



Community Field Experience in Chongqing (China)

By: Namrata Verma

Community field experience @ Chongqing,
China (2016)

UBC (Vancouver, Canada)
and
SWU (Chongqing, China)
collaboration



By: Namrata Verma
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History of UBC with Chongqing government.

- It all began on 26th August, 2013 when UBC signed a historic agreement with China's Chongqing government.
- The University of British Columbia has concluded an unprecedented, five-year strategic cooperation agreement with China's Chongqing government, opening doors to increased academic and research collaborations with universities and research institutes.
- The agreement was signed on August 25 in Chongqing by UBC President and Vice-Chancellor Stephen Toope and the director general of the city's education commission, Mr. Xu Zhou. It is the first time UBC has entered into such a wide-ranging agreement with this level of government in China - the city has provincial government status.

<http://news.ubc.ca/2013/08/26/ubc-and-chinas-chongqing-government-sign-landmark-academic-cooperation-agreement/>



UBC with Chongqing

- *UBC has existing relationships* with three of Chongqing's first tier institutions: Southwest University, Chongqing University, and Chongqing Medical University. New relationships have now been established with two others: Southwest University of Political Science and Law and Sichuan International Studies University.

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CHONG QING

- **Chongqing**, located in southwest China on the Yangtse river, is a provincial-level administrative area with a population of 32 million. Chongqing, along with Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin, has provincial government status. The city has 34 institutions of higher education, six of which are first tier universities.



Discuss two aspects of this lesson(s) or activity(ies) that went well.

1. I was little concerned when I got an email from Keith prior to my trip about level of understanding Mandarin language . But , Mr Dai had arrangements of having volunteers with us all the time, who helped us out with language barrier and they were really good at interpreting language. These volunteers were undergraduate students in Education department at SWU. They made our life a lot easier.
2. I was under impression that our CFE will be more like practicum but it is way beyond that. I can feel how a new immigrant / refugee would feel when they come to Canada. This experience that I am getting are little by little changing me and my way of looking things in real life. I am sure that I will be new me when I am back in Canada in a lot of positive way. This gave me an idea how students feel when they are in my class and they are ESL/ELL learners, or students with special needs.



Discuss one aspect of the lesson(s) or activities that did not go as well and outline what you could do to solve this issue.

→ I personally prefer to eat vegetarian food over sea food, which is a challenging for me as most of the food here is seafood and really really spicy. I literally went to a supermarket with help of the volunteer to get food. I did try local food here, but I still felt hungry at the end of the day.

→ In school though it is international school where I am observing, most of the teacher and students speak Mandarin but read and write English.



Personal reflections How do you feel as this moment?
What are your concerns, if any? Any questions? Any
comments and impressions on education in general? Any
suggestions to enrich your experience?

→ I feel proud to get this international CFE in
Chongqing and this has been so far spectacular,
full of surprises experience. I am learning a lot of
things about the culture and community which
makes me feel that I am fully embraced in chinese
culture. I am working hard to learn new words
with pronunciation in Mandarin language.



What are you learning about the community you are working with (strategies, composition)?

→ Most of the people in community are very respectful and that comes from their history and it play vital role in their culture as well. Small things matters a lot. For e.g. When I went for Tea Ceremony (Tea was invented and widely used in China); tea is always poured to fill the teacup half only, the reason behind is that - it is like saying I have more to offer and I want you to stay longer here, so I will pour tea little by little. If tea is filled completely in teacup means I have given you everything that I have so now you may leave. Also the spout of the teapot is never pointed towards the person as it mean I will kill you (negative implication).



What challenges have you encountered (with hosts, students, the work you were asked to do)?

→ At this point, I can say language barrier is a big issue but on top of that I have also learned that government of China likes to use Baidu which is also known as chinese google in western countries.

→ To have access to google, gmail, safari and any other social media website or apps do not work at all. I came prepared with VPN (Virtual Private Network) but wifi strength is not at all comparable with Canadian.

→ There was a huge misunderstanding between Keith and Chongqing CFE partner due to which our schedule for the first week was not well organized but at the end everything went well.



What ideas/strategies could you bring back to the classroom?

→ To have patience “rome was not built in a day”, I am learning this new language I am not perfect but I am sure I will improve/ it will get better at the end of the CFE.

→ Try to include pictures and gestures, it will allow students to have grasp at the concept quickly.

→ For example while introducing leaves and its patterns/ types of leaves taking students out in park and allow them to collect different leaves and ask them to draw it in class with appropriate labels - this will be a great experience and allow students to remember the concept as it was hands on activity.



Have you had any “A-HA!” moments?

- In the school, they have IELTS, SAT as part of their courses. Moreover, school follows many international education system such as following British Curriculum. That made me feel like WHAT???
- Their level of English at age of 14-18 is equivalent to grade 8-9 students in Canada.
- Students get 2 hour lunch break which was really different than our system.
- Parents involvement towards their child's education is way more as they have parents -teacher meeting each month.
- The amount of fees that each student pays at international department is too expensive and still most of the students leave by himself at the school not with their family(This was common), this shows how much parents are interested in their child's education.



How does learning “look/feel different” in this context?

- Students are respectful (way too much) than Canadian students in general and that comes within them as a part of their culture, they consider teacher as god. This kind of respect makes me feel “wow” really!! I don't think someone has given me that kind of respect.
- Students at the age level 14-18 are able to understand English but their level of adapting the fluency and terminology (in science especially) is comparatively lower than Canada.
- In class observation (Biology 11), their class is only for 40 min. teacher generally starts teaching right from the point (no hook or interesting activity).



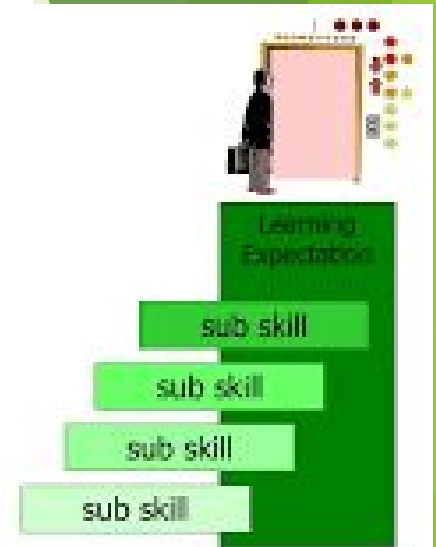
What pedagogical approaches learned in the BEd program could be used in this context?

→ Scaffolding learning is key to any kind of teaching areas.

→ No matter if it is a science class, ESL or teaching in a place where language creates vast difference= Scaffolding learning is the solution.

Scaffolding

- Breaking learning targets into attainable, measurable steps
- Provides learners an opportunity to build upon prior knowledge through multiple, increasingly complex opportunities





What in particular did you learn from this experience this week?

→ Respect others and they will respect you more (in any situation).

What are your goals for next week? → To observe other classes and visit to a primary school to see the difference between classroom setting and difference between private and public school.

What suggestions could you make to your host in order to make the CFE experience more powerful for a candidate next year?

→ To give proper schedule and information for CFE prior to arrival at Chongqing.

What components could the host develop to make their program more relevant to teachers and students (pre-and post-visit lesson ideas, projects for future teacher candidates)?

→ To know what kind of resources are available to plan lesson and in class activities.

