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Chinese Culture Preparation

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Chinese Culture Preparation

An Interdisciplinary Qualifying Project Report
submitted to the Faculty of
Worcester Polytechnic Institute
in partial fulfillment of requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Science

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Abstract

Each year WPI students go abroad to perform their Interactive Qualifying Projects. Preparing them to live in a foreign country for the duration of the project is essential to the success of this experience. The project's goal is to produce an online resource for students who are doing an off campus project in China. The creation of lecture videos and a companion website on a variety of topics will enable students to learn more about Chinese culture before leaving campus.

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Executive Summary

China is a powerful country with a rich cultural heritage and plays a major role in the World. In the WPI Strategic Plan, China is recognized as one of the priority regions that continues to have an increasing global impact. There are three out of 45+ WPI's global project centers that are located in China: Hong Kong IQP Center, Hangzhou IQP Center, and Beijing Project Center. Approximately 75 WPI students and 7-8 faculty advisors spend one entire term or approximately two months in China to do their projects annually.

Previous feedback from students and faculty advisors who went to China for their projects, strongly recommended that more cultural preparation should be done prior to their arrival in China. There were also a number of unpleasant incidents that could have been avoided but occurred due to unawareness of the cultural differences. One example is that, in B15, a group of students faced a local police interference charge because the students and faculty advisors were unaware that conducting interviews and surveys in public must be approved by the local authorities. Another example, in E15, a student visited the Summer Palace in Beijing and insulted a Chinese mascot without any bad intentions. However, what the student did was considered unacceptable behavior in Chinese culture.

Additionally, there were a countless number of times when an advisor, who is very familiar with the Chinese culture, had to act as an intermediary between the local project sponsors and WPI students in order for the conversations to go smoothly and without misunderstandings. Therefore, it is fundamental and urgent for all WPI's faculty and students to be exposed to and learn about China and its culture for the projects and programs to run productively, effectively, and successfully.

This project, Online Culture Training for Students Going to Project Centers in China is meant to develop a digital way, termed a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to expose, prepare, and support students and advisors about culture, history, and daily life in China in order to enhance their experiences with projects and the local Chinese populace. Since WPI students and advisors are working on their research project closely with local college students, advisors, and sponsors this project would be a useful and advantageous program. It is important to respect and honor the traditions and culture of the host county and people.

An analytical review of the current situation of the Chinese IQP's was the initial step. Then research of established protocols of cross-culture online training resources was made of current study abroad programs based on programs sponsored from a number of universities and other organizations. The conclusion was that an organized, structured, and systematic online culture training resource about Chinese culture for WPI's IQP program was a necessity. A number of particular topics were determined based on students' and advisors' needs. Those topics were vetted and then covered in seven modules or VLE for students, advisors, and anyone else going to China can utilize the material through the website as well as using the WPI's Canvas. However, creating and implementing all seven modules was not possible in this initial phase. Therefore, it was determined to focus on only creating and implementing four of the modules at this time..

This Online Culture Training for Students Going to Project Centers in China project developed and implemented four modules based on the project center location in Beijing, China. These topics and all information gathered are then used to create, develop, and implement a website as well as on Canvas. These modules are: Food, Language, Fun Things to Do, and Transportation. Each module provides students and advisors with essential and useful information

as well as videos, in order to generate a better understanding and improved outcomes between the local people and WPI's students and advisors,.

Canvas provides useful links about each topic plus quizzes to review and test the individual's comprehensive knowledge at the end of each topic. The Food and Language modules were constructed and implemented first, in order for students and advisors who were going to the project center in Hong Kong to test them. A survey was constructed to gather feedback about whether or not the students and advisors going to Hong Kong thought the modules were useful and effective.

1.0 Introduction

The current generation of students has grown up using the internet, with a majority of American students having internet access both at school and at home. "In 2013, 74.4 percent of all households reported Internet use, with 73.4 percent reporting a high-speed connection".[1] With this trend, students are increasingly at ease in using technology in their studies. At universities, many professors are embracing the addition of online resources. Virtual Learning Environments (VLE) are an additional part of many classes, allowing students to interact with the material in a completely new fashion. The addition of discussion boards and suggested links to learn about a topic in more detail benefit students. Furthermore, the VLEs aid students who do not learn as well through the often used PowerPoint presentations professors systematically go through. Another major advantage VLEs provide is that it allows students to learn outside of class time and at their own pace.

For students who travel overseas to complete their Interactive Qualifying Projects (IQPs) they do have a course to complete before going abroad but there is not enough time to impart to students all they need to know before leaving the United States. Many of these pre-departure classes only cover minimal information that students need to complete their project and little else. The students who go abroad for their Major Qualifying Project (MQP) have no pre-departure course provided.

Many IQP and MQP students go abroad and leave completely unprepared for the cultural differences they will experience. For example, some college students before leaving for overseas might have only limited experience, if any, of riding on a metro. During their time abroad, they

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[1] File, Thom, and Camille Ryan. *Computer and Internet Use in the United States: 2013*. Rep. no. ACS-28. American Community Survey Reports, 2014. Web. <https://www.census.gov/history/pdf/2013computeruse.pdf>.

may need to take the metro regularly to commute to their project site and to take advantage of their overseas experience. The goal of this project is to create a Virtual Learning Environment that allows students to learn about the culture and environment they are going to live in for two months.

2.0 Background

This section establishes the issue of the current preparation process for WPI's students who are going abroad to China in order to do their IQPs and MQPs. The principle problem of the current preparation process is that the students do not gain enough information and knowledge about China. The lack of information has often led to misunderstanding situations between the WPI students and the locals in China.

Many students unwittingly said or did something in a public setting that to Americans would be of no consequence, while according to Chinese culture they committed a major blunder. The advisors at the project centers endeavor to smooth relations between the WPI students and the project sponsors. However, the advisors cannot always be there and run interference. This is why having a resource to inform students about Chinese culture is a necessity.

2.1 Information on Projects and Centers in China

WPI's IQPs, both On-Campus and Off-Campus projects are fundamental to every student at WPI. There are three out of more than 45 WPI's global project centers located in China.[2] Those three global project centers are Hong Kong IQP Center, Hangzhou IQP Center, and Beijing Project Center. This equates to approximately 75 students and 7 to 8 advisors from WPI spending about two months in China in order to do their projects. Annually, these students and advisors are staying at various project sites working with local people in China.

It is important for WPI to have these students go to China. With its long history surviving in one form or another through countless dynasty changes, the current incarnation of China rebirthed 67 years ago. Even now, China still preserves many customs accumulated from ancient

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2 "Interdisciplinary & Global Studies." *Interdisciplinary & Global Studies WPI*. N.p., n.d. Web. 22 Feb. 2017.
<https://www.wpi.edu/academics/departments/interdisciplinary-global-studies>.

China while ever expending its industry and world presence. "In February 2011 it formally overtook Japan to become the world's second-largest economy".[3] With the growth of the economy and increase of white collar jobs, engineering firms and projects have been growing substantially. "In 1982, the Chinese S[scientist]/E[engineer] labor force was 1.2 million, about 80% the size of the American S/E labor force (at 1.5 million in 1980). By 2010, China had 3.2 million scientists and engineers, compared with 4.3 million in the United States"[4]. This massive amount of engineers has been drastically increasing to meet demand.

2.2 Incidents in History

In previous years, many incidents have occurred between WPI's students and the locals in China. The main reasons for the occurrences were misunderstanding situations, miscommunication, and the lack of understanding between cultures (language and culture differences). An example is that, in B15, a group of student encountered local police interference charge because the students and faculty advisors were unaware that conducting interviews and surveys in public need approval by the local authorities.[5] Another accidental incident, in E15, a student visited the Summer Palace in Beijing and unknowingly insulted a Chinese mascot without any malice.[6] However, what the student did was considered unacceptable in regards to Chinese culture. Moreover, there was countless number of times when an advisor, who is very familiar with the Chinese culture, had to act as a liaison to keep situations in control. Often the advisors must act as the intermediary between the Chinese project sponsors and students in order for the conversations to occur without unnecessary misunderstandings.

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[3] "China profile - full overview." *BBC News*. BBC News, 21 Jan. 2016. Web
[4] Xie, Yu, Chunni Zhang, and Qing Lai. "China's rise as a major contributor to science and technology." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*. National Academy of Sciences, 01 July 2014. Web.
[5] Liang, Jianyu . *History of WPI in China*. 2016. Professor's view of incidents in China.
[6] Ibid.

2.3 Project Plan

The current preparation process that WPI has employed has proven to be insufficient to properly prepare students traveling to China. The cause of most of the problems that occur is that students are used to American culture and manners, which are much more lax than in other countries. Even students exposed to earlier familial generations tend to be of European or South American culture, very different from the Chinese. Many students do not know much if anything about the location of their project, let alone the cultural niceties that many locals grow up with and find instinctual. This leads to numerous incidents that could be prevented if students had a better understanding of the locals' culture and language.

There are various ways to approach and solve this problem. The simplest of them is to provide readings and lectures in the limits of a structured class to students that they can then use in China. This way, WPI's students have a better understanding of the country that the students choose to spend their times away from homes for about two months. Then there is the use of online resources.

There are many online websites students can find to learn about China. However, many of these are from or written by untrusted sources and how can a student tell the difference? Next many of the websites are outdated. In order for students to be informed, students need instruction about the Chinese culture from a reliable website.

As of January 2017, Worcester Polytechnic Institute subscribes to Canvas. Canvas is an online resource that allows professors to supplement their classes by posting online articles, homework, quizzes, discussion boards and videos. This resource is very useful for sharing documents and videos but not the best for having an engaging and visual document. To have the

best possible resource for students it was determined that Canvas should be used to contain links to the information, but the literature should be done on a separate website that can be interactive and less crowded.

After much research, it was determined that there were specific topics that WPI's students should learn and understand to make their time in China smoother and more enjoyable. These topics could also reduce the risk of unwanted incidents between WPI students as well as the advisors and the students, staffs, and local people in China. Following are the topics that would be the most advantageous to students doing their IQPs or MQPs in China.

1. *Chinese language*

2. *History of China*

3. *Important landmarks and fun things to do in China*

4. *Information about transportation in China*

5. *Chinese food*

There is other important information that students should know before their departures to China. However, due to the time constraints for this project of 6 months there is not enough time to include everything. Instead, the current form of the VLE concentrates on information that would be useful for those going to Beijing. The website can then be expanded by others in following years.

2.4 Survey

There are numerous ways for individuals to learn new things and each person takes on and acquires the information differently. For instance, watching video is the best way for one person to learn a new language such as Chinese but reading might be a better way than watching video

for another student to learn a language, or a combination of both methods. The goal is to create an applicable VLE containing an interactive website and modules on Canvas.

To determine if the VLE created is sufficient in teaching a wide range of different types of learners a survey was created and distributed. The survey was designed to be short in length of approximately ten to fifteen questions. The point of the survey was to be short and concise while still being capable of gathering the student users' valuable opinions of the VLE.

The survey was meant to have appropriate and effective questions regarding the provided information on the interactive website and Canvas. The questions reflect the respondents' thoughts and opinions on the information that was imparted to them. Thus, what part of the information provided to them should be expanded and improve.

A good research survey that would present accurate and acceptable results on the general thoughts of the target must follow an applicable pattern of how to conduct a survey. Below are the steps that were carried out in order to design an effective research survey:

1. *Determine the objective of project*

2. *Establish the goal of the survey*

3. *Decide on the target*

4. *Create the survey*

5. *Review the survey*

6. *Distribute the survey*

7. *Gather results*

8. *Derive conclusions from the gathered results*

The first process was to determine the objective of the project which was to design and create an interactive website and E-modules on Canvas for WPI students who are going abroad to China for their IQPs and MQPs. The purpose is to reduce the risk of miscommunication and misunderstanding situations between WPI students and the local people in China. Thus, their experiences of China would be more memorable and enjoyable.

The second process was to establish the goal of the survey. In other words, what is the reason for designing a survey and what is the problem the survey is supposed to address.

The third step was to decide on the targeted group of students. The target group was who would receive the information about the project and respond to the survey accordingly. In this case, the target was already determined to be the WPI students who are going to China for their IQPs and MQPs.

The fourth step was to create the survey. The question on the survey should reflect the target's thoughts and understandings about the given information.

The fifth step was to review the survey. In this step, the survey should be reviewed carefully and thoughtfully to verify that it would provide accurate results once distributed to the target.

The next process was to distribute the survey to the selected target.

The following action was to gather the results once the results were done by the target.

The last process was to reach conclusions based on the results. The results were evaluated and the project would be adjusted and improved based on the results.

2.5 Background Conclusion

Intuitively, based on the general and background information amassed, this particular project would definitely have a great impact on WPI's preparation process for students who are

going to China for their IQPs and MQPs. The created website and Canvas learning centers can advance WPI's preparation process for students who are going China and could be developed for many other countries WPI students travel to around the world, to take their projects and experiences overseas to the next level. By designing and implementing an interactive website and E-modules on Canvas, the students learn and collect more information about the topics that they are actually interested in or concerned about. As a result, the students are further exposed to and have more information about China and its culture. This leads to the lessening of unexpected incidents and more pleasant working and living experiences amongst WPI students, local students, and the local people of China.

3. Methodology

The project goal is to produce a resource specifically for WPI students who are going to do a campus project in Beijing. Based off of prior research and responses from previous students who completed their IQPs, it was determined that the classes prior to leaving the United States do not provide all the education that is needed. Due to the short timeframe for the students to learn all the information that would be useful, it was determined that a VLE that the students can use outside of class should be created. The following list is the objectives that need to be met to successfully meet the goal of this project:

- To identify the strengths and weaknesses of the VLE

- Create a VLE that will allow students to learn and reference

- To determine students' improvement and satisfaction with the VLE

The first two objectives are to determine if the VLE is successful at teaching students the information they must know. The last objective is to ascertain if the students thought that the VLE was effective, easy to use, and enhanced the overall learning experience.

3.1 Strengths and weaknesses of VLE

The primary drawback with Virtual Learning Environment s is that they cannot adjust to the user's individual learning style. For computer based learning, the Felder-Silverman's learning style model is the one that is most typically used by researchers. This model has students learning preferences divided into four dimensions with each having 2 scales as seen in Figure 1.

Dimension	Definition
Verbal	Get more out of words—written and spoken explanations
Visual	Remember best what they see—pictures, diagrams, flow charts, time lines, films, and demonstrations
Sequential	Gain understanding in linear steps Follow logical stepwise paths in finding solutions
Global	Learn in large jumps Solve complex problems quickly once they have grasped the big picture
Active	Understand information best by doing something with it,Like group work
Reflective	Understand information best by thinking about it quietly first ,Prefer to work alone
Sensing	Like learning facts Solve problems by well-established methods and dislike complications
Intuitive	Prefer discovering possibilities and relationships Like innovation and dislike repetition

Figure 1: Felder-Silverman's learning style module[7]

"According to Felder and Silverman (1988), learners having learning material, which fits their learning styles, learn more effectively and progress better".[8] Using this concept it was determined that the VLE should cater to as many learning styles within reason to aid students in absorbing the material. Using a study where Felder-Silverman Learning style dimensions were studied in relation to online learning with a sample size of 207 students from Massey University of New Zealand and Vienna University of Technology in Austria found that "57% of the students in our study were found to have an active preference, 58% a sensing preference, 87% a visual preference, and 56% a global preference".[9] The yearly users of the VLE will be a much smaller number but it assumes that the percentages of types of learners will be approximately the same as

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[7] Özpolat, Ebru, and Gözde B. Akar. "Automatic detection of learning styles for an e-learning system." *Computers & Education* 53.2 (2009): 355-67. Web.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Graf, Sabine , Silvia Rita Viola, Tommaso Leo, and Kinshuk. *REPRESENTATIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF FELDERSILVERMAN LEARNING STYLES: AN EMPIRICAL MODEL*. Rep. N.p., n.d. Web.

the cited study. Based on the data, most of the dimensions of the Felder-Silverman Learning Style Model were approximately equal for the population of the study excluding the visual preference.

To accommodate the different learning styles, the VLE was created with different parts that will aid students in learning according to their preferred methods. The following table suggests different online teaching methods that will aid each type of learning style.

Learning style	Recommendations in learning and VLE
Active	Linear text, general vision maps, chat, forum and emails. Navigation based on arrows (back and forward), providing printings. Guessing possible questions and answering them with other students.
Reflective	Lesson objectives, case studies, conceptual maps and slide shows based on text as well as linear text. Online help and email. Opportunity to write short summaries about the already learned material and emphasising activities where learners can watch and listen.
Sensing	Facts, concrete material and data, hands-on activities, and practical material. Applying theory into practice, relating information to the real world. Slideshows, hypertext, a response system, a digital library, media clips, graphics, audio objects, case studies, conceptual maps, multimedia slideshows, graphics, digital movies, audio objects, and linear text.
Intuitive	Concepts and theories. Letting the students discover possibilities, fostering their creativity and innovative talent, asking them for interpretations that link data and facts. Lesson objectives, conceptual maps, text and multimedia based slideshows, graphics, digital movies, audio objects, and linear text.
Visual	Graphics, tables, flow charts, images, videos, demonstrations, conceptual maps, colour notes with highlighters, slides with multimedia and animations. Slideshows, a digital library, case studies and a focus on synthesis.
Verbal	Text-based material, also including audio objects, lesson objectives, hypertext, slideshows, a digital library, conceptual maps, and hypertext. Opportunity to write summaries about the learning material, work in groups and discuss and lecture learning.
Sequential	Guidance and having a predefined learning path.
Global	Slideshows, a response system, media objects, and open course structure.

Figure 2: Recommended activities in learning VLE according to the FSLSM[10]

10 KANNINEN, ESSI. "LEARNING STYLES AND E-LEARNING." Thesis. TAMPERE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY , 2009. 12 Dec. 2008. Web.

3.2 Creation of a VLE for Online Learning

Using the research on different learning styles, a Virtual Learning Environment was created with the goal of aiding the maximum number of students by employing different learning styles on the website.

3.2.1 Content

The modules are structured by topic e.g. Chinese food, teaching Mandarin, transportation and cultural activities around Beijing. These topics were chosen based on responses from the previous year's students who traveled to Beijing. The information that was included in each module was determined by the project team. With the team being composed of students from both China and America the information was chosen based on what questions the American had about living in China and what the Chinese had to learn when coming to America. This allowed the content to be relevant for those going overseas.

3.2.2 Delivery Platform

After exploring various options, it was proposed to use the Canvas system that WPI is currently subscribed to. After exploring the system, it was determined that the Canvas system would be effective for organizing the information into separate modules. Each module contains a lecture video, suggested links for more information, a quiz and discussion board. The content for students to read with was completed on another website in order to customize it and add interactive elements.

3.2.3 Website

To fully integrate the objectives and make the website as useful as possible, instead of using Canvas for providing the written information, a separate website was created to allow fully

customized pages of created and inventive interactive components. For each module there is one primary web page with short and organized paragraphs based on subheadings in the module: tipping, allergies, street food for example. This allows a linear format that is beneficial for sequential learners, while the subheadings allow global learners to skip around if they so desire. In addition to text, the website has pictures and an interactive map or picture for each module; allowing students to connect with the content and leading to improved comprehension and retention.

3.2.4 Lecture Video

For each module there is a ten to fifteen minute lecture video, links to supplementary information, a short quiz and discussion board. The overall open system of a VLE is beneficial for global learners that enjoy being able to set their own path and pace of learning. There is a suggested order for students to complete the activities adding a sense of order for those who are sequential learners.

The lecture videos are useful for both global and visual learners allowing them to view the information being presented in a different way than the characteristic written one. Lecture videos are also beneficial for they force the students to completely focus on the material both visually and auditory, allowing for fewer distractions in the learning process.

3.2.5 Suggested Links

Unfortunately, due to time restraints, not everything could be covered in the lecture videos nor on the website. The suggested links provide both videos and websites to students so that no matter what their preferred learning style is, there are additional safe sources that allow students

to acquire additional worthwhile information. This page of links also allows them to easily find more information about topics that they are particularly interested in exploring further.

3.2.6 Quizzes and Discussion Board

Each module has a short ten question quiz. The purpose of the quiz is less about testing the students then confirming to the professor that the students have watched the video lectures and read the information on the website. Conversely, the discussion board is completely for the students' benefit. The discussion board allows them to discuss and ask questions on whatever they may not understand, question, want to learn more about, or get other viewpoints.

3.3 Determining student progress and satisfaction with the VLE

The most effective way to verify that students are able to learn effectively with the Virtual Learning Environment is to have them sample a module and then conduct a survey to gather their opinions on their VLE experience. To collect data for this project there was only one group going to a Chinese region and that was the group traveling to Hong Kong. This is not the primary target audience since this VLE is specific for those going to Beijing, but the food module content would be relevant for their stay in Asia.

To determine if the students are learning from the content provided, they were given the same quiz that the students who would be going to the Beijing project center would take. This is a multiple choice quiz and is based upon the lecture, video and the website; they are given thirty minutes to complete the quiz. See appendix for the quiz and student results.

After completing the food module the students were given a survey to fill out. The survey was a mix of multiple choice questions and free response. The data collected from this survey includes basic information about the student, what type of learner they are and their

opinions about the VLE. See appendix for the survey and student responses. From the survey results it is now possible to determine what parts of the VLE need to be improved.

4.0 Findings

A survey was distributed to determine if the VLE would be a valuable method in facilitating students going to China for their projects. The feedback from the students was collected online and then analyzed to determine if the VLE was effective. The results were then used to ascertain which sections of the online course needed to be revised and improved.

4.1 Response Rate

The survey was distributed to the students going to Beijing for their MQP in the summer of 2017. Initially there were 25 students accepted by the project center, of those students only 13 accepted. The ideal response rate would be 100%, but realistically the rate was expected to be a minimum of 45%. The survey was available for two weeks and multiple reminders were sent to the students requesting them to complete the survey.

Unfortunately, the actual response rate was 23.1%, this equated to only three students responding. This response rate was disappointing since there is data showing that 7 of the 13 students had used Canvas for over 8 minutes. The other 6 students had used Canvas for less than 3 minutes or not at all as seen in figure 3.
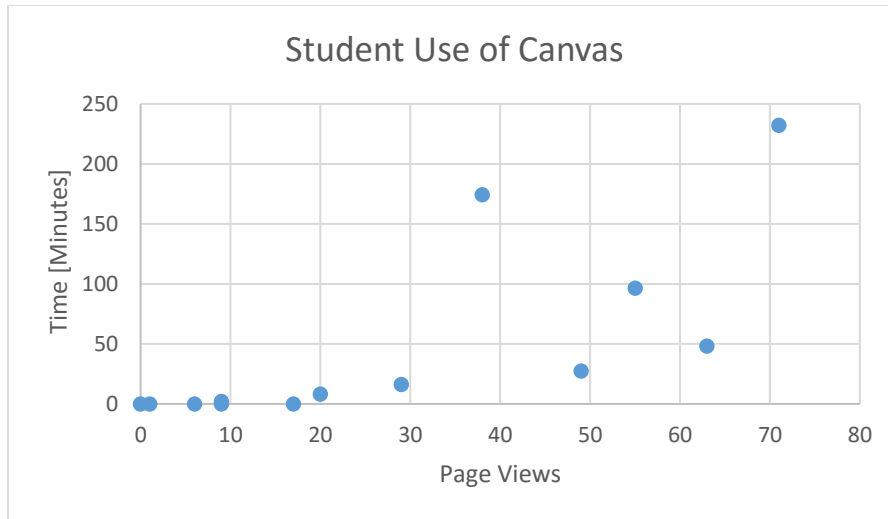
Figure 3: Student use of Canvas

In fact, the data analytics provided by Canvas provided more information than the survey results. This additional data was utilized to supplement the surveys that were returned.

4.2 Canvas Results

A benefit of using Canvas as part of the VLE is that it does contain analytic recourses. The analysis tools are included for professors to use to ascertain the progress that the students are making. For this project, these tools were likewise useful to determine the use and success of the VLE.

The primary method of determining how successful the videos and information on the website are in instructing students may be judged by the quiz results that are the final section in each module. The relationship between the two, however, is not necessarily connected since part of the reason for using the VLE is to accommodate different learning styles. There are students who may not test well but still have learned the information presented. The quiz grades can be seen in figure 4 in a box and whisker plot.
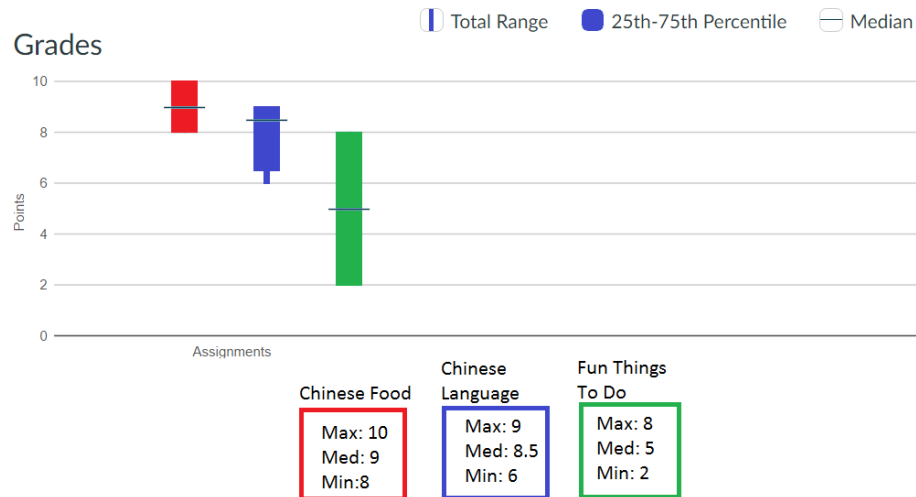
Figure 4: Quiz Results

From the quiz results, many conclusions can be assumed. The Chinese food quiz, see appendix B, contains a range of questions. Many of the questions relate to useful information for students that they will apply to their time in China. In contrast, the Fun Thing To Do quiz which is a mix of useful information and interesting facts. The inclusion of questions asking about what students may consider unimportant details may be the reason that many students performed poorly. The link between the good quiz grades and the quiz content appear to be related to the relevance of the information being asked and the apparent usefulness of that information.

4.3 Benefits of Canvas

From the survey question "what parts of Canvas were useful?", the result shows that videos were the most worthwhile part for students. There were several videos included: food, language, famous places, and the metro system in Beijing. The reasons that make videos the

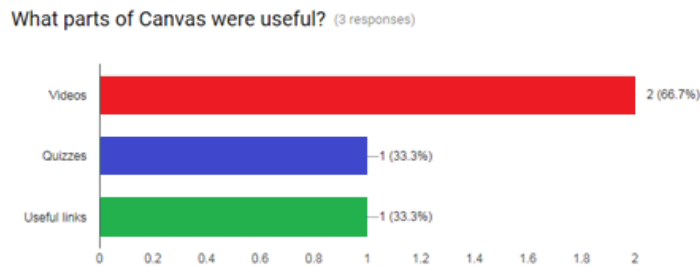most popular part for students appear to be uncomplicated.

What parts of Canvas were useful? (3 responses)

Figure 5: Student Views of Canvas

Primarily, the videos were exceedingly straightforward. The tools which were applied to produce the videos were the Echo360 video platform and Camtasia Video Editor software. The framework for the content was PowerPoint slides complemented with relevant pictures. The audios were recorded while the slides were on the screen. Finally, a precise explanation was provided for every slide. Therefore, students would have a clear understanding of the important facts for each slide presented. For the transportation videos, there were various videos shot in RAW[11] that were recorded in Beijing metro stations, the tasks included cutting the video, inserting relevant pictures and annotations, and adding the audio tract to produce the finished videos. The videos were similar

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[11] output of a video camera recording that is unprocessed data from a camera's image sensor. Raw footage retains the highest quality of images that the camera sensor could produce. Since it is raw or unrefined, the footage remains as it was captured, retaining all details, true colors and lighting. This allows considerable ability for modification and editing. *www.techopedia.com/definition/3126/raw-footage*

to the video style used in a VLOG (a blog that contains video content) It gave a straightforward introduction to metro stations in Beijing.

In addition, the videos were brief, each typically 3 minutes long. Even the longest video covering food, which included the differences between authentic Chinese and American Chinese food, different regional cuisines, famous Beijing restaurants, street food, and tips, needed only 12 minutes to be viewed. Therefore, the concise videos truly saved time and were more enjoyable for students, instead of reading time consuming and often tedious articles by themselves. Additionally they provided for two types of learning styles, visual and auditory.

The quizzes and useful links also have their own advantages. For quizzes, students could get the important information that the author wants them to know. For useful links, students who were willing and wanted to learn more particulars about Chinese culture, life, or cities before heading to China would definitely benefit from using the relevant links.

4.4 Time Spent on each Module

The pie chart below illustrates that two students spent less than 30 minutes and one student spent 30 to 60 minutes to finish a module on Canvas and the website as seen in figure 6.
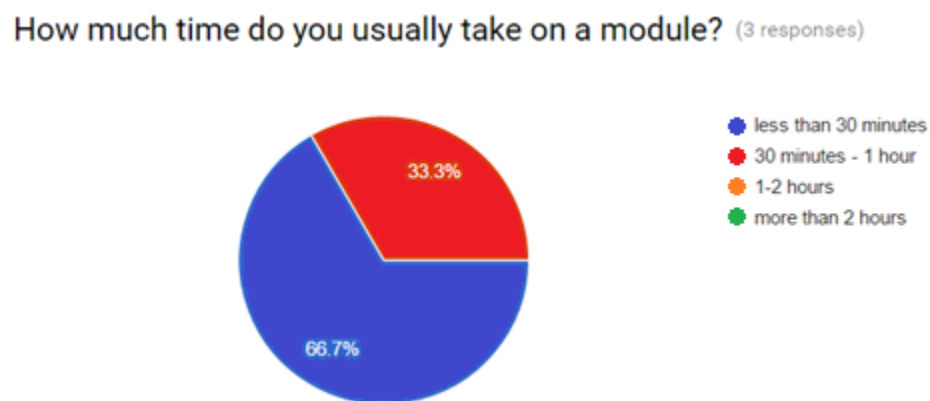

Figure 6: Time Spent on each Module

The results were excellent since the principle concept of the program was providing basic information of China, especially Beijing, for students in a straightforward way that could be learned quickly and efficiently. Based on the time spent for each module, the total time that would be to finish all modules were two hours. Compared with course ID 2050 that students must take before leaving for their IQP and requires an investment of one term, the VLE saved a great deal of time and truly created a flexible learning condition for students.

Students spend only thirty-five days in China. It is not necessary to teach them excessive details about culture and language. What is important is to focus on the most important and useful information that would help students. Compressing the desired facts and teaching them by video gives many advantages. It entails two types of learning patterns: visual and verbal to reinforce the information provided, and the students can review as many times as they desire to acquire the facts. It can even be reviewed while in China when retention might be more focused once they are actually in the environment the information is to be used.

4.5 Expand the useful links

All participants of the survey thought that the useful links were very helpful and should be expanded on.
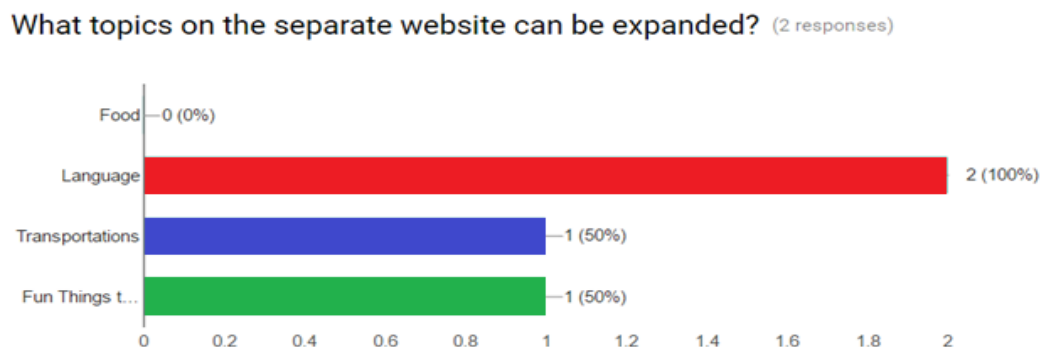

Figure 7: Sections to Improve

Food Section - the useful links were focused on table manners, how to use chopsticks, and other YouTube videos that could be of interest to the student. For example, the links definitely helped prepare students to know about basic Chinese table manners; how to greet, set chopsticks on the table, and how to correctly use chopsticks. Students did not really need all that information, though might be interested in knowing. There would not be solemn banquet for students to attend and chopsticks were not necessary for the meal, a spoon would be the common tool etiquette required to eat a meal. Therefore, more links or videos which introduced nearby restaurants to try and the dining halls of Beijing University at the School of Chemical Engineering would definitely be useful links.

Language Section - the main tool for Chinese Mandarin learning is provided on Transparent, a web service that WPI subscribes to that is to teach students a language. Unfortunately, a proportion of students who would head to China for MQP only seek to learn some basic Chinese words or sentences such as how much is that and hello, useful for communication in daily life. Adding some videos from YouTube such as Chinese phrases for the beginner would be a good choice to improve this segment.

Fun Things to Do Section - useful links offered for this part were videos that gave specific information on some of the famous places to visit, such as the Summer Palace and The Great Wall. The links provided repeated much of the content of the short videos which were already available in this part. Therefore, instead of giving information of famous places, some useful links could introduce nearby gyms, shopping, theater, and possibly even some malls for students to go to.

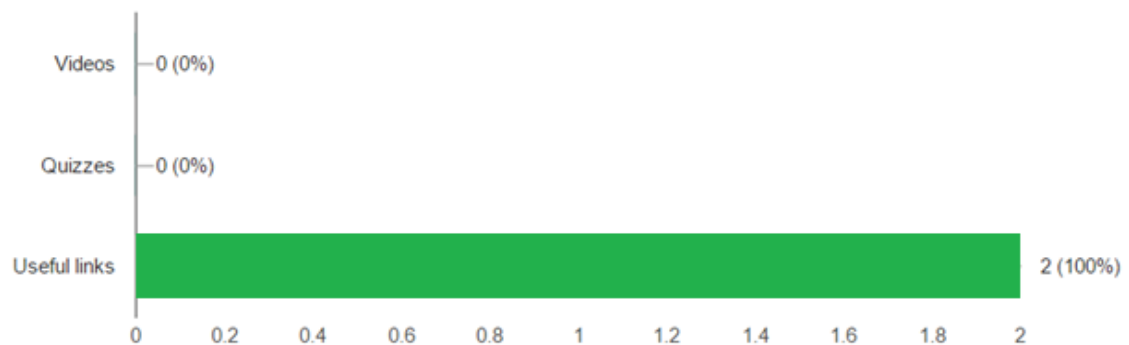## What parts of Canvas can be expanded? (2 responses)

Videos —0 (0%)

Quizzes —0 (0%)

Useful links 2 (100%)

0   0.2   0.4   0.6   0.8   1   1.2   1.4   1.6   1.8   2

Figure 8: Parts to Expand Upon

4.6 Expansion of the Website

From the bar chart of "What topics on the separate website can be expanded", the language, transportation, and fun things to do could all be improved and supplemented with more links.

Language   The language lessons provided words used frequently in daily Chinese life and transportation language to inform the students of what they will be hearing and speaking. A significant improvement for the language section would be to add audio for each word to demonstrate how to pronounce it. The Chinese use of tone and inflection is very different from the Western European languages most students know or studied. In Chinese, the same word with a different pronunciation can mean something totally different and the sounds themselves are very unfamiliar for American students

Transportation   Even though the website discusses the metro system, Uber, and taxis in Beijing, students could use more information about how to travel in China given that summer is the best weather for taking a trip. Therefore, adding some useful website links and videos to show

how to book tickets and what is needed to take an airplane trip, plus how to use the China Railway High-Speed trains would definitely aid the students.

Fun Things to Do   As previously mentioned in the expansion of useful links sec. 4.4.1, more information on gyms, shopping, malls, cinema and theatre, and places to hike or other outdoor venues should be included.

4.7 Switch the Contents of Language Video

The language video was designed to show students how to register the account for the school provided language-learning website, Transparent. A short overview of this website was also included. From the column chart below, the feedback showed that most participants were not satisfied with this video. There are two possible explanations of the low satisfaction: video was not clear enough to demonstrate how registration works or videos did not show the contents which students were hoping to find.

The first explanation does not seem plausible for every step necessary was shown in detail with the demonstration. This leaves the explanation of rethinking what the students wanted and to provide that information.

5.0 Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to prepare students for a spending a term abroad in Beijing. To achieve this it was determined that a VLE should be created. Based upon this decision the project developed three objectives:

- Create a VLE that will allow students to learn and reference

- To identify the strengths and weaknesses of the VLE

- To determine students' improvement and satisfaction with the VLE

During the course of this project these objectives were completed allowing the team to succeed in the resolution of the overall goal of aiding students traveling abroad to Beijing. Due to time constraints, the project has many avenues that can still be expanded upon.

5.1 Recommendations

Even though the project was competed with limited time and member skillset the VLE was well done and is useful for students going

5.1.1 Lecture Video Improvement

The primary concern with the lecture video method was condensing the information into a decent length video. Currently each section has one general overview video that is 10-15 minutes long. However, it has been established that many students today do not have the attention span to focus on a video that is over 10 minutes. The solution is keeping the current videos that are a general overview and to create more that are shorter and focuses on a single topic in more detail. For example in the food section there can be a single video that is only 3 minutes long that demonstrates how to use chopsticks.

Another improvement to the lecture videos would to improve the video quality. The current videos are well done considering that the project members have never created videos previously. If there was more time that could be focused solely on video creation then more advanced videos could be created using more professional programs. Ideally the videos would be designed better and flow smoother. Using transitions and use of animation would also help grab the viewer's attention without being to over the top and detracting from the information that is being presented.

5.1.2 Website Improvement

The website in its current form is attractive and to the point. If given more time and experience with website design then the website could be made more appealing to college students. However, in its current form, it is still better than Blackboard or Canvas in appearance and is able to be interactive. Currently the website is simple following a basic color scheme and uses interactive maps to get the user to be more involved in learning. Ideally with metrics collected from future groups going to Beijing; data could be collected on how the website was used and improve based upon the survey results.

Additionally the website could be improved by having specific information about where the students are staying and the IQP program they are participating in. A good example of this is Princeton's website for their Center on Contemporary China. With more experience and time, the website could be developed and be more beneficial to the students going to Beijing on IQP or other Chinese locations.

5.1.3 Survey Improvement

For this initial implementation of the project a survey was created to determine if the Virtual Learning Environment was useful to the students. The survey queried them on the food

module and if it was informational and usable. This survey was limited based on the requirements given the limited audience. It did collect useful data but could be extended and elaborated on by more questions and surveys and over time, getting more students who are participating in or had participated in IQPs in China.

Ideally for future extensions on this project there would be a trio of surveys given to students to get hard data on what they learned and if they found it beneficial. The idea is to find out what students know before starting ID 2050, after the class, and after they went to Beijing. The first and second surveys would allow the VLE's developers to know what the students learned in the program and to ask questions about student preferences on the VLE after using the system. These two surveys would be a mixture of questions on facts that the students should have learned from the program and questions asking opinions on the different components of the Virtual Learning Environment. This would allow the developers to find out what topics are weak and sections of the VLE need improvement. The third survey would be to find if the students found what they learned in the program useful for life abroad in Beijing and if there are any other topics that should be included in the VLE.

Appendix A: Terms and Definitions

- **Canvas –** a VLE that WPI subscribes to and allows students to obtain class readings, assignments and more online

- **E-learning** – electronic learning generally using the internet or a specific program

- **ID 2050 -** a preparatory class for students who are completing an of campus IQP

- **Interactive Qualifying Project** (IQP) – a WPI junior year project that is designed to benefit others

- **Learning Style** – how a student prefers to learn

- **Major Qualifying Projects** (MQP) – a WPI senior year capstone project that relates to their major

- **Transparent** – a website that teaches student a language through listening, reading and speaking that WPI subscribes to

- **Virtual Learning Environment** (VLE) – a software program or website where information/lessons is taught to students online

- **Worcester Polytechnic Institute** (WPI) – an engineering and science university in Massachusetts, US that is project oriented

Appendix B: Canvas Content

Chinese Food Quiz

After watching the video and exploring the website on Chinese Food, please take the following quiz. There are 10 questions and you have 30 minutes to complete it; but if you completed the rest of the module it should take you only 5 minutes.

Good Luck

Question 1
Which of the followings is an example of Americanized Chinese food?

- ○ Fortune cookies
- ● Two of the above are correct
- ○ General Tso's Chicken
- ○ Crab Rangoon

Question 2
Which of the followings is the default utensil at most restaurants in China?

- ○ Chinese spoons
- ● Chopsticks
- ○ Forks
- ○ Sporks

Question 3
What kind of beverage is served as a default option at a restaurant in China?

- ● Hot Tea
- ○ Water
- ○ Chrysanthemum Tea
- ○ Pepsi

Question 4
Is tap water safe to drink in China?

- ○ No, only bottled water is safe to drink in China.
- ● Yes, but water must be filtered or boiled before drinking
- ○ Yes, but only in the cities
- ○ Yes, it is safe to drink.

Question 5

Is tipping a must-do after one finishes a meal at a local restaurant?

- ◉ No, tipping is not a common practice in China.
- ○ No, students do not pay for service charges in China.
- ○ Yes, tipping is a must.
- ○ Yes, but only at local restaurants in Beijing.

Question 6

Which of these is the most common type of toilet in China?

- ○ Toilet seat with cover
- ◉ Squatting pan
- ○ None of the above
- ○ Electronic toilet

Question 7

Which of the followings is true about public restrooms in China?

- ◉ Toilet papers are not free of charge at public restrooms
- ○ None of the above
- ○ Toilet papers are provided and free of charge at every public restroom
- ○ All of them are free of charge

Question 8

What are the regions in China that are most well known for their hot and spicy cuisines?

- ○ Fijian and Annul
- ◉ Sichuan and Hunan
- ○ Hunan and Jiangsu
- ○ Sichuan and Shandong

Question 9

What are the best websites to look for information about food precautions in Asia?

- ○ TripAdvisor
- ◉ US Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- ○ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- ○ Both CDC and FDA

Question 10

What is the best way to avoid food allergies in China?

- ○   Get the information about food precautions from the CDC and FDA
- ○   Check for a particular ingredient for every meal from the waiter or waitress
- ○   Know what is in the dishes by browsing online when dining out
- ●   All of the above

Chinese Language Quiz

After starting Transparent and exploring the website on Learning Mandarin please take the following quiz.

There are 10 questions and you have 30 minutes to complete it; but if you completed the rest of the module it should take you only 5 minutes.

Good Luck

Question 1

"现金(xiàn jīn)" what does this word mean

○ Debit card

◉ Cash

○ Check

○ Credit card

Question 2

How do you say good morning

○ 午安(wǔ ān)

○ 你好(nǐ hǎo)

○ 晚安(wǎn ān)

◉ 早安(zǎo ān)

Question 3

How do you translate "我是Kyle"

○ He is Kyle

◉ I am Kyle

○ You are Kyle

○ His name is Kyle

Question 4

How do you translate "厕所在哪里(Cèsuǒ zài nǎlǐ)?"

○ Where is the outlet?

○ What is the password?

◉ Where is the bathroom?

○ Do you have shampoo?

Question 5

"电话(Diàn huà)" what does this worlds mean

- ○ Shampoo
- ○ Credit card
- ○ Password
- ◉ Telephone

Question 6

How do you declare your allergies in restaurant?

- ☐ 请给我。。。
- ☐ 我想吃。。。
- ☑ 我不能吃。。。
- ☑ 我对。。。过敏

Question 7

When will you use " 请给我"?

- ○ self-introduction
- ○ greeting to your friend
- ◉ make an order
- ○ ask the direction

Question 8

What does " 五十九" mean?

- ○ 95
- ◉ 59
- ○ 5109
- ○ 509

Question 9

What should you say when you try to begin a conversation with strangers?

- ○ 十分感谢
- ○ 再见
- ◉ 不好意思/ 打扰一下
- ○ 要来我家玩吗

Question 10

What does "地铁站" mean?

- ⊙ metro station
- ○ taxi/ uber
- ○ metro
- ○ bus stop

Transportation Quiz

After watching the video and exploring the website on Beijing Transportation please take the following quiz.

There are 10 questions and you have 30 minutes to complete it; but if you completed the rest of the module it should take you only 5 minutes.

Good Luck

Question 1

Upon your arrival in Beijing, what is the best way to get to Beijing University of Chemical Technology (BUCT)? (If the local students are not available for pick up).

- ⦿   Taxi
- ○   Uber
- ○   Subway
- ○   Airport Shuttle

Question 2

When grab a taxi, how would you tell your driver where to go?

- ⦿   Write down the name of the location before hand in Chinese and show it to the driver
- ○   Directly say the name of the location to the driver in English
- ○   Instead of using taxi service, you prefer to request an Uber because there is a higher chance that Uber driver would be able to speak English.
- ○   None of the above.

Question 3

According to the Beijing Subway System, where would you transfer from line 10 to Beijing International Airport (PEK) line?

- ⦿   Taiyanggong Station
- ○   Xiongmao Huandao Staion
- ○   Wanliu Station
- ○   Shaoyaoju Station

Question 4
Approximately, when is the last train of the day?

○   11PM

○   2AM

○   1AM

○   12AM

Question 5
When is the rush hour in the morning on weekdays?

○   7AM - 9AM

○   5 AM - 6 AM

○   8 AM - 10 AM

○   All of the above

Question 6
When is the rush hour in the evening on weekdays?

○   All of the above

○   5PM

○   6PM

○   7PM

Question 7
What Line does Guangximen station is on?

○   Line 13

○   Line 8

○   Line 9

○   Line 14

Question 8
What Line does Bajiao Amusement Park station is on?

○   Line 1

○   Line 2

○   Line 8

○   Line 9

Question 9

What Line does Beijing Zoo station is on?

- ⦿   Line 4
- ○   Line 2
- ○   Line 10
- ○   Line 16

Question 10

What to do if you miss the station that you want to get off?

- ⦿   Get off at the next station, walk to the other side, get on the subway going to the direction of target station
- ○   Get off at the next station and walk back
- ○   Stay on the subway until it come back to the target station
- ○   All of the above

Fun Things To Do Quiz

After watching the video and exploring the website on Fun Things To Do please take the following quiz.

There are 10 questions and you have 30 minutes to complete it; but if you completed the rest of the module it should take you only 5 minutes.

Good Luck

Question 1

What subway line are there lots of historic sites?

- ⦿   Line 2
- ○   Line 10
- ○   Line 5
- ○   Line 8

Question 2

How long is the Great Wall, and which is the longer section?

- ⦿   13,170.7 mi, Badaling
- ○   120,575 mi, Badaling
- ○   25,500 mi, Juyongguan
- ○   120,575 mi, Juyongguan

Question 3

Which was originally the largest pleasure garden for the emperor?

- ⦿   Old Summer Palace
- ○   Summer Palace
- ○   798 Art Zone
- ○   The Forbidden City

Question 4

The Beijing Zoo the newest zoo in China.

- ○   True
- ⦿   False

Question 5

To get to the Beijing Capital Museum you can take:

☑   Line 1

☑   Taxi

☑   Uber

☑   Walk

Question 6

The Chinese emperors were believed to be _____.

◉   living gods

○   the sun kings

○   sorcerers

○   the hand of god

Question 7

The Forbidden City was built in the ___ dynasty.

◉   Ming

○   Qin

○   Han

○   Western Song

Question 8

798 Art Zone was built in what type of abandoned building

◉   military factory

○   barn

○   shoe factory

○   temple

Question 9

At the Summer Palace the best view is from the _____.

◉   Front-Hill Area

○   Kunming Lake Area

○   Rare-Hill Area

○   Old Area

Question 10

The summer palace was rebuilt by who?

- ● Empress Cixi
- ○ Emperor Kangxi
- ○ Emperor Qin Shi Huang
- ○ Empress Yongle

Appendix C: Website

Chinese Culture Preparation

WPI in China

As part of WPI's signature global projects program, our undergraduate students make an impact in communities throughout China at three world-class project centers with ties to five important Chinese cities. New teams of bright and motivated students travel to these centers each year to immerse themselves in new cultures as they make connections with local students and take on real-world challenges that lie in the critical zone where science and technology meet business needs, social issues, and cultural norms.

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WPI's Current Footprint in China Through Student Projects

Beijing

Beijing, the capital of P.R. China, is a modern, industrialized metropolitan with rich cultural heritage and easy access to other major cities by train or airplane. The Beijing Project Center offers real-world project experiences for students to simultaneously practice their technical skills, apply their innovative ideas, develop their interpersonal abilities, and cultivate their entrepreneurial spirit in a global and innovative world. In particular, WPI students will work in teams with students from Beijing University of Chemical Technology (BUCT). Beijing has hot, humid summers. Average temperatures in Beijing in June range from 66˚F to 86˚F.

Hangzhou

West Lake in downtown Hangzhou and experience on a daily basis the booming growth of Hangzhou, China's 4th largest metropolitan area wit a population of 8 million. From Hangzhou, students can easily travel to Shanghai, only an hour away on the high-speed train, and to many cities on China's seaboard as well as inland. Students will live in furnished apartments for international students on the new campus of Hangzhou Dianzi University (HDU) or in a hotel near the campus.

Hong Kong

The city of Hong Kong offers a gateway to one of the most dynamic and significant regions of the globe and is a growing leader in economic development, transportation efficiency, artistic expression, educational reform, and environmental conservation. This rapid growth and modernization present opportunities as well as difficulties, but WPI students are more than up for the task as they bring ingenious approaches to an array of challenges to make an impact in local communities.

Health and Safety

WPI is committed to the health, safety, and security of all students who participate in our programs. While off-campus study can present unique challenges and inherent risks, we believe that careful research and diligent planning are keys to a safe and rewarding project experience. WPI utilizes several key resources to understand the risks of travel in the countries where we operate, and we urge you to consult these same resources as you research your intended destination. You can also discuss questions and concerns about your travel plans with on-campus resources such as the IGSD, the Student Health Center, the Office of Disability Services, and the Student Development and Counseling Center. It very important that you consider your own health requirements as you review what sites are most interesting to you, and that you carefully review the published information concerning health, safety, and security at the resources linked below prior to applying to a particular site. Make sure to visit the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website for the most up to date health and vaccine information, and review all information in relation to your own health and any medical conditions you may have.

Chinese Food

Differences between American Chinese and Chinese Food

'Food is the first necessity for people' according to an old Chinese saying. The easiest way to learn about a culture is through immersion and the most enjoyable part is trying the new and different foods. Many Westerners before going to China think that they enjoy Chinese food; in reality what they are eating is a poor imitation that has been adjusted throughout time as immigrants have been assimilating. What many people love here in America does not exist in China.

Crab Rangoon	Sweet and Sour Pork	General Tso's Chicken	Fortune Cookies
Deep fried wontons filled with fake crab meat and cream cheese are a pure American invention. If you really want to order dumplings try Xiao Long Bao (soup dumplings) or try different types of Dim Sum	In America it is chunks of pork, battered, deep-fried and slimed in a thick orange sauce with mix vegetable. The real Chinese and sour pork used bone-in rib and is not mixed with vegetables.	It is another Americized Chinese food it will not appear in any restaurant in China. The most similar dish may be la zi ji (chicken with chilies). Both are fried chicken but the American one is sweeter with orange sauce while the Chinese one is spicy with chilies.	These yummy cookies will not be found in China because they are actually Japanese! Normally Chinese people end their meal with fruit or a pastry.

Etiquette

Chopsticks

In China, using chopsticks is one of the most well-known aspects of Chinese culture. When a foreigner thinks of Chinese food, he automatically thinks of people eating with chopsticks in the hands.

However, no one is obligated to use chopsticks. Everyone can always ask for other types of utensil such as spoons, forks, and knives. There are some places that would not be able to provide their customers with all sorts of utensil. Therefore, it is best to be prepared and bring personal utensils.

The two links below are an article and video showing you how to use chopsticks

http://thewoksoflife.com/how-to/how-to-use-chopsticks/

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/19/how-to-use-chopsticks_n_1353656.html

Allergies

A person with a certain type of food allergy should let whoever that takes his order know about it. A list of food and ingredients that one cannot have should be prepared before arriving because typical searching engines such as Google is not available in China. The list can be shown as a hard copy, digital image, or document.

Water

A cup of hot tea or hot water is automatically served to customers but ice and cold water can always be requested from a waiter.

In China, tap water cannot be drunk directly. Water has to be filtered or boiled before consuming. Usually, people drink bottled water or either boiled or filtered and store water in bottles for later consumption.

Tipping

While tipping is customary for services in the United States, it is not ordinary to tip in China or in most Asian countries. Customers do not tip when they dine at either a street food stand or a restaurant.

Restrooms

There are no toilets with seats and covers at restaurants except those that are rated four stars and up. Instead, they would provide customers with squat toilets. Additionally, customers should always bring their own toilet papers because, normally, there are fees fc toilet paper at public bathrooms.

Regional Food

Despite knowing the large size and population of china many westerners do not realize that Chinese cuisine is

not a singular entity. The geographical differences throughout the country affect what people eat. The south eastern regions of china are best for growing rice with warm tropical areas; some places can even produce two crops a year. On the other hand wheat is grown in colder northern areas and cannot tolerate the humidity and damp of the southern area.

What many do not realize is that the regional differences between provinces are a well-known and celebrated fact. There are eight culinary cuisines of China ranging from spicy Sichuan to fresh Jiangsu. To learn more about each click on a colored region on the map:
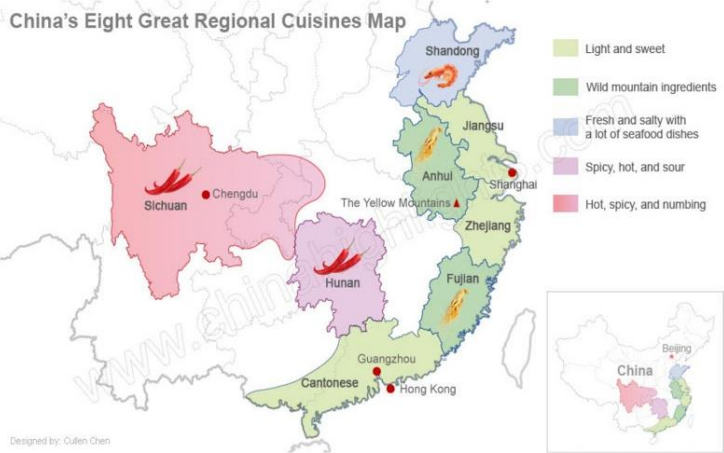
Street Food

When on the move in a Chinese city the best option for a quick bite to eat is to stop at a street vendor. In the US the food truck is quickly becoming a common site in China street vendors can be found on most streets selling their wares. Many of these foods are quickly made and are delicious (probably because they are fried). To see a list of common street foods click below.

Barbeque Kabobs	Hot and spicy crayfish	Chinese Burgers	Chinese Crepes
One of the most popular street foods in China is barbeque. You can choose between pork, beef, chicken, or vegetables with a salty, spicy, or sweet flavoring.	Even the crayfish is the state food of Louisiana; this creature has become one of the most popular foods in China. This food is extremely spicy and is not for those who cannot handle the heat.	Chinese burgers are called Rou jia mo. The bread which is known as Mo is baked as crispy as possible. There are pork, beef, chicken, or lamb options. The meat is first minced and chopped, then cooked or stewed and then stuffed into the bread.	Chinese crepe is a little bit similar with the wraps. The crepe is made of fried eggs and flour. Fried sausage and crisp fritter are added in the crepe. There are different kinds of sauces to choose from, including sweet sauce or a spicy powder.

Restaurants in Beijing

Chinese cuisine is definitely one of the best and most well-known cuisine in the world. Beijing, the capital city of China, has a countless number of restaurants and each one often offers a countless number of dishes. There are all types of cuisines and food that one can think of from around the world located in Beijing.

See list

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Regional Food

Anhui Cuisine

To be blunt this food is peasant food. Using local meats and vegetables from the local mountains are the primary ingredients and because of the unique ingredients it is one of the eight famous Chinese cuisines. Unlike many other regions when making a stewed dish an oily brown sauce is used. Many of the dishes have the same common ingredients but they are cooked in different ways generally stewed, steamed, or simmered. The food is lightly seasoned and is generally salty or is faintly hot. It is said that tofu originated in this province and is the finest in China because of the spring water that is used.

Stewed Turtle with Ham 火腿炖甲鱼 huǒtuǐ dùn jiǎyú (Hwor-tway dwnn jyaa-yoo)	Bagongshan Stinky Tofu 八公山臭豆腐 bāgōngshān chòu dòufǔ	Egg Dumplings 农家蛋饺 nóngjiā dànjiǎo

Sichuan Cuisine

Once the hot pepper came to China from South America in the early Qing Dynasty, it became a dominant flavor in Sichuan cuisine. The hot spicy flavor that the food is famous for being primarily from chili peppers and Sichuan peppercorn. It is believed that the popularity of spice food is because the heat from the food prevents chills and helps combat the humid and damp weather. Poultry, pork, beef, fish, vegetables, and tofu are popular and are cooked in different ways to have different textures. Unique to the region is dry-frying and dry braising. Dry frying is when dehydrated food is cooked or stir-fried in oil before seasoning is added. Dry braising is when a sauce is cooked so that it is not liquid anymore, so the seasoning sticks to the meat or vegetables.

Sichuan Hotpot 四川火锅 Sìchuān huǒguō (srr-chwan hwor-gwor)	Kung Pao Chicken 宫保鸡丁 gōngbǎo jī dīng (gong-baoww jee ding)	Twice Cooked Pork 回锅肉 huí guō ròu (hway gwor roh)

Cantonese (Yue) Cuisine

The goal of the Cantonese chef is to enhance the food's natural flavor. Many dishes use plain steamed white rice as a base and allow the meat or vegetables to be the primary focus of the dish. For food that do not smell appetizing because it is made from all parts of an animal with none going to waste, unlike western food, are seasoned more. This included the use of different sauces and spices. The primary spices used are garlic, ginger and scallions. Before each meal there is a clear soup that is eaten. This soup is generally considered medicinal. Many of the soups are meat based and are cooked for hours. Some meals consist of Dim Sum which bite size; in America, they would mostly likely be considered appetizers, but in China multiple different types of Dim Sum can form a meal to be shared between people.

Chinese steamed eggs 蒸水蛋 zhēngshuǐdàn	Tea-Smoked Duck 茶熏鸭 cháxūn yā (chaa-sshynn yaa)	White cut chicken 白切鸡 báiqièjī

Shandong Cuisine

Being on the eastern coast; fish, shellfish, and other ocean life are a major staple of the regional diet. Few spices are used for the seafood dishes in order not to overpower the natural flavors. The primary spices used are garlic, green onions, and other vegetables related to the onion. Ginger and other spices are used to add flavor to the meat and vegetable dishes. Many of the non-seafood dishes use a great deal of salt and oil making the food greasy. Many of the dishes are prepared using extreme heat stir frying where the outside of the food is singed by the high temperatures to prevent the oil from seeping into the food and the oil is then poured out and disposed of. The primary spices used are garlic, ginger and scallions. Before each meal there is a clear soup that is eaten. This soup is generally considered medicinal. Many of the soups are meat based and are cooked for hours. Some meals consist of Dim Sum which bite size; in America, they would mostly likely be considered appetizers, but in China multiple different types of Dim Sum can form a meal to be shared between people.

Nine-coiled Large Intestine 九曲大肠 Jiuqu dachang	Braised Sea Cucumbers with Scallions 葱烧海参	Dezhou Grilled Chicken 德州扒鸡 dézhōu pá jī (Der-joh paa jee)

Fujian Cuisine

Many delicacies from this region originate from the mountains or from the nearby sea. The spices used are chosen with care generally giving the food a sweet and sour flavor. The most famous of this type of flavoring from Fujian are the dishes that are cooked in red rice wine. Also a common ingredient is red distillers grain which is rice fermented with red yeast for a year giving it the famous sweet and sour flavor and red coloring. Fujian meals are not complete without soup; many times soup is the only drink at a meal.

Buddha Jumps Over the Wall 佛跳墙 fú tiào qiáng (For tyaoww chyang)	Hot and Sour Squid 酸辣烂鱿鱼 suān là làn yóuyú (Swann laa lan yoh-yoo)	Flat-shaped egg noodle soup 板面 Ban mian

Go Back

Jiangsu Cuisine

In this region rice, wheat and root crops are grown. This combined with seafood make up a major part of locals' diets. With seafood from the sea and water plants from the lakes and rivers fresh and quality food is a given. Not only is quality important but the visual appeal of the meal is a major component. The colors of different ingredients and the cutting techniques make each dish a piece of art. While art is a focus the nutrition of the meal is not forgotten. Increasing nutritional value and health is done by using ingredients that are in season and are thought to prevent illnesses. For example in cold weather ginseng is used more often.

Braised Mandarin Fish in Shape of Squirrel songshu guiyu	Braised Giant Meatballs 红烧狮子头 Hong Shao Shi Zi Tou	Water Melon Chicken 西瓜鸡 xīguā jī (sshee-gwaa jee)

Go Back

Zhejiang Cuisine

Zhejiang is the "land of fish and rice". Fresh seafood and local vegetables the food is characterized to be light and fresh. With a light use on oil many of the foods are not greasy or abundantly fatting. Instead many foods are soaked in brine, similar to pickling bring a crisp texture and salty flavor. Many dishes use bamboo shoots adding a more tender texture. Since Zhejiang held the capital of the Southern Song Dynasty the region was known for its sweet desserts. Many of these treats are made out of rice, wheat or beans.

Beggars Chicken 蒸水蛋 jiàohuā tóng jī (jyaoww-hwaa tong jee)	Sweet Ningbo Rice Balls 汤圆 Tangyuan	Splendid Fish 锦绣鱼 jǐnxiù yú (jin-sshyoh yoo)

Go Back

Hunan Cuisine

Ying and Yang are prominent ideas in this type of cuisine. The cold

Learn Mandarin

Chinese Language

The official language of China is Mandarin with 1.9 billion worldwide speakers. There are many other languages spoken in china with the other prominent language being Cantonese (spoken in South East China) along with various dialects of each language.

What makes Mandarin a difficult language to learn is its character based writing system. Unlike the English alphabet there are 4000 Chinese characters that are commonly used. While this can make learning the language intimidating, learning common phrases is rather simple.

Transparent

WPI sponsored language learning application called Transparent Language in which it uses an established an excellent way to learn a language such as Chinese. It is recommended that everyone try the resource called transparent and can be used on your computer or cellphone. This website teaches you useful everyday Madeiran phrases.

https://education.transparent.com.ezproxy.wpi.edu/wpi/game/ng/#/login

To learn how to use Transparent please watch the video showing you how to sign up. Click here

Pinyin

There is an official Chinese pronunciation alphabet called pinyin that helps with how to pronounce words without tone inflection. This alphabet is used to compare Chinese pronunciation to English; unfortunately it is not directly the same but it will help you get around and entertain locals when you try to speak (hopefully correctly).

Numbers

Luckily there is a common system for numbers that is like our own, with hand signals. The hand signs for 1-5 are the same, but 6-10 are different then our own but easy enough to learn.

One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight	Nine	Ten
一 Yi	二 Er	三 San	四 Si	五 Wu	六 Liu	七 Qi	八 Ba	九 Jiu	十 Shi

Hundred	Thousand	Ten Thousand
百 Bai	千 Qian	万 Wan

Examples:

One hundred: 一百 Yi Bai

Fifty thousand: 五万 Wuwan

Shopping

Below are some useful phrases for when out shopping.

What is this? 这是什么? (Zhe shi shen me?)

Do you have ...? 有没有 ...? (You mei you ...?)

How much money? 多少钱? (Dou shao qian?)

Could you give me a better price? 便宜点？Pian Yi Dian?

Directions

Below are some useful phrases for trying to get somewhere.

Excuse me, where is the ...? 不好意思，...在哪里？Bu hao yi si, ...zai na li?

How to go to ...? ...怎么走？...zen me zou?

Metro	Train	Taxi	~stop/station
地铁 Di tie	火车 Huo che	出租车 Chu zu che	~站 ~zhan

Beijing Transportation

Arriving to Beijing

Once arrive at Beijing Capital International Airport and grab your luggage it is suggested that you take a taxi. This is the easiest way to get to the University with your luggage. The ride should cost $11 to $13 and take around 20 minutes with no traffic. Avoid drivers who approach you inside or just outside the terminal because they will over charge you. Instead follow the taxi sign and there is a taxi stand outside the each terminal. There is an express metro but it does not easily connect to the Universities nearest station.

Taxi

Like all big cities the easiest and quickest way to get someplace is by taxi. Unlike the iconic yellow taxies in America, Chinese taxies have a lower yellow stipe and the taxi sign on top. All legitimate taxi license plates will be for the "Beijing B". It is not guaranteed that the driver knows English, so the easiest way to communicate is by writing down the location in Chinese. But no matter the language taxi drivers will most likely try there English on you and chatter and drive like a maniac.

Uber

Unfortunately because of China's internet laws and different phone networks your American Uber App will not work. Instead you can download the Chinese version when in Beijing so you can use Uber. There is an English language version that you can use. But be careful because it is likely that your driver will not know any English, it is suggested not to use Uber when alone.

Subway

The Beijing subway system is world class and is the third largest in the world. The subway is the fastest way to travel around the city allowing you to avoid traffic jams on street level. In addition the subway is simple

because there are signs in English allowing you to easily figure out how to reach your destination. In order to find the subway look for a blue sign with the letter D in a circle. The subway system has multiple North/South lines (4,5,6,8,9) and East/West lines(6,1). Line 2 and 10 are loops.

Subway Tips

- Download the Beijing Subway app
- The last train of the day is around 11pm
- Fare is based off of distance traveled
- For the escalators people stand to the left and walk to the right (only Americans don't do this because they are inconsitert meanies)
- have your ticket ready for entering and exiting

- There are no rules for getting on or off the Subway
- Personal space does not exist
- Be careful and watch out for pickpockets, hold your bags in front of you
- Get close to the doors before your stop to be sure not to miss it
- If possible avoid rush hour from 7am-9 am and 5pm-7:30pm Monday to Friday
- There are four entrances in four directions for each stop, so be careful of getting turned around

Things to do in Beijing

Fun Things

Beijing has many things for everyone to do. There are a variety of historic, cultural, shopping and outdoor places to visit. This list is just a starting point to give you ideas of what this city has to offer. Many historic sites can be reached from the subway line 2. But there is a lot more for you to explore and find.

Click on the map markers to get more info