal objective for education? How would countries measure up to this objective? What means would we use to measure if countries are meeting the objective? (Student 4).

Students 3 and 4’s reflections also connected to promises of actions that will be taken within both their professional and personal contexts.

I will be bringing the experiences I had last week back to my school next year. I will be educating the teachers and students in my school about the children in China through a web based educational approach. As we move forward with this collaboration project, I would be willing to open my home and be a host family to any students and staff who would be visiting our country and university. (Student 3)

Using language bridges, such as body language and positive gestures, I can reduce language barriers between students, parents, teachers and administrators in the school setting. Finally, through an appreciation of cultural diversity, I can look for opportunities to extend cultural awareness experiences to my colleagues by encouraging conversation and activity in culturally diverse settings. (Student 4)

These were full-circle reflections that captured the essence of I_LEAP’s goal and the conclusion that participants learning met both LOs. They went beyond acquiring cultural knowledge by making connections to promises of specific action to be taken in their respective professional contexts. These actions connected both personal and professional commitments that are aligned with all dimensions of global competences and cultural responsiveness, including a greater appreciation of the diversity of American classrooms (Quezado, 2004) and of those

beyond American borders (CAEP, 2013; CCSSO, 2013). They also align with multiple elements of the 2011 ELCC accreditation standards, especially the content knowledge and professional skills dimensions of Standard 4 (use of cultural, social, and intellectual resources) and Standard 5 (valuing and safeguarding democracy, equity, and diversity) (NPBEA, 2011).

Challenges and Conclusions

Designing and implementing a faculty-led study abroad program was both challenging and rewarding. Navigating through travel and visa logistics, university forms, and seemingly endless guidelines was time-consuming and frustrating at times. Locating resources, recruiting enough interested and financially-able students, and working with a short planning and implementation timeline (approximately 12 weeks) were the greatest hurdles. Student participant numbers and demographics continue to reflect the norm for Education students (NCES, 2015, Table 310.10) who have historically low participation levels in international experiences (Institute of International Education, 2017c). Though the in-China expenses were covered through the UTCI partnership, departure costs from the USA were still substantial enough to make the experience unaffordable for many. Both faculty members received some financial support for themselves and for students through their department and a university travel grant program. However, support did not include workload release time for developing and implementing a de-facto new course or compensation for time spent during the practicum period (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Therefore, the fact that the initial practicum was implemented under these conditions was itself, the first success. The educational and professional value for all pre-service educators as well as faculty was evident. Finally, the opportunity for the faculty, staff, and students of sister universities to collaborate and grow with each other was one of the greatest rewards.

This transnational E2E collaboration reflect the ideals of citizen diplomacy (Sister Cities International, n.d.) by affirming mutual understanding and intercultural awareness on both sides (Smith, 1990). It also supported UTCI's cultural exchange goals of sharing Chinese language and culture, building partnerships, and making connections with other educators (UTCI, 2016). The realization of this vision from a mere idea to reality created a blue print for leveraging available resources and partnerships to create and implement valuable and meaningful learning experiences for students to explore the world beyond the classroom.

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