

Proposal: Curriculum Design for ISP - Intro to US Universities

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to develop a curriculum to be used as an elective course in the International Special Programs (ISP) that will prepare international high school students for American university life. ISP is an independently run company at PSU that offers short term courses to visiting international students who want to improve their English skills and experience life in the United States. The curriculum design for this project is for an afternoon course called *Introduction to American Universities*. The course will be one of three eligible elective courses that students enrolled in ISP summer programs will choose from for their afternoon course.

This project is the product of an informal meeting I had in the summer of 2016 with my ISP employer who expressed a need for course design for a new elective course that was in the initial stage of development. I have worked for ISP as a program assistant since 2015 and know the ISP staff well. The majority of my time with the company has been spent working on the “American Field Studies Plus” program as a program assistant for Japanese students. Program assistants are responsible for a group of students in the program. Additionally, program assistants help the students explore Portland during excursions. This past term, I also worked at ISP as an office assistant and was able to get a better feel for the internal system of ISP with regards to client communication, program development and elective courses assessment.

In coordination with the ISP program coordinator, I decided to develop this project to help ISP with its goal of devising appropriate materials for one of two new summer courses. I’m familiar with the structure of ISP and, based on my experiences there, I have a strong perception of the expectations of students, ISP’s coordinators, and affiliated companies. I have routinely talked to teachers at ISP who have an appreciation for how the company can affect the design of the courses. This background at the company has been essential for the curriculum design of the *Introduction to American Universities* course. It has familiarized me with many of the complex intricacies between teachers, students, coordinators, host families, employers, city life, campus life and formal events that affect a course design.

PROJECT OUTLINE

For this project, I will do a curriculum design for a new course called *Introduction to American Universities* that will be a part of the new and upcoming **International High School** program at ISP. The program starts in July of 2018 and finishes in August of 2018. Each class for the new course is two hours long (1-3pm) with a ten-minute break. Classes meet 2-5 times a week depending exceptions from holidays, whole program excursions, and class excursions. Class size varies from 7-20 students. By the end of this term, I aim to have completed:

1. *MA TESOL Project Proposal (digital and hard copy)*
 - a. Project Introduction
 - b. Environmental analysis
 - c. Background Research
 - d. Curriculum Design Framework
2. *Curriculum Design (digital copy)*
 - a. Motivation for the project and reason the project is needed
 - b. Environmental Analysis
 - c. Needs Analysis
 - d. Theoretical Perspective and Approach
 - e. Goals
 - f. Objectives
 - g. Scope and Sequence
 - h. Assessment
 - i. Excursions
3. *Materials for Introduction to American University (digital copy)*
 - a. 1-3 materials per class (12-24 total materials)
 - b. 1 lesson plan per class (8 total lessons)
 - c. 1 final presentation for ISP students (assignment with rubric)
 - d. 1-2 materials per excursion (3 total excursions with 3-6 total materials)
4. *CE Project Presentation*

I will meet with the CE advisor and ISP coordinator once a month at different intervals. I will email the CE advisor weekly on a specific deadline to report on my progress. Below is the planned Spring 2017 timeline:

Week 1: Materials (and suggested lesson plans) – Class #1, #2
Week 2: Materials (and suggested lesson plans) – Class #3, #4
Week 3: Materials (and suggested lesson plans) – Class #5, #6
Week 4: Meet with ISP Coordinator for Feedback
(Develop Materials for extra week) -- Class #7, #8)
Week 5: Revisions
Week 6: Format Materials to be consistent and professional
Week 7: Insert curriculum design section
Week 8: Prepare Presentation
Week 9: Give Presentation

This project proposal is divided into three sections. The first section is an *environmental analysis* designed to give a background of ISP and the course. The second section is *background research* into U.S. university life preparation in ESL. The final section will be a tentative *curriculum design framework* (including the scope and sequence, goals, objectives, assessment and approach).

1. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

International Special Programs (ISP)

ISP is a part of PSU's Office of International Affairs but it is technically an independently run, income-generating institution. As a result, staff is paid directly with revenue gained from ISP programs. ISP offers numerous summer and winter EFL courses for international students of all ages who wish to participate in a short program in the US. The length of different ISP programs ranges from 1-6 weeks depending on the program and the client. The programs focus on ESL education for students from the elementary level all the way through college and after college. Additionally, there are programs offered for teachers from other countries who wish, for example, to have a guided tour of the Pacific Northwest. The typical program offers two courses for the students. The first is an English grammar course that takes place in the morning while the afternoon course is a topic-based elective course. ISP also offers opportunities for students to travel to other parts of Oregon and Washington (including trips to Seattle, the coast, Crater Lake, and the mountains). ISP often works with Andeo Homestay, a private company that places these international students in different homes throughout Portland for the duration of the program. Andeo and ISP work together to ensure that students have a positive experience during their stay in Portland. Andeo handles most homestay and evening issues while ISP is in charge of the day-to-day activities for students.

STUDENTS

A majority of the projected students will come from France and Japan (Lint, 2017). Students will be in their final years of high school and will be attending college/university within 1-2 academic years. The students will come from private high schools with well-established English programs, so the estimated English level could vary from low-intermediate to advanced. Student backgrounds may include students who are traveling abroad for the first time as well as those who have visited other countries many times before. ISP program coordinators are currently networking with high schools from both Europe and Asia to bring students to Portland who will enroll in their summer and spring programs (Lint, 2017). At present, most projected students will be coming from Terre de Langues, a language study recruiting organization in France, and Mikunigaoka High school, which is located in Osaka, Japan.

Students coming from Mikunigaoka High school are expected to be adequately proficient in English (Lint, 2017). Students from this high school tend to matriculate to top Japanese universities like Kyoto, Osaka, Kobe and Tokyo University (Mikunigaoka High School, 2017). Mikunigaoka High School lists four pillars listed on their website: (1) learning the principles of global citizens, (2) learning from developed countries, (3) learning the current situation of developing countries, and (4) proposing specialized business plans. Furthermore, many of the Mikunigaoka students may already have experienced an international excursion to Portland, Oregon. The Mikunigaoka High School's website describes the excursion:

A course of lectures conducted by instructors of Marylhurst University (Portland, Oregon, USA), is held weekly at our school. Here students learn methods and principles of urban development in Portland, considered to be the most environmentally-friendly city in the U.S. In March, students visit Marylhurst University, its surrounding communities and companies in the U.S., to study and give research

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presentations while staying with local families. (Mikunigaoka High School, 2017)

Because of the strong English background of Mikunigaoka students, they will be expected to have moderate proficiency in English and may already be familiar with Marylhurst University in Portland. These Japanese students may consider Marylhurst University when looking for a US school to apply for. Accordingly, Marylhurst University could be a potential competitor of ISP and it may not be beneficial to build materials that feature Marylhurst University.

Terre des Langues is an organization that offers study abroad opportunities for French citizens (Notre philosophie, 2017). One of the goals of the organization is to locate French students and place them in international schools abroad. ISP has connected with Terres des Langues and hopes to recruit French students to their program. Because this is a new recruitment agency, there is less data available about the type of French student who might attend an ISP program.

TEACHERS

One teacher will be recruited from a pre-existing list of teachers who work with ISP and who have taught other courses for ISP programs. A majority of the teachers at ISP have more than five years of ESL teaching experience and have taught many different courses for ISP.

CLASSROOM

It is difficult to predict the classroom environment because the specific classrooms will change each season. ISP rents classrooms through PSU. Most classrooms have a computer with a projector, chairs, desks, and a whiteboard. Teachers will be equipped with worksheets and teaching materials via ISP's online database and at ISP's main office.

FUNDING

Funding for ISP and each course is handled case-by-case with a separate budget for each course. A typical course for a three-week ISP program has 3-4 local excursions. ISP pays for bus/van transportation fees and pays an hourly wage to program assistants and teachers who attend the excursion. During these excursions, ISP also encourages the students to stop at a local coffee or ice cream store and ISP covers the cost of the students' purchases.

2. BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Developing a curriculum for an intensive English program for high school international students can be complicated when the students come from many different language, cultural, and economic backgrounds. This section will focus a comprehensive list of initial experiences that international students undergo when attending a U.S. university. Research in this section will focus on three critical parts: The application process, choosing an appropriate university, and cross-cultural adaptation.

APPLICATION PROCESS

There are a lot of important steps that international students need to consider when applying to universities in the U.S. These students need to look into visas, register at university websites, check test scores, consider university requirements and/or look into alternative paths of enrollment. The application process for international students who apply to U.S. institutions changed considerably in the early 2000s, when the U.S. government created the Student and Exchange Visitor Information system (SEVIS). SEVIS was created by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), in part, as a reaction to the September 11, 2001, attacks on U.S. soil (Starobin, 2006). Prior to the creation of SEVIS, universities were able to process visas independently, which created an easier application process. This situation changed in 2003-04 with the new system, and international enrollment declined. While changes have been made to the SEVIS system and DHS, SEVIS is still arguably the first intimidating step that many international students have to go through.

In January and February of 2017, immigration policy changes in the U.S. also suggest that student immigration may become even more difficult. In March, a news article titled, "Lives of two Iranian students upturned by Trump immigration bans" (2017), described one student at an American university who risked the temporary immigration executive order by President Trump to return to Iran during his father's cancer treatment. The student described the fear of not being able to return to the U.S. to continue studies. Another Iranian student explained how the changing immigration policies exacerbated regular school stress and led to a few minor health issues (Binder, 2017). This constant negotiation of immigration policies with the new administration could be big source of stress at school unique to international students and could negatively affect their experience in the U.S. as well lead to possible health issues from excess stress. Many American universities have responded to the concerns of these international students by responding to recent executive orders on immigration policies and with formal petitions:

More than 6,000 college and university academics, including several from Georgia institutions, signed a national petition over the weekend denouncing the executive order. The group argues, among other things, that the order will "significantly damage" the country's higher education reputation because it hurts many of the researchers working at U.S. schools who are from the countries named in the travel order. (Davis, 2017)

This petition is a great starting point for continuing to welcome international students to the United States and should be used as an example for the students who are concerned about the community they will be migrating to. Teachers can follow the news cycle to aid students in understanding which universities actively seek to support their international students and can help keep students aware of any potential extreme changes in immigration

policies that might negatively affect the academic experience abroad.

In order to legally study in the U.S., international students now need F or J visa types. The Berkeley University website offers a valuable guide on how to decide whether to apply for F visas or a J visas (F-1 or J-1: Which Status is Right For You?, 2017). F-1 visas allow for any source of student financing whereas as a student with a J-1 visa would need to have more than half of his/her funding paid for by the institution. J-1 visa holders are allowed to declare dependents, but F-1 visa holders are not eligible. For additional employment, F-1 visa holders do not need a work permit if they work on campus. J-1 visa holders need a work permit for both on campus and off campus employment. When considering the likely demographic of the students who will be attending the ISP program, it is reasonable to assume that the students will be applying for the F-1 visa type.

The full process for applying for this visa involves many important steps. (“How to Apply for an F-1 Visa”, 2017). These steps are: (1) Get accepted to an academic institution, (2) pay the I-901 Sevis fee, (3) receive I-20 form, (4) complete the F-1 visa Form, (5) schedule and complete an F-1 visa Interview, (6) receive F-1 visa Approval. Each step can be both difficult to complete and time-consuming. As a requisite to scheduling the F-1 Visa interview, international students must have a passport, a completed Form DS-160, an interview application fee payment, passport photo, and a “Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status” (Form I-20). It also takes time waiting to hear back from a university, waiting to receive the I-20 form, and waiting to hear back from the F-1 visa interview. Due to this complexity, a formal discussion of this process in a college prep course would be beneficial for students who attempt to apply to U.S. academic institution.

The complexity of applying to academic institutions adds to the frustration of international students. In a different study by Zhang and Hagedorn (2011), the researchers looked at the perception that high school Chinese students have of the college application process. In their study, the researchers asked 900 international Chinese students whether or not it was better to have professional assistance when applying to universities in the U.S. Approximately half of the students interviewed had used professional assistance while the other half had not used such assistance. The most significant difference between the two groups was that a large number of the assisted application students had already attended college in U.S. before applying (p.10). Those who used an agent for aid in college applications cited reasons of lack of knowledge of the application process, the visa application process, and foreign institutions as important reasons for using professional help (11). One student writes about his experiences:

My English was poor when I applied to the Midwestern University. It took me a couple of weeks to figure out how to complete the online application form... I am serious. I finally gave up and found an agent to assist my application. (Zhang and Hagedorn, 2011, p12)

Other quotes from students in this study also illustrated the perceived benefits of having professional assistance when applying to colleges. The researchers offered four important conclusions related to helping students with the college applications process: (1) it's important to initiate contact with “necessary personnel” at the university that the student is applying to, (2) the physical preparation of college materials can be aided with flow-charts, and professional agents can fill out necessary English documents, (3) it's important to choose an institution that is appropriate for the student, and (4) students need to be prepared for face-to-face interviews at the US embassy and need to have all of the accompanying documents (2011, p.15). The results of this study can inform the

development of an IEP curriculum focused on helping high school international students apply for colleges in the US.

In a less formal study reported in an article by *BizEd Magazine*, a college-application consultant company called InsideTrack conducted an experiment by contacting the admissions department at different universities in the United States (2013). InsideTrack pretended to be international students and tried calling, emailing, and using the college websites to ask the colleges questions about admissions. InsideTrack recorded the length of time it took admissions departments to reply to these requests. Only 48% of private schools and 43% of public schools replied to the “student” within ten days of the initial contact. This response time could indicate that international students may not be able to effectively get the requisite information from a school with these delays in an appropriate response time. Teachers in the ESL classroom can be another source of aid for helping students uncover information they are looking for when applying to schools.

An analysis of requirements that need to be met for students applying to Portland State University include: financial documentation, English proficiency standards, application submission fee, and immigration certification (“International students admissions,” n.d.). PSU offers translated material of the admissions document in Arabic, Korean, Spanish, and Chinese (Mandarin). There is no evidence of the need for a written essay or recommendation letters on the PSU website. The Oregon State University website specifies more criterion for admissions but likewise does not include requirements for a written essay or recommendation letters (“Admission Requirements,” n.d.). French students who wish to be admitted to OSU need to have an average of an 11 out of 20 in the French grading system and must have some form of a baccalaureate degree (the equivalent of a US high school diploma). Japanese students wishing to attend OSU are required to have a GPA of 2.5 (out of 4.0) and a “School Leaving Certificate.” Additional specifications state that students with a TOEFL score lower than 80 (out of 120) or an IELTS score lower than 6.5 (out of 9) will not be admitted (“International students admissions,” n.d.).

There are many programs that focus on higher education for students who want to study and work in the international community. There are two types of programs that seem to be well-recognized by U.S. academic institutions. These two types are the International Baccalaureate programs and English Pathway programs. The International Baccalaureate (IB) program, is a well-established international program that sets a standard of education for international schools around the world (International Baccalaureate, n.d.). The programs are designed to fast-track students into higher level education and are offered both nationally and internationally. The pathway programs are offered at some American Universities to allow international student enrollment in intensive English language programs and to help students with lower English ability prepare for full attendance at a university.

The IB Diploma program is a set of standards that require a school curriculum to prepare students, ages 16-19 years old, for higher education. In one study, Hayden and Wong interviewed students, teachers, and other program members at a school that follows the IB system to look at the ability of the IB program to facilitate *mobility, international understanding, and preservation/appreciation of culture* (Hayden and Wong, 1997). In this study, the authors noted that the IB utilized multiple languages, field trips, and class discussion to focus on cultural understanding, prejudices and other social issues. Students who graduated from the program were considered by teachers to be “open-minded with respect to other cultural identities and modes of thought” (Hayden and Wong,

1997, p. 397). This trend of cultural awareness could be applied to ISP's Introduction to American Universities program by adding intercultural topics to the content of the course.

There are many different International Baccalaureate programs that help to fast-track students into the international academic community (International Baccalaureate, 2017). Many of these programs, like the IB Diploma Program, take into account multiple years of study and focus on preparing students for a specific educational field and country. These students are prepared for the countries they intend to study in and for the area of study they wish to focus on. For IBDP, students will study topics in six different core areas: language and literature, language acquisition, individuals and society, experimental sciences, mathematics and arts. This standard, applied internationally, makes it easier for higher education institutions around the world to accept students from other countries. Unlike some countries that only accept students with an IB, US higher education schools do not necessarily require an IBDP and requirements will vary from school to school (Hill, 2013). Because students in the IBDP program would likely have already decided on their path for higher education it is unlikely that these students will be attending the ISP course. However, pedagogical principles that focus on cultural awareness established by the IBDP can be relevant to the design of the *ISP Introduction to American Universities* course and it may be helpful to consider the design of IBDP courses with regards to preparing high school students for higher level education.

Pathway programs are ideal for universities. In *Continuous Assessment Frameworks within university English Pathway Programs*, Cross and Loughlin cited two reasons why English pathway programs (EPP) are beneficial to universities. First, Cross and Loughlin suggested that universities over the past decade in the United States saw more financial dependence on international student enrollment than in previous years (2013). In other words, EPPs allowed universities to bring in more international students. Because of this financial gain, it is likely that the number of English pathway programs available in the U.S. will also increase. Second, the researchers further argue that standardized tests like TOEFL and IELTS didn't necessarily reflect whether international students were prepared for enrollment abroad. As an example, both PSU and OSU offer pathway courses as an alternative to the general undergraduate admission for international students. Pathway courses, as defined on the PSU website, "are for students who want to improve their academic English skills and avoid taking high stakes language tests over and over" ("International students admissions," n.d.). Students take their first PSU classes in a supportive environment and meet other international students who are studying at PSU. Pathway programs are a conscious effort on behalf of a university to address student preparedness at an American University, and because of this, student awareness of pathway programs can be a point of encouragement for international students who are concerned that the results of their test scores will bar them from being admitted into an American university.

Another hurdle that international students face when applying to universities in the U.S. is the difficulty of filling out individual applications for each university. If students are worried about being admitted to a competitive school, they may want to apply to more than one backup school. This process is more difficult for international students with lower English proficiency who need to visit multiple American university websites. A solution to this problem is to use a service that repeats the application process from just one application template on the student's behalf. An example of this service is the Common application form at Commonapp.org, which provides a simple user interface that allows students (and international students) to fill out student information that can then

be sent to multiple universities (“How to apply: The common app,” n.d.). A search for Oregon institutions on the Commonapp.org website showed that multiple Portland universities like University of Portland, Reed and Lewis and Clark College accept the Common application form. In total, CommonApp.org states that almost 700 universities accept the Common Application form. This website is a great resource for teachers helping international students apply to a school and can be implemented into a course with explicit scaffolding with a variety of different accompanying activities.

CHOOSING AN APPROPRIATE UNIVERSITY

International students who want to come to the U.S. for school may have difficulty deciding which university to attend. Students living in the U.S. often have the opportunity to visit potential schools to develop an impression of a school but visits are more difficult for international students because of financial and logistical constraints. Furthermore, for students learning English as a second language, navigating university websites in English can be difficult. As such, ESL teachers can help international students decide on a school by helping them create a list of schools and categories to help determine the university that best suits these students’ needs, abilities, and goals (see Appendix 1.1). The process of navigating multiple university websites can help the student understand what to look for and make informed decisions that will affect their final choices.

As background research for this course, I chose to look at six schools. I chose 3 different types of local schools (Portland State University, University of Portland, and Portland Community College) as well as three national schools (University at Buffalo, Duke University, and Rice University). I used four categories to evaluate and compare schools: test scores, international student support, international student scholarships, and English language programs. The three local schools were chosen with an emphasis on selecting one local private school, state school, and community college. The three national schools were picked from an online ranked list of “50 great affordable colleges for international students” (2015). The four categories were pulled from the same ranked list via content listed in the methodology section of the webpage. The research was largely informal as I used information from each university’s home website to fill out the tables (see Appendix 1.2). The result of this informal research guided my understanding of the process of searching for information about schools online and led to the discovery of the types of services that are available to international students at universities in the U.S.

The differences between the six schools became more and more obvious when considering the four categories that might be relevant to international schools. When comparing schools via required test scores, it was easy to make a few critical observations about individual schools. Among the six evaluated universities, Rice University had the highest test score requirement with a requisite score of 7.0 for IELTS or 100 for TOEFL (online version). Rice University also didn’t appear to have many scholarships dedicated to international students and there did not appear to be many international groups on campus. One probable reason for this lack of support could be high test score requirements. Many of the accepted international students may not necessarily need as much support from ESL programs and on-campus international support if they already have a higher English level of fluency. Duke University has a different system altogether in that it does not have an IELTS/TOEFL requirement for admissions. Duke only accepts test scores from U.S. tests like SAT and ACT. Duke University’s approach could open up opportunities for some international students who might be very strong in one academic category but comparatively weak in English with somewhat lower test scores. However, Duke is also a highly competitive

private institution where the average SAT scores for admitted students is higher than the national average and would require higher academic achievement and/or aptitude than other schools like PSU or PCC (Duke SAT Scores and GPA, n.d.). Similarly, this approach might also make it more difficult for international students to apply if they need to take the SATs or ACTs without access to proper resources in their home country. Portland Community College also does not have a test score requirement but appears to offer a lot of ESL support on campus. Each of these examples demonstrate that a look at test score requirements could show significant differences between schools that a student may be interested in noting. It may also be relevant for a teacher to show that students do not need to rely on English test scores to enroll in some American schools.

A look at scholarships offered by universities also revealed to a great extent how students should conduct research when deciding on their top choices. Only two of the six schools appeared to have scholarships intended for international students (PSU's Seith Rorden Scholarship and Duke University's Karsh International Scholarship). Need-based and merit-based scholarships are available for international students but they do not appear to be much different than the scholarships offered to regular students. Because of the limited availability of scholarships at institutions, teachers would be more effective with introducing students to online resources and show students how to navigate scholarship websites like *fastweb.com*, *collegeweeklive.com*, and *gotchosen.com* ("Scholarships for International Students," 2017).

The six institutions all offer a range of service for international students. The institutions seem to vary, however, in terms of the types of services offered. University at Buffalo appears to offer numerous language practice opportunities. English language services include an English Bridge program, an online chatroom program, and evening ESL courses. The Bridge Program is a selection of courses that prepare international students for admission at University of Buffalo if the students' test course did not meet the university requirements. The chatroom program matches international students with a native speaker for online conversational practice. The evening ESL courses are free and are offered at a convenient time so that all ESL students have the opportunity to attend. Of these services, the chatroom program was the only program that did not appear to be offered by other schools. This service could be useful to students and it may be indication that University at Buffalo is pursuing new ways to help English learners on their campus. Portland State University offers a Pathway program, which appears to be very similar to the Bridge Program in that it provides an alternative route for students who want to gain admission to the school despite not meeting the required test scores.

The process of choosing the best school(s) is perfect for an ESL/EFL classroom. Teachers can use charts (like Appendix 1.1 or 1.2) to direct conversation towards specific topics related to university life. The activity can be designed such that over the course of a program, students are given the skills to do increasingly complex analyses of different universities. Within the three-week Intro to American Universities program, teachers can slowly integrate daily content into a comprehensive chart that will help students think about the school they want to attend. From the research of the six universities, it is probable that teachers will need to provide students with real materials created with content pulled from actual websites and help the students develop skills to navigate the web.

International students will interact with many new communities when moving to the US. Discussing *culture* in a classroom can be essential for these students who are trying to adjust to life in a new place. Students can benefit from a basic overview of how life in academia and in the surrounding community can contribute to the success of a student. This section focuses on two aspects of culture: preparing for life in the US and preparing for cultural norms at school.

Preparing students for new cultural experiences in the US is a daunting task for any ESL teacher. Researchers Chapdelaine and Alexitch describe *cross-cultural adaptation* as the process by which individuals transition to a new environment (2004). These Individuals undergo adaptation “at the cognitive, behavioral, emotional, social, and physiological levels” (2004, p.168). In other words, cultural adaption is a complex process that happens at multiple levels with many influencing variables. Chapdelaine and Alexitch contrast two approaches to preparing students to combat cultural difficulties linked to cultural adaptation: The phenomenological approach and the sociopsychological approach. The phenomenological approach encourages teachers to guide students from “a state of low self- and cultural awareness to a state of high self- and cultural awareness” (2004, p.169). In this approach, students are taught to understand the complexity of culture and to recognize that every country has innumerable variations of culture that can’t be essentialized. In the sociopsychological approach, teachers help students see how their cultural background in their home country might adversely affect their experiences in the visiting country. Teachers focus on the differences between the two countries to create a metaphorical cross-cultural connection. This focus is meant to target the students’ affective adjustment to the new country.

In *Understanding the Courses We Teach*, Goodwin (2001), a teacher at UCLA, designed a course to help ESL students understand the academic structures of higher level education. The course was designed to address difficulties that ESL students had with “discourse markers, pauses, and nonverbal features” as well as difficulty with “recognizing main and subordinate points, using abbreviations, and maintaining an organizational structure” (2001, p.262). In order to combat these problems, Goodwin emphasized the use of authenticity and content-based instruction in the design of the course. The goal of this format was to promote student engagement via real experiences with academic life.

In one of Goodwin’s activities, students were shown a video of a 7-8 minute class lecture two times. During the first viewing, students are expected to take notes based on a note-taking-guide, and in the second viewing, students are asked to fill in gaps in a guided worksheet. Finally, students consider the lecture from a deeper level with an “application and review” activity provided to students online after the class. This activity uses authenticity by showing footage from a real class and then combines multiple tasks to help students learn ways of adapting to classes in the U.S.

In another class activity, Goodwin leads “a class discussion of an assigned reading” with various lists of important terms that students draw abstract connections between (2001, p.269). Students are encouraged to use turn-taking strategies with other students while also making connections between key terms. This is an effective activity because it acts a way of reviewing homework content and it develops skills pertinent to U.S. classrooms. The activity can also be used in multiple lessons with the teacher gradually introducing more and more elements pertinent to the pragmatics of classroom conversation.

In 2016, Caplan and Stevens conducted a triangulated study on the “needs, challenges, and successes” of

170 Chinese international undergraduate students at the University of Delaware. In their research, students explained how they had difficulty in dealing with cultural topics and academic instruction. Many of the Chinese students expressed difficulty in understanding instructions and/or assignments given by teachers in class (Caplan and Stevens, 2016). Conversely, Chinese students who frequently participated during class and met with teachers during office hours reported feeling successful at the university. The results are useful because they discuss examples of pragmatic topics that could be addressed in an ISP course that wants to address culture. The “Introduction to Universities” course could create materials to help students develop strategies for understanding instructions, researching topics unique to American culture, meeting with teachers, and participating in class.

Chinese students also claimed difficulty in dealing with cultural challenges and academic instruction (Caplan & Stevens, 2016). For example, some of these students identified struggling with having a lack of knowledge on American pop culture topics. Instructors reported that students would ask what poker or dice was and that many students, for example, were not familiar with Jesus Christ, a well-known religious figure in the U.S. These incidents of information gaps became problematic for Chinese students when the cultural topics came up in academic courses, assignments, and academic conversations. In other words, Chinese students did not have background for many of these pop culture references that were sometimes requisite to understanding the conversation, assignment or activity. Caplan and Stevens propose a way of understanding this issue. They compare Chinese students who reported more success to those who reported less success. Students who reported more success tended to use on campus academic services and had at least one American friend. Thus, a teacher can help students by both explaining unfamiliar pop culture topics in class and by finding ways to increase international students’ amount of contact with American culture. In the Intro to Universities course, a teacher can help promote learner success by designing materials that show students how to use on campus resources and encourage students to make friends outside of their L1 community.

SUMMARY

The application process, university selection process, and cultural adaptation process are all topics that can be addressed in a classroom. Teachers can help students apply to universities and can prepare students for the cultural immersion process that is associated with academic life in the U.S. These educators can also provide students with strategies for finding an appropriate school and for understanding American culture.

A careful curriculum design of the Introduction to American Universities course can be improved upon with knowledge of pathway programs and international diploma programs as guidelines for a theoretical approach. Materials created from university websites and video-recorded class lectures are essential for student development in this curriculum. Furthermore, lesson plans can be scaffolded to help students fill out the common application form, which will be a great start for students who become enamored with the U.S. and wish to get started on the application process early.

3. CURRICULUM DESIGN

CURRICULUM DESIGN FRAMEWORK

From the environmental analysis and background research sections, I propose a basic framework for the curriculum design of Introduction to American Universities. At present, this outline includes an initial design of the scope and sequence, a summary of the theoretical approach, and a discussion of the curriculum goals. These three sections provide the foundation for which I will develop lesson plans according to the needs of ISP and the course goals. For the final curriculum design, I will also include a more formal environmental analysis, objectives, method of assessment, lesson plans, materials and planned excursions.

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

Curriculum design for this course will connect the processes discussed in the background research stage with the aims set by ISP for this new course. The lessons will be sequenced such that students will be introduced to university life from different angles. The course will be graded and will require summative assessment. Because this is a new course, formative assessment will also be emphasized. Based on the background research and the goals expressed by ISP, the suggested scope for this course is:

1. **Class 1 - Researching institutions – *Knowing what to look for***
 - a. Types of Universities
 - b. Degrees Available
 - c. Location (environment)
 - d. Price
 - e. Scholarships for international students
 - f. Test score requirements
 - g. International student support systems
2. **Class 2 - Academic Experience – *Visiting classes***
 - a. Note-taking
 - b. Academic Expectations
 - c. Academic Differences
3. **Class 3 - Cultural Experience – *Talking to students and faculty***
 - a. Culture Shock
 - b. University Life
 - c. City Life
 - d. Support Groups
4. **Class 4 - College Research – *Finding the best fit***
5. **Class 5 - Application Process – *Getting into a school and the U.S.***
 - a. Visas
 - b. Pathway programs
 - c. Timeline
6. **Class 6 - Final Presentation – *Defending your choice***
 - a. 5-8 minute presentation about their favorite university

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

As a result of interviews with program coordinators Jeff Baffaro and Masumi Lint, I have devised a list of approaches to help guide the design of the materials and curriculum of this course so that it meets their expectations. I have also included additional approaches from the background research conducted on this project and have modeled these principles on examples provided by Nation and Macalister's book, *Language Curriculum Design* (2010). There is a total of six guiding principles that will influence homework, materials, activities,

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excursions, and lesson plans created for this course. These principles are ranked in order of current perceived importance:

1. **Motivation:** Students are encouraged to have fun! The primary goal of this course is to show students that studying in the U.S. is fun and relevant to their short term and long term goals.
2. **Strategies and Autonomy:** Students are taught to understand their learning styles and to develop methods for studying English so that they can eventually become effective independent learners of English capable of adapting to new life at a university.
3. **Realia:** Teachers will use as much authentic material as possible to keep the topics relevant to real life experiences that students might encounter when studying in the U.S.
4. **Spaced Retrieval:** Students will be introduced to key terms relevant to university life in the U.S. Students will be repeatedly presented with these key terms in different contexts so as to reinforce their understanding of these terms.
5. **Ongoing Assessment:** Because there will be students from multiple L1 backgrounds with varying levels of English skill, the teacher will need to constantly assess the comprehension and interests of all students. Lessons and materials will be designed so as to aid the teacher with assessment.
6. **Depth of Processing:** Students will encounter many new cultural topics in English and will be encouraged to use problem-solving skills so as to process the meaning of a situation at a more comprehensive level.

CURRICULUM GOALS

The purpose of the *Introduction to American University* is both to prepare international high school student for college life in the U.S. and to encourage enrollment at PSU. The program aims to help students prepare for academic life in the U.S., learn about different schools, identify complex cultural topics, learn about the application process, and navigate school websites. By the end of the course, the students will have chosen their preferred U.S. University and will give a short oral presentation on that university to their classmates. Goals for this curriculum are:

Enjoy the academic life in the US! – Course excursions will introduce students to exciting new possibilities of higher education and classroom discussions will promote interesting analyses of university life.

Prepare students for life in the United States – Content in lessons will guide students' thought process regarding the full experience studying abroad.

Show the benefits of online research – By creating a spreadsheet of different schools, students will begin to see the benefits of comparing different schools to make sure they find the school that is the right fit for them.

Explain the application process – International students will understand the complex application process for gaining admission to a school in the United States

Conclusion

This project proposal is a guide for how I intend to approach curriculum design for ISP's Introduction American Universities course. Background research for the curriculum design will be ongoing with the development of the lesson plans and materials. The background research will also contribute to the final literature review and will aid in explaining additional motivation and necessity for the project. Frequent ongoing discussions with the program coordinator at ISP will also aid in the careful development of these materials. The intended completion date for this project is June 6th, 2017 at the end of PSU's 2017 Spring term.

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Appendix 1.1 - Example Template for Choosing the Appropriate University

Choose the Correct School

	1. School 1	2. School 2	3. School 3
Type			
City, State			
Environment			
Tuition			
Degrees			
<i>Category 1</i>			
<i>Category 2</i>			
<i>Category 3</i>			
<i>Category 4</i>			
<i>Category 5</i>			

Appendix 1.2 - Local and National Academic Institutions (2017)

Local -	PSU	UP	PCC
Type	State	Private	Community College
City, State	Portland, Oregon	Portland, Oregon	Portland, Oregon
Environment	City, Urban	City, Suburban	City, Urban/Suburban
Price per year Tuition Room and Board	(International) \$23,348 \$14,319	(Out-of-State) \$43,686 \$18,513	\$8,446 N/A
Degrees	Bachelor of Arts, Sciences, Fine Arts	Bachelor of Arts, Sciences	Associate Degrees (many)
1.Test Scores	IELTS - 6.0 TOEFL - 71 PTE - 53	IELTS - 6.5 TOEFL - 71	N/A
2.Intl. Support	French language club, Japanese student society, International student mentor program, Organization of International students	International Club, Campus Connectors, International Student Services event	PCC International Student Services,
3.Intl. Scholarships	International Cultural Service Program, International student Retention Scholarship, Seith Rorden Scholarship	Pamplin Graduate Fellowship, Merit-based scholarships	N/A
4.English Programs	Pathway Program, Intensive English Language Program	N/A	Intensive English Program, ESOL Programs
Website	https://www.pdx.edu/	https://www1.up.edu/	http://www.pcc.edu/

National -	University at Buffalo	Duke University	Rice University
Type	State	Private	
City, State	Buffalo, New York	Durham, North Carolina	Houston, Texas
Environment	City, Suburban	City, Suburban	City, Urban
Price per year Tuition Room and Board	(Out-of-State) \$23,270 \$12,292	(Out-of-State) \$51,510 \$6,830	(Out-of-State) \$39,980 \$9,100
Degrees	Bachelor of Arts, Sciences, Fine Arts	Bachelor of Arts, Sciences, Fine Arts	Bachelor of Arts, Sciences, Fine Arts
1.Test Scores	TOEFL - 70 IELTS - 6.0 PTE - 50	(Regular SAT/ACT test scores)	TOEFL - 100 IELTS - 70
2.Intl. Support	Week-long international student orientation program, international student and scholar services	International House, Language Partners, Conversation Clubs, Global Cafe, International Friends Program	International Ladies Network, Campus Initiatives, Friends of International Students and Scholars
3.Intl. Scholarships	Merit-based scholarships, International Admissions Scholarship	Need-based financial aid, Karsh International Scholarship, Merit-Based Scholarship	Need-based financial aid
4.English Programs	Bridge Admission Program (pathway), English Language Institute, ESL Program, Chatroom Program, Evening Program	Summer Transition Program, Intercultural Skills Development, English Language Placement Exams, English course for international Teaching Assistants	Free English and Culture Classes, Intensive English Program, ESL Communication Skills Program
Website	http://www.buffalo.edu/	https://www.duke.edu/	http://www.rice.edu/