

Japan Studies Institute 2019

Undergraduate curriculum

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Education is becoming increasingly globalized and teacher preparation programs must coach teacher candidates to effortlessly employ culturally responsive teaching strategies, to educate our children about understanding, to connect children all over the world, and most importantly to teach tolerance and love. Our world demands that we not only understand our own country, but that we have knowledge of nations, cultures, languages, and religions around the globe.

These two weeks at the Japan Studies Institute have given me not only unbelievable knowledge about Japan and her people, but also the resources necessary to help my teacher candidates explore the fundamental and shifting values of the culture through investigation of literature, language, history, art, film, and religion. I teach Curriculum and Instruction for Secondary Teachers (SEED 400), and I see the potential for the most impact in this course. Holistically in this course, students learn to write lesson plans, organize curriculum, and build a repertoire of teaching strategies.

Students will have the opportunity to learn to design cross-cultural units that integrate Japan studies with respect to three areas: curriculum (course readings, learning materials, and technology) teaching strategies (research assignments, language introduction, collaborative projects, and *Amoeba* classroom management) and assessment (individual reflection, self-evaluation, and virtual presentations to cross-cultural audiences). By utilizing resources of Japan in an undergraduate course such as this, teacher candidates will apply their knowledge and enthusiasm in their own classrooms, thus impacting even more individuals.

Successful completion of a cross-cultural unit that integrates Japan studies will fulfill the following student learning outcomes: 1) articulate culturally responsive teaching strategies; 2) compare underlying values of culture and evaluate the impact on education; and 3) analyze the practice of internationalizing curriculum and assessment.

In addition, I have walked away with an increased enthusiasm for leading my students to Japan for a study abroad experience. Part of Northern State University's vision for its students is to provide global learning opportunities which can be done virtually with technology. However, I would argue that to truly be an effective educator in the 21st century, teachers must have an adept ability to teach multiple perspectives in a way that fosters appreciation and acceptance for all students. It seems that my students' understanding of the Japanese culture is elusive and therefore underrepresented in their curriculum. To see, feel, and experience is to understand and appreciate which is why I wish to prepare a faculty-led study abroad curriculum for travel to Japan. I believe in urging my students to investigate cultures that will not only help them to gain perspective of a very difficult culture, but also to discover themselves as teachers and as human beings in the process. Traveling to Japan as young adults will do just that.

My job as a teacher educator is to prepare my teacher candidates to be effective in a continually changing world of education. Modeling a propensity for lifelong learning and consistent adaptation to change and renewal is imperative. The opportunity to participate in the Japan Studies

Institute has been an inspiration in learning not only from the brilliance of our speakers and adventures but also from my colleagues with whom I have shared this experience. It has been an honor.