



Adventures in China: Teaching Abroad at Tsinghua University



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INTRODUCTION

The Tsinghua University Summer Camp, located at Tsinghua University in Beijing, China, provides a three week English immersion opportunity freshman students. The program employs native English speakers from around the world to teach at the camp, giving the students an excellent opportunity to practice their English with native speakers. Students are able to drastically increase their English proficiency, especially their listening and speaking skills.

In addition, the program allows Chinese and foreign students to befriend each other and develop long-lasting friendships, which in turn fosters positive relations between China and other countries.

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The logo of Tsinghua University, the school that hosted the summer camp. Tsinghua University. "Tsinghua University Logo." JPG file.

SUSTAINABILITY

Tsinghua students will be the next generation of leaders in China, and fostering their comfort level and ability to communicate with foreigners will only encourage them to collaborate with foreign nations on improving their sustainability in the future.

With China's rapid growth has come a variety of sustainability issues, including water and air quality, food security, and human population growth. When the students of Tsinghua graduate and eventually become leaders and policy makers, they will have the ability to communicate with foreigners and learn from other nations.

It is clear that the Tsinghua summer camp has not only helped to improve the language ability of the Freshman class, but also to develop future opportunities for students to collaborate with foreigners. The camp has acted as a catalyst for international cooperation on many different international issues and policies, including sustainability.



Summer campus students brought teaching volunteers on a tour around the city to practice their language skills Liu, Judy. "Beijing Tour." 2012. JPG file.

ACTIVITIES

Mornings:

- Taught two classes of 30 students each
- Created PowerPoints to teach students information about various topics to discuss in English during class.
- Played fun games that forced students to use English, such as Simon Says and The Human Knot game.
- Encouraged students to converse with each other as much as possible.
- Led group discussions related to pop culture and other areas of interest.

Afternoons:

- British Parliamentary Debate
- Created and ran seminars to introduce students to British Parliamentary Debate
- Ran and judged a practice debate competition and critiqued students on the structure and delivery of their argument.
- Acted as one of eight head judges during the final British Parliamentary Debate Competition during the last week of the camp.
- Wrote articles for the camp newspaper and created flyers to advertise for upcoming events.



Students from the first morning class pose with teaching volunteers during the final day of the summer camp. Long, Janice. "Tsinghua Students." 2012. JPG file.

IMPACTS

As a language student interested in entering the field of international relations, the experience of befriending and working closely with Chinese students and other university members was invaluable. The students also grew from the experience, since they were able to develop confidence in their English language ability and learn more about American culture.

Personal Impacts:

- Made my first international friends, many of which that I still keep in touch with today
- Gained insight into the Chinese way of life, including their culture and values
- My Chinese language study took on a whole new meaning, and my motivation to study greatly increased.

Impacts on the Students:

- Each student had the opportunity to learn from and interact with a foreign volunteer from places like England or the USA.
- Students practiced and improved their English skills, especially in the areas of pronunciation and listening comprehension.
- Students developed a more profound understanding of western values and viewpoints.
- Students were able to debunk or confirm stereotypes they've been told for years, such as the rule to never ask a westerner their age.

FUTURE PLANS AND THANKS

As a result of this practicum, I am more culturally aware and greatly interested in Chinese culture as a whole. I plan to continue my Chinese and government studies at the University of Maryland. In a future semester, I plan to study abroad in China for an extended period of time to increase my breadth of knowledge.

This experience has also encouraged me to continue my studies in internationally related fields. After I graduate, I intend to pursue a career with the Department of State or another government agency.

I am grateful that Tsinghua University, and my program supervisor, Todd Steed, allowed me to have this fantastic, eye opening experience.