

Reciprocal Learning Program Newsletter (March – June 2018)

Throughout the dates of March 21st to June 21st, 2018, ten Reciprocal Learning Program (RLP) participants had the opportunity to visit China. The RLP participants were pre-service teacher candidates from the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor hoping to learn from the Chinese education and culture. The RLP participants included Crystal McDonald, Christopher Cuffaro, Gilbert Gilbert, Kayla Bacon, Kaleb Stropkvoics, Marium Khan, Peter Miller, Samantha Di Fazio, Sanah Malik, and Terry Dang. In addition, Yuhan Deng, Dr. Xu's graduate research assistant, was also a member of the RLP, and was seen as the "big sister" (大姐) by the UW teacher candidates. At the beginning of the trip, the RLP participants had a four-day tour in Beijing, China. They visited the Forbidden City, the Great Wall, the Summer Palace and many other historical sites. The experience was an eye-opening one for all of the RLP members. Sanah Malik said, "Learning about Chinese culture and traditions has been an enjoyable experience and we are absolutely loving it."



After their Beijing trip, the RLP students arrived in Chongqing, China on March 26th, 2018 to start their new life in the city. During their three-month stay in Chongqing, they participated in many activities and workshops arranged by Southwest University (SWU). These included observing college courses, participating in Chinese cultural workshops, taking field trips, and observing schools affiliated with Southwest University.



Figure 1: The RLP students observed Chinese pre-service education classes in the Education Building of SWU.



Figure 2: The RLP students learned how to draw Chinese traditional paintings.



Figure 3: Kayla is practicing a traditional Chinese instrument — Guzheng.



Figure 4: The RLP students learned how to write calligraphy with bamboo brushes.



Figure 5: Gilbert, Peter, Sanah, and Terry observed the Kindergarten affiliated with Southwest University.



Figure 6: Kayla and Samantha observed and participated in the Peking Opera club at the High School affiliated with SWU.

During the school observations, all of the teacher candidates were warmly welcomed by the school administrators, teachers, and students. “Some of us feel so welcomed that we cannot remember a time we have ever been treated this well! ...Countless students welcomed us at our observations and committed teachers helped us learn more about China's education system,” said Peter Millers.



Figure 7: The RLP students visited downtown Chongqing with their SWU buddies.

The UW RLP participants also had the opportunity to conduct their Mitacs research during their teaching placement at local Chinese primary, middle, and high schools. Each RLP teacher candidate had at least one associate teacher while they were at their placement. They improved their teaching skills and had an unforgettable experience doing their placement in Chongqing schools.



Figure 8 & 9: Marium, Peter, Samantha, and Terry taught in Zengjiayan Primary School. It was the first day of the school sports meeting. Ms. Qin introduced the four new teachers to Zengjiayan students.



Figure 10: On April 16th, Crystal, Christopher, Gilbert, Kayla, and Sanah visited Bashu Primary school. Everyone received an exquisite gift from the school.



Figure 11: The RLP students learned how to make dumplings with their homestay family.



Figure 12: The grandma of a local student taught the RLP students how to make Zongzi for Dragon Boat Festival at her home.



Figure 13: Gilbert and Christopher joined Dr. Xu and Yuhan to participate in the sister school Skype meeting at Bashu Primary School and helped the Chinese students to communicate with their sister school peers at Tecumseh Vista Elementary School in Windsor, Canada..



Figure 16: Peter was teaching English using Canadian animals to the middle school students.



Figure 17: Kaleb was teaching SWU students in the Foreign Language Department.



Figure 18: This was the the last class Marium taught at her placement school. The kids loved Marium so much.



Figure 19: The five RLP students completed their placement at Bashu Primary School. Dean Liu, Dr. Ju Huang from the Faculty of Education at SWU, Principal Ma and other teachers from Bashu Primary School attended their farewell ceremony.



Figure 20: The RLP students and the SWU students enjoyed their cultural exchange at the Multi-Cultural Night on June 17th, 2018.

