

Intercultural Exploration: US Teacher Candidates' Experiences in China

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Agenda

- Project Background and Objectives
- Short-Term Study-Abroad Program in China
 - Program Overview
 - Teacher Candidates' Experiences
 - Impact on Intercultural Competence Development for Teachers
- Project Outcomes
 - Research
 - Course Development
 - Fulbright Proposal

Project Background and Objectives

Project Background

- Need to enhance UNCG students' global awareness and intercultural competence through study abroad
- Existing collaboration with universities and schools in Shanghai, China
- Cross-disciplinary interests and common resources

Project Objectives

- Collaborative design and evaluation of UNCG students' experiences participating in short-term study abroad programs in China
- Development of faculty-led study abroad course to offer students intercultural exploration opportunities
- Application for the Fulbright-Hays group project abroad

Study-Abroad in China SP2014

Program Overview

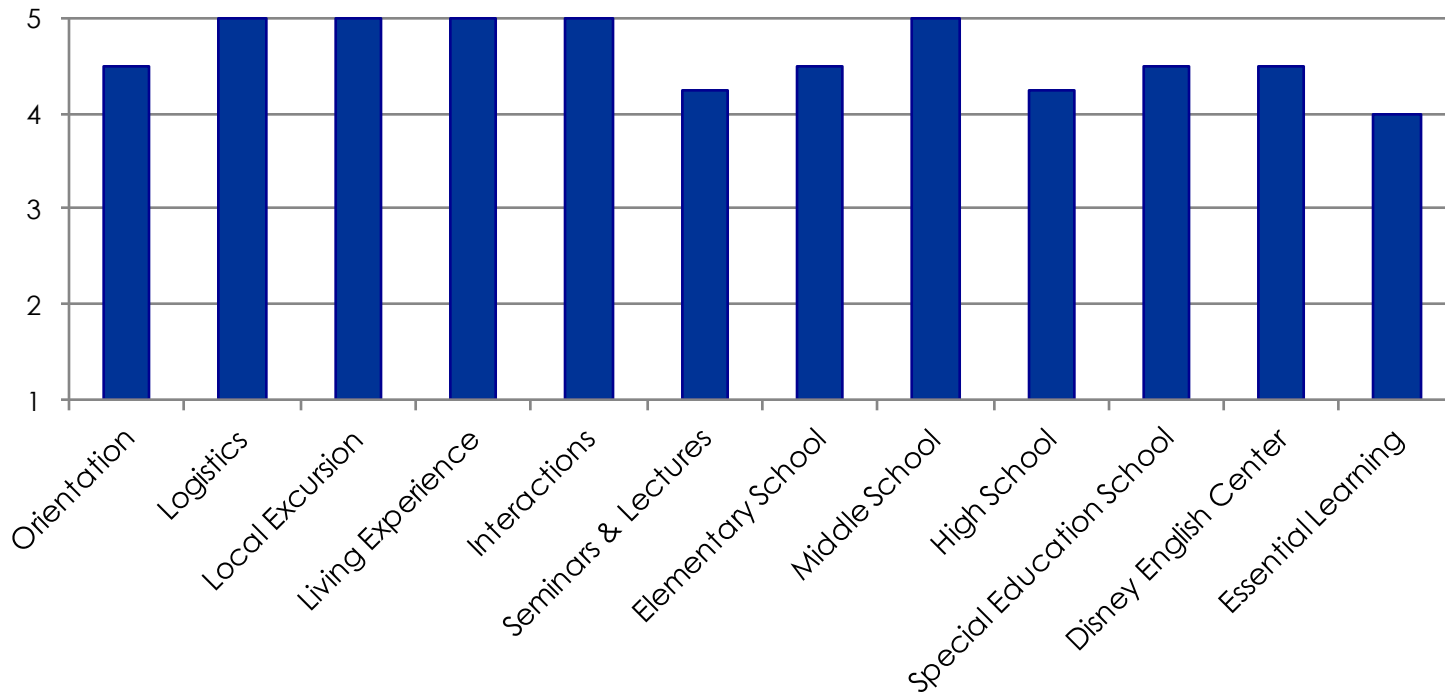
- Duration: January – April 2014
- Partner: Shanghai Normal University (SHNU)
- Program:
 - Pre-Departure: January 31 – April 7
 - Four orientation meetings – Pre-assessment
 - Online interaction with faculty and students from SHNU
 - China Visit: April 8-28
 - K-16 classroom observations and teaching
 - Lectures and seminars
 - Local excursion
 - Post-Return: May-June
 - Post-assessment
 - Informal Sharing & Debriefing

Program Participants

- Participants: 4 teacher candidates
- Prior Experiences:
 - Studied abroad in Australia, Germany, Uruguay, Ireland & England (1-6 month programs)
 - Have interacted with Chinese students through UNCG courses
 - Little knowledge about China; 2 participants reported having had one Asian history or world history class
 - Major concerns include language, communication and unfamiliar cultural norms
 - Major goals include both personal and professional growth

Program Satisfaction

- Overall, all participants are satisfied with various program components.



Experiences

- **Interactions with University Students**

“I really loved interacting with all the different students from primary to university level. They were curious about us and were willing to carry on conversation. Through these interactions, I think I learned a great deal about Chinese culture. “

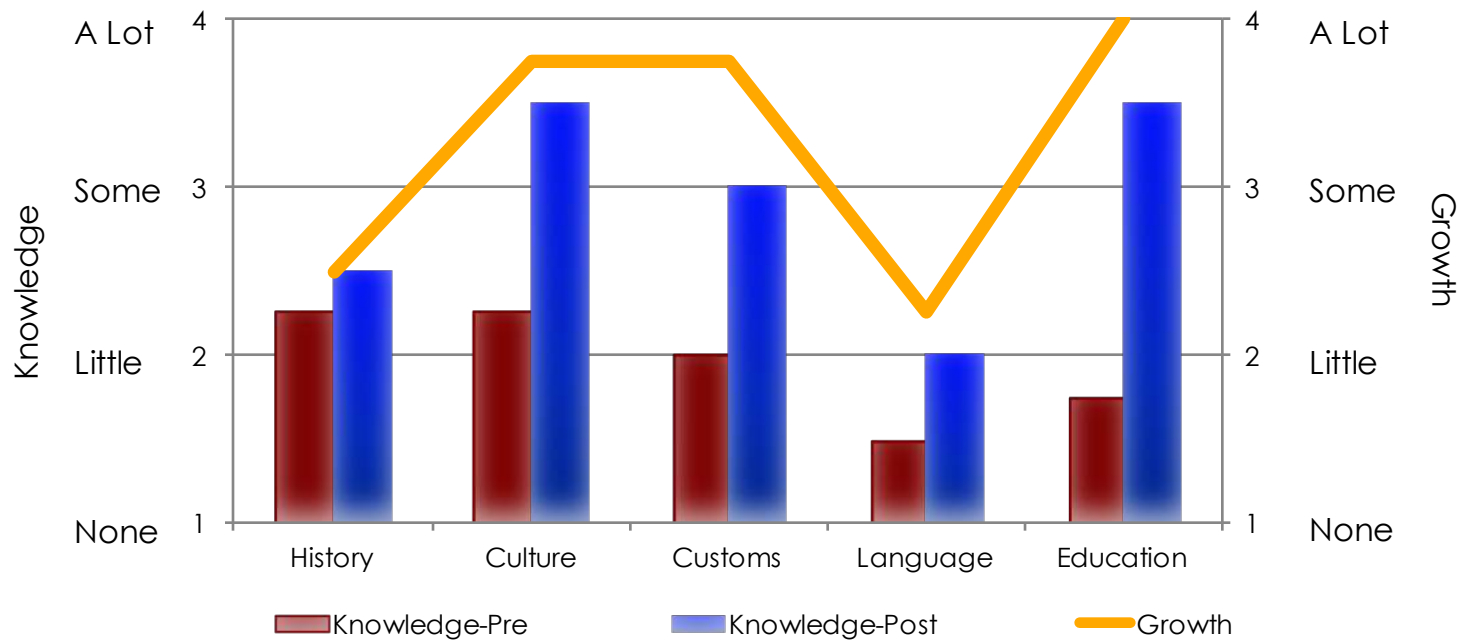
- **Cultural Excursion and Experiences with Food**

“We have been able to eat everything from baked chicken with curry noodles to congealed blood, soup dumplings, and pizza shaped like an ice cream cone. Many of the smells, flavors and textures have been foreign to us, but we have discovered some delicious dishes and we can't wait to try some more! “



Impact - Knowledge

- Highest growth observed in terms of understandings of Chinese educational systems, culture and customs.



Knowledge

■ Education System

“ I think I have learned a lot about the school system by observing and talking to both students and teachers in the school. I now have heard multiple perspectives about the system.”

■ Culture and Customs

“Culture and customs are an area that I have grown significantly. I came on this trip with basically no knowledge and I am leaving with all kinds of interesting facts.”

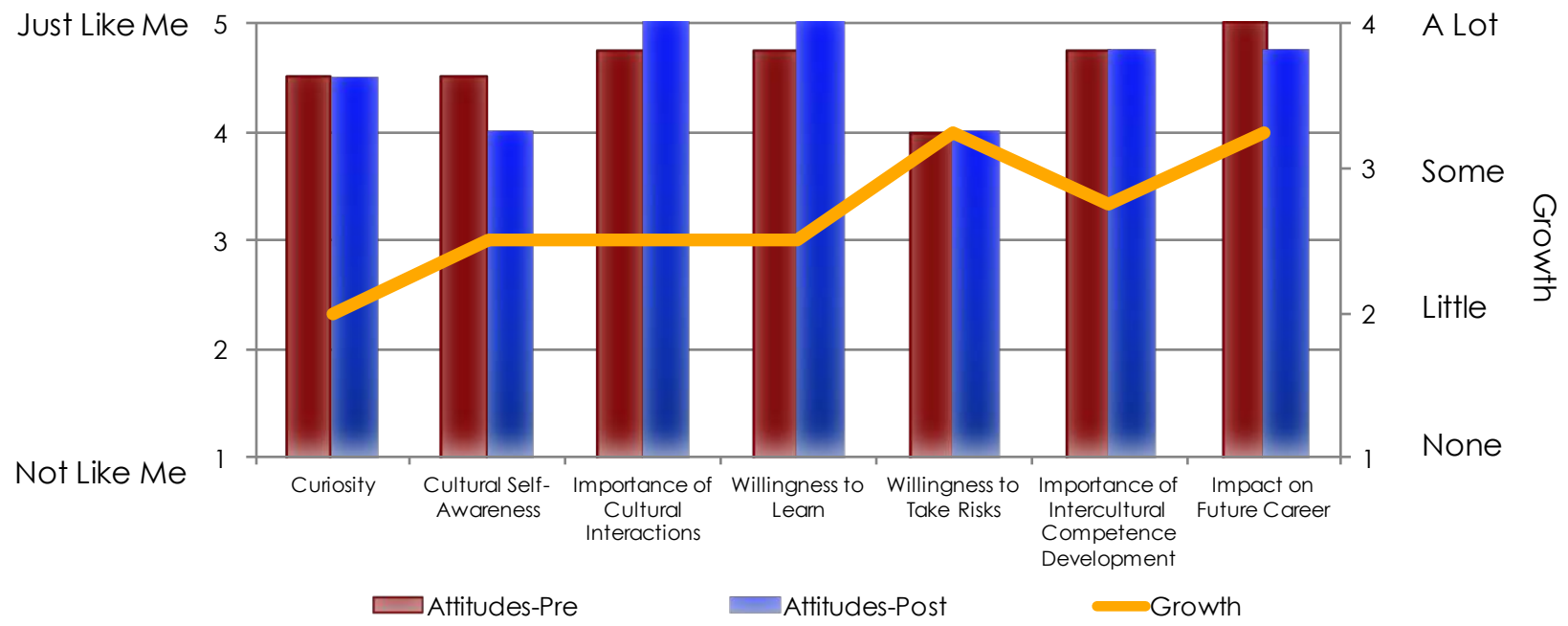
■ Language

“I have been able to practice a little speaking, but my listening is where I think I have had the most growth.”



Impact – Intercultural Attitudes

- Willingness to take risks was rated the lowest but demonstrated the highest growth.



Attitudes

■ Risk-Taking

“I was proud of the risks I took on this trip. I had never been to an area that was so foreign to me. I didn't know the language, the culture, the food, or the customs. Yet, by taking risks and trying new things, I gained valuable experiences.”

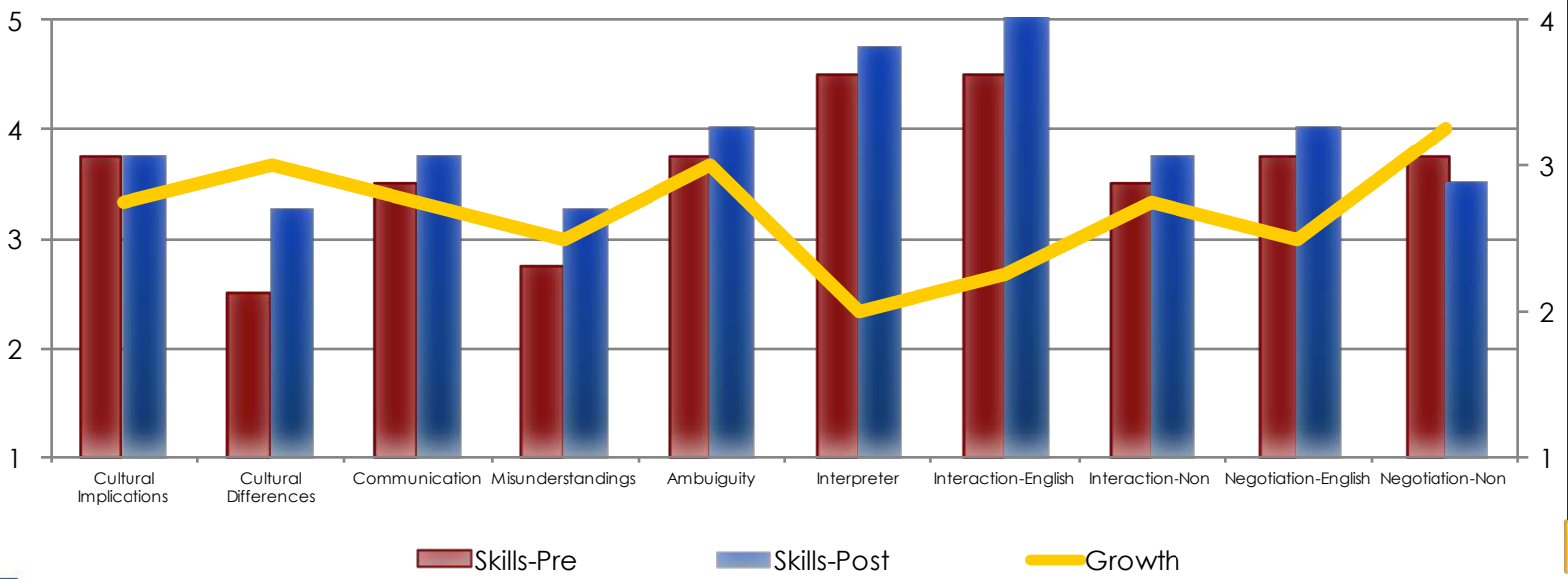
■ Self-Awareness & Continued Growth

“Before I had only been to European countries so I thought I had a handle on things, but going to a country as foreign as China has made me understand that I have a lot to learn.”



Impact – Intercultural Skills

- Highest rating observed in terms of working with interpreters and interaction with English-speaking Chinese;
- Highest growth observed in terms of noting cultural differences in verbal and non-verbal behaviors; negotiating ambiguous situations, interacting and negotiating with non-native English speakers



Skills

– Negotiation & Communication

“I have gained a lot of experience **negotiating cultural differences** from this trip.”

“I am much better at reading and understanding the **nonverbal cues** around me, especially in school settings and public transportation.”

“After we spent a few days listening to non-native speakers and having to fend for ourselves, I began to feel way more **confident in how I communicate.**”

Teaching Applications

- To be culturally responsive you have to **know about** the culture of the student you are working with. Take the time to find out about language, family dynamics, schooling, cultural values. When you have those basic tools in your kit you can find ways to interact with the student in a way that is more comfortable with them.
- Teachers need **to be aware** that students who have not always been in our education system, or that may have parents who weren't raised in our education system, may be coming to the classroom with very different understandings of how education works or how it is to be valued. Not only will their classroom personas be different, but so will their approaches to learning and interactions with the teacher and other educators.
- I'd like to continue my learning and education about multicultural education and Chinese history, and I'd like to **take this experience into my classroom** with me.

Project Outcomes

- Research
 - Study regarding teacher candidates' experiences
 - Follow-up of teacher candidates' applications of what they learned in their classrooms
- Course Development
 - Submitted course proposal for study-abroad course -TED 580
- Fulbright Proposal
 - Received Fulbright-Hays Group Project Funding (<http://goo.gl/YKV70D>)