

Portfolio

Aaron Meadows

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Editorial sample:

The following piece was written to elicit interest in Peace Corps. It focuses on one of the main attractions of Peace Corps service: intercultural immersion.

Peace Corps in Ukraine: work for peace

by Aaron Meadows

On a Ukrainian farm in Borodyanka in Kyiv Oblast province, an American realized that potatoes had to be extracted from the earth. “Kartopyla” means “trap,” not “potato.” Mr. B furrowed his brows and repeated to Erica, “It means ‘potato,’” and poured a cup of raspberry herbal tea for Erica who now realized that Mr. B, Language & Cultural Facilitator (LCF) for Peace Corps Ukraine, may sing along to American classic rock at work, but language was serious. Erica accepted the tea and realized that the 27-month journey had just begun.

Erica Minich accepted an invitation to teach English in Ukraine as a Peace Corps volunteer after a difficult application process that required her to prove manageability of type-1 diabetes. Before joining Peace Corps, she lived in Japan. A Japanese neighbor, WWII veteran, took pleasure in bringing spicy snacks to the American family next door. Erica would blush bright red after eating one. To which, the neighbor would reply, “assassination attempt failure.” Years later, Erica would once again become a guest whose process of cultural assimilation is enjoyed by herself and community alike.

Peace Corps assigned Erica to a host family. Delighted to receive their guest, the mother prepared a pig’s head as the central piece of a Ukrainian feast. Erica entered the home, accepted tea, spoke Ukrainian, relaxed, turned to face the table, and screamed. She had grown up eating perogies, but even her Ukrainian mother never heard of *salo* (cured pig fat) or *kholodets* (meat aspic). Trying new foods wasn’t the most difficult part of Erica’s service; it was the training.

Peace Corps Ukraine program managers place incoming volunteers into cluster groups to complete their training. Erica and her cluster-mates supported each other through the difficulties of learning Ukrainian in communities that also spoke Surzhyk, a mixed Ukrainian dialect. LCF, Security officers, Medical officers, and various other personnel facilitate skill training, language learning, and cultural assimilation for about nine weeks during Pre-Service Training (PST).

After PST, Erica met her second host family and site. In the small town of Borodyanka, she caught gossip from babushkas in the bazaar, befriended a wild dog, wrote on Communist-red chalkboards, facilitated camps for kids, and walked down streets still decorated with Lenin propaganda and the occasional Soviet-era tank. At the school, the women were bosses. Workers adhered to a strict hierarchal working environment routinely paused by moments of reverie. As her host family father would fill half of a coffee mug with vodka, toss it down, and declare in one of the few English phrases learned from Erica, “to work!”

Reflecting on her Peace Corps experience, Erica stated that the positive benefits far outweighed negative effects. A strong sense of perseverance in the face of adversity and inspiration

to innovate constitute the skills that she translates from her Peace Corps service to her career in K-12 education. In addition, it enabled Erica to educate about the importance of the current invasion of Ukraine. A student who scored highly on a test asked Erica to be rewarded by getting their nails painted in Ukrainian blue & yellow. In small and large ways, we can plant seeds for a brighter future.

In talking with Aaron Meadows, UVA Peace Corps recruiter, they reflected on how the pandemic and political situations have affected the evacuation and reinstatement of Peace Corps activities in Ukraine. On February 24, 2014, Peace Corps announced [safe evacuation](#) of all volunteers preceding the Russian annexation of the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine. Then, volunteers returned. COVID-19 global pandemic necessitated a global evacuation of volunteers. Now, as [Peace Corps plans to start sending](#) volunteers to sites across 24 countries in Africa and the Americas, how has the world changed? How will grassroots areas greet American volunteers?

As Carol Spahn said to [NBC News](#), “This is not the same Peace Corps you know from 10 or 20 – or even two years ago. We have preserved the enduring ‘magic’ that brings us together again and again—after all these years—to support an agency and a mission we love and care about while fundamentally changing the pieces that make us better.” To learn more about Peace Corps service, visit peacecorps.gov and contact your local recruiter.

Editorial Sample:

This writing blends both information about Traditional Chinese Medicine and the political nature of soft power diplomacy. It was intended to raise awareness for TCM practitioners and persons interested in it.

Current trends in TCM international dissemination

by Aaron P. Meadows

The internet, which can instantly connect persons from opposite ends of the earth, has become a major tool for the spread of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) around the world. Not only because of its speed, but the nature of the internet users, accessibility, audience size, and conformity with current market trends could enable TCM to spread further than it has ever spread before.

The speed at which a person can connect is ever-more obvious through the online educational platform which has effectively supplemented if not replaced education in the USA, China, and various other places in the world. Not only that, world-renown universities such as Harvard regularly offer online classes. Often referred to as “distance learning,” the National Center of Educational Statistics (NCES) reported that 3,259,560 students were enrolled exclusively in distance education courses, 441,646 in exclusively distance education institutions, and 3.67 million in some distance education courses in Fall 2018 [1]. The number rose to 34.7% from 33.1% from the previous year, showing a slow but growing trend in the popularity of online education. As seen, the persons receptive and interested in online courses has grown, implying the feasibility of using this platform to not only spread TCM culture and knowledge, but it can also potentially allow TCM schools to reach out to more students for part-time or even full-time enrollment.

Online education at TCM schools could only be implemented for courses that do not require clinical skills trainings and practicums. Much of the clinical practice in TCM requires hands-on experience and testing [2]. But some do not require a non-distance learning environment. For example, much of the theoretical basis of TCM could be learned on an online medium with or without an interaction with a teacher, especially for non-seminar, entry-level courses. Some organization offer continuing-education units (CEU) or general online education modules for the public, but there exists little to no educational platform, which is solely offered online for college-credit toward a degree. Coursera runs a free online course for the general public that serves as a introductory course to some of the tenets of TCM called “Everyday Chinese Medicine” [3]. eLotus offers CEU units, similar to various other platforms [4]. The online course offered by Coursera is connected with The Chinese University of Hong Kong, offers a certificate, and features professional teachers from the university. While given with a certificate, there exists no usefulness for that certificate. It can’t be used toward college credit for a degree, and it doesn’t have the same use as a CEU would toward an existing

professional. As a result, the potential for reaching a larger audience would be diminished by the lack of persuasiveness--whether free or paid--as there is not incentive for taking the course other than for the satisfaction of one's curiosity. While free, it still requires a person to invest their time. In a fast-paced world, time is money.

Providing the potential customer with an incentive could improve the persuasiveness of an online education program. But a person who would want credit toward a degree and maintains interest in a TCM course is probably a student who wants to study TCM. It wouldn't successfully attract a person who is only interested in TCM as a course which leads to attainment of a degree. So, for promoting TCM toward persons curious and persuading them to invest their time into a program, it may be better to target a general audience whose curiosity remains their main motivation.

One of the most meaningful ways to reach someone in the medical field is through treatment. Many persons who have become interested in TCM have usually experienced it firsthand. But there exists the trouble of finding a practitioner, their address, and deciding to follow-through with the decision. The depth of this investment could potentially dissuade a person unsure of whether they really want to try TCM. A platform that could allow a person to test the water before they dive could potentially reach the uncertain customer. That platform is the internet, namely "telehealth."

In China, the growth of online-doctor consultation has been growing slowly, and its dissemination is impeded by a variety of factors. One of the issues may be due to its largest market--the elderly [4]. TCM consultation also requires a bit of face-to-face consultation. But the entire diagnosis part doesn't actually have to be face-to-face. To be exact, inspection and inquiring could both be communicated over the internet prior to a direct consultation--that's half of the diagnosis process. During this type of consultation, the doctor could also introduce other information to the potential patient so that the person can make an informed decision as to whether they want to try TCM. Their confidence when talking into the clinic could be greater than if they didn't, potentially leading to a preference for this type of consultation and TCM treatment. This could also be the same platform where TCM doctors assist persons with their TCM prescriptions, allowing for greater ease in the whole process. For example, if a patient is uncertain about the preparation of an herbal decoction, they could call their doctor for advice on the preparation of the herbs. Such services could also be free or charged, depending on the requirement and preferences of the doctors and the patients.

The online platform for consultations and education could be limited by the legal liability of providing consultations or giving medical advice online. This obstacle has already been passed by various platforms for conventional medical doctors. So, while there are obstacles, and specific limitations would have to be put into place, the need for online development is evident as more persons use online-services more than traditional services. So, not only for the promotion of TCM abroad, but an online platform could also increase the competitiveness of TCM as it seeks to reach younger, non-Chinese markets.

References:

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3. Everyday Chinese Medicine. (2020). Retrieved June 07, 2020, from <https://www.coursera.org/learn/everyday-chinese-medicine>
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Research Sample (USA):

I published this research with the International Journal of Health, Wellness, and Society while an undergraduate in Berea College. It includes the results of research that I conducted with Dr. Jeffrey McClung. The abstract's format adheres to the journal's specifications.

Taiji Improves Kinetic Link Coordination

Aaron Meadows, Berea College, Kentucky, USA

Jeffrey McClung, Berea College, Kentucky, USA

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to see if learning Tai Chi could have a cross-training effect on movements that require very rapid movements with force generation as the targeted end result. Nine subjects (4 women, 5 men, 18–22 yrs., BMI < 25) completed the study. All had limited experience in the martial arts prior to this study. The average number of hours attended by the subjects was 32 ± 10.5 hrs. over six weeks. The pre-instruction functional movement screen (FMS) (17.3 ± 1.5) compared to post-instruction (20.1 ± 1.5), $p < .01$. In the standing medicine ball throw, the running medicine ball throw, and the overhand ball throw, the initial movement pattern showed a simultaneous segmental rotation (SSR) at the knee, hip, and shoulder, followed by sequential segmental rotation in the elbow and wrist. In the posttests, all segments showed a sequential segmental rotation pattern ($p < .05$). In the tennis forehand, SSR followed shoulder to wrist in the pre-test, then SSR from knee to wrist post-instruction, though the differences were not significant ($p = .57$). Results showed that Tai Chi training improves the quality of functional movement. Tai Chi can improve coordination in high-speed movement, even though it is practiced in slow, controlled movements.

Keywords: Tai Chi, Functional Movement Screen, Coordination, Cross-training

Source:

Meadows, A.P., et. al. (2012). "Taiji improves kinetic link coordination." The International Journal of Health, Wellness and Society, 2(2), 15-22.

Research Samples (China):

I first published these with Shandong University of TCM Journal while a postgraduate. The abstracts' format adheres to the journal's specifications.

Meta-analysis of acupuncture and integrative acupuncture efficacy in treatment of Lumbago

Author: Li Jianliang (Aaron Parneal Meadows)

Abstract

Objective: This research aimed to assess the value of integrative acupuncture compared to acupuncture in the treatment of acute and chronic back pain according to the mean scores of the Visual Analogue Scale (VAS) and the Oswestry Disability Index (ODI).

Materials and Method: 75 RCT studies were included. The analysis included data from 5,356 participants. SPSS 26.0 was used for statistical analyses. A preliminary search of the literature yielded 8,234 articles from CNKI and 178 articles from MEDLINE concerning acupuncture treatment of lumbar pain. Articles which met the required criteria excluded all except for a total of 75 articles [2-76]. 51 of the research articles included simple acupuncture treatments, and 24 of the studies used comprehensive acupuncture treatments for back pain. The total number of participants within the group of articles equaled 5356 research participants. Of which, 2658 were men, and 2698 were women. The average age of the participants was 48.24 years old with a standard deviation of 8.75 years (see table 1).

Results: The mean difference of VAS scores for acupuncture were 4.4053(1.49635) and 4.3225(1.92546) for integrative acupuncture treatment. For ODI, the mean for acupuncture treatment was 18.6722 (9.05878) and 11.7575(3.04747) for integrative acupuncture. For ODI, the mean score of acupuncture was 8.54(5.42019) and 11.7575(3.04747) for integrative acupuncture treatment. T-tests and Levene's test revealed no statistically significant difference ($p>0.05$). Statistical significance (0.007) was observed comparing treatment and injury type according to ODI scores.

Conclusion:

There was no statistically significant difference in the overall treatment of acute and chronic back pain by acupuncture or integrative acupuncture. Researchers assert that there appears no beneficial benefit according to measurements of pain (VAS) or disability (ODI), but they suggest that further research into the types of injuries, length of injury, and treatment type may reveal an advantage.

Keywords: lumbago; back pain; integrative acupuncture; acute lumbago; chronic lumbago;

Meta-analysis of acupuncture and integrative acupuncture efficacy in the treatment of lumbago

Author: Aaron Meadows

Abstract

Objective: To evaluate the efficacy and safety of acupuncture in the treatment of acute and chronic low back pain by systematic evaluation of evidence-based medicine.

Methods: According to Cochrane system evaluator's manual, the inclusion and exclusion criteria, and literature retrieval strategy comprised the fundamental basis for analysis. After searching CNKI, VIP, Wanfang and PubMed databases, researchers evaluated the methodological quality of the included literature. Revman 5.3 software analyzed the scores from outcome indicators, Visual Analogue Scale (VAS) and Japanese Orthopedic Score (JOA), to evaluate the efficacy over the course of each Randomized-Controlled Trial (RCT). Relative risk (RR) at 95% confidence interval (CI) was used to qualify data, and standardized mean difference (SMD) at a 95% confidence interval (CI) would reveal the degree of efficacy of acupuncture versus integrative treatment for lumbago.

Result:

1. A total of 440 articles were retrieved, and 17 research articles that met the inclusion criteria were finally included, totaling 17 Chinese articles.
2. Literature quality: the researcher only analyzed a comparatively small number of articles.
3. The results of meta-analysis showed statistically significant pain alleviation of lumbago. In the comparison of efficacy before and after treatment, all the 17 trials contained significant results.

Conclusion: Acupuncture combined with other methods in the treatment of acute and chronic low back pain exceeds the degree of pain alleviation of acupuncture alone, can reduce the pain of patients and improve the quality of life of patients.

Key words: acupuncture alone; moxibustion; acute low back pain; chronic low back pain; Meta-analysis

Essay example (China):

This piece was written to be published in the Bianque Medical and Cultural Research Society Academic Proceedings. This is only a preview.

针对传统中医教育的跨学科教育的跨文化化

作者: Aaron P. Meadows

在 5000 个不同的群体中传播、涉及 3.7 亿人的传统医学实践，通过《联合国土著人民权利宣言》（UNDRIP）第 24 条的实施得到了国际上的认可，该宣言确认了这些人对其传统医学和健康实践的权力⁹。尽管不是具有法律约束力的文件，但该文件形成了保护和促进传统医学实践，知识产权以及相关草药知识的中心论调。然而，有 143 个联合国会员国采用了具有民族或地区意义的政策，其中第 24 条对确认土著人民的基本权利及其传统医学信仰和习俗做出了贡献。由于传统医学在不同国家的成功水平各不相同，因此能否成功实施尚待确定。无论是在拉丁美洲国家还是传统中医中，保护和整合方面所面临的挑战仍然是：西方生物学在政策和融资方面的持续主导地位，某些国家政策实施的缺乏，传统医学发展和教育的低优先级，以及跨文化交流和合作失败不断加剧的趋势。在保持独特性的同时，为了在保存多样性的同时发扬传统医学，世界各地各种传统药物主要是确定在传统医学组织、资金募集以及对传统医学对立和批评的反应性言论方面在本土的领导地位。因此，传统医学，尤其是传统中医药，可能面临边缘化甚至在欧洲国家以及美国（亚洲以外最大的中药出口地区）被禁用的问题。通过对不同类型的传统药物的分析，本研究为地方，国家和国际层面的决策者提出了一系列建议，包括基于体现共同点的具有文化契合性的监管环境的发展，取消限制土著人民对健康体系领导和自治的实施合同模式，领导和自治系统的卫生系统应由土著人民承担，以及对真正的跨文化卫生计划和实践发展的促进，以促进交流和融合，而不是反对和隔离，同时保持医疗发展的后勤工作。