

Adapting a Vocational College Study Tour for Russian Adolescents

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Abstract

How practical participation relates to cultural understanding is a central question for short educational visits. Drawing on transcultural communication and experiential learning, this retrospective qualitative case study examines curriculum adaptation at a ten-day camp hosted by a Beijing vocational college in July 2026 for 40 Russian adolescents aged 11-16 years old. It draws on curriculum documents and accounts from five staff members, with particular attention to the 25 beginners, although recollections cannot consistently be assigned to one language class. Teachers described demonstration, interpretation and student assistance enabling task completion alongside difficulties using vocabulary and explaining cultural meanings beyond the immediate activity. Finished objects offered opportunities for expression, including one reported combination of Chinese characters and Russian motifs. Institutional contact continued after departure, but participants' subsequent use of the experience remained undocumented. The case contributes a conditional account of curriculum adaptation: Classroom support can enable participation, while opportunities for learners to interpret cultural material and revisit it in other settings require separate consideration. This connects experiential learning's concern with reflection and further use to transcultural communication's attention to the reshaping of meaning. It suggests that successful making and expressed enthusiasm cannot, by themselves, establish negotiated meaning or lasting learning. The analysis identifies conditions to examine in applying these perspectives to brief visits; staff recollections do not establish learning gains or a causal progression between outcomes.

Keywords

Inbound study tours, Russian adolescents, Curriculum adaptation, Transcultural communication, Qualitative case study

Introduction

An adolescent can make a pastry or decorate a fan without understanding the language used to explain it. Practical activities therefore offer a way into a short international study tour. For the host teacher, the task is to make the activity manageable while giving visitors an opportunity to understand its cultural context. This involves choosing suitable content, organising language support and adjusting instruction as the lesson unfolds. Inbound study tours form part of China's educational and people-to-people exchanges, including cooperation with Belt and Road countries. Measures published in March 2026 by the Ministry of Commerce and eight other departments address inbound education and training consumption, including Chinese-language and vocational training [1]. A draft tourism industry standard released for consultation in February 2026 proposes substantial course time and an initial period of cultural adaptation for inbound study tours [2]. Such provision depends partly on how institutions turn an itinerary into lessons

that visiting adolescents can follow.

Vocational colleges offer a useful setting for examining this process. Their training kitchens and specialist facilities accommodate practical activities beyond those usually available in language classrooms. Teachers can adapt established courses with help from student assistants. Courses designed for enrolled students, however, often assume language skills and background knowledge that short-term visitors lack. Decisions about explanation, demonstration and practice therefore become central to curriculum design.

Research on educational travel has examined student outcomes and the relationship between emotion and learning [3-5]. Studies of international students in China and heritage camps address adaptation and cultural identification [6,7]. Less is known about how host teachers adapt individual lessons for adolescents making a brief visit with little or no Chinese. Detailed accounts of these adjustments can inform course preparation and

help institutions identify where additional support is needed.

This study examines the “Meet in Beijing” Chinese Culture and Digital Culture Tourism Summer Camp for Russian Youth, held in July 2026. Curriculum documents are read alongside staff accounts to trace how planning and classroom support shaped the programme. The camp is treated as a single case, with particular attention to provision for beginners. Three questions guide the analysis:

RQ1: How did curriculum planning and classroom support make the activities accessible to adolescents with little or no Chinese?

RQ2: What did staff report about participants engagement and understanding, and what evidence was available about continuity after the camp?

RQ3: Which changes to teaching and follow-up are supported by the difficulties identified in this case?

Literature review

Learning during short educational visits

Educational travel can produce different kinds of learning. Chen et al. examine cognitive, affective and behavioural outcomes among university students. Dou et al investigate affective learning during short educational visits abroad, while Li et al. show that the relationship between emotion and learning varies with the experience. These studies give attitudes and feelings a place in evaluation alongside knowledge and skills. Distinguishing these outcomes helps researchers interpret visible responses such as enthusiasm, persistence or voluntary participation.

Choi and Bae examine intercultural competence following a short international educational trip. Byram’s framework distinguishes attitudes and knowledge from the skills needed to interpret cultural practices and interact with others. This distinction calls for evidence appropriate to each outcome: Willingness to join an activity can indicate engagement, while changes in understanding require closer examination.

Population and setting also matter. Huang et al studied the adaptation of international students already in China [8]. Wang et al interviewed 30 ethnic-Chinese adolescents at a root-seeking camp, relating participation to cultural identity [9]. These studies help frame the present inquiry while drawing attention to differences in heritage connections, language experience and

familiarity with China.

Language support and cultural interpretation

Language support must address both the practical task and its cultural explanation. Illustrations may show how to shape dough, while translation helps explain the name and significance of the finished pastry. The two forms of support meet different needs within the same lesson. Their timing also matters when teachers have limited time to introduce unfamiliar terms before participants begin practical work.

Hoskins and Mirus’s concept of cultural discount concerns the reduced appeal of cultural products across markets [10]. It offers an analogy for considering unfamiliar content in education, although this study does not measure such a discount. The review by Wang et al. also directs attention to visitors perceived cultural distance [11]. For classroom design, the relevant question is which aspects of a task or explanation a visitor finds unfamiliar.

Interpretation research identifies practical dimensions of this provision. Zhao and Chan examine preferences for interpretation services at Chinese heritage sites [12]. Chen, Yang and Xie assign interpretation and education the highest primary-level weight in their city-level evaluation of study-tourism service capacity [13]. A classroom study can extend this attention to provision by examining how translation, illustrations and demonstration are combined during teaching.

Participation and the construction of meaning

Anbin, S. and Yang, S. formulation of transcultural communication drew attention to the reshaping of meaning through encounters [14]. Its broader intellectual history is discussed in [15]. This perspective prompts questions about how visitors interpret the material offered to them and how teachers respond to their contributions.

Zhang likewise discussed construction and negotiation of meaning in heritage tourism, while Du and Cui examine intercultural dialogue in museum learning [16,17]. These approaches allow for interpretations that differ from the host’s intended account. A visitor’s choice of a design, question about a motif or explanation of a finished work may offer a way to investigate that process.

Kolb’s account of experiential learning connects practical experience with reflection, conceptual understanding and further action [18]. It helps identify

the learning opportunities surrounding a workshop task, including discussion after making and occasions to use what was learnt. In this case, the curriculum documents and staff accounts are examined for these opportunities alongside reports of supported task completion.

Focus of the present study

Research on study-travel provision identifies curriculum design, staffing and organisational support as practical concerns [19]. Feng et al. examined popular youth study-travel products from suppliers' perspectives [20]. The present study complements this work by tracing the relationship between planned provision and classroom adjustments at a vocational college. Here, "curriculum adaptation" means changes in content, presentation and support that make activities accessible to visiting learners. Four analytical dimensions organise the inquiry: Participation, classroom support for understanding, expressed emotional responses, and opportunities to record or retell an experience. They guide comparison across the materials without prescribing a fixed sequence. The resulting account concerns curriculum delivery and staff interpretations; establishing learning gains or their persistence would require participant-level evidence.

Methods

Case and curriculum

This is a retrospective qualitative case study of a camp hosted by the college's School of International Education and School of Tourism and Arts from 1st to 10th July 2026. It involved 40 Russian adolescents aged 11-16 years old, comprising 25 girls and 15 boys from several schools, accompanied by five adult group leaders. A pre-camp language survey informed placement in two classes: Class A comprised 15 participants with some Chinese, and Class B comprised 25 beginners. The classes were taught separately. The camp is the unit of the case study. Provision for Class B is the main focus because these participants faced the greatest reported language barrier.

However, the four class teachers taught both groups, and their retrospective accounts cannot consistently be assigned to Class B. This limits the specificity of the findings: A teaching episode recalled without a clear class designation is evidence about the camp's provision, not an observation established for all 25 beginners.

The curriculum combined traditional culture, digital applications in culture and tourism, and visits around Beijing. Cultural activities included calligraphy, tea art, tie-dye, lacquer fans, Chinese drums, Taijiquan and pastry making. Digital classes covered short-video production, motion capture, new-media operation and cultural-creative design. The programme also included themed Chinese lessons on pinyin and names, food culture and Beijing's subway, together with coffee making and pastry classes in the college's training facilities. The timetable placed the main city visits on 4th and 5th July, and a commercial district visit on 9th July. The opening ceremony took place on 2nd July and the closing ceremony, with certificates, on 10th July. These dates distinguish the ten-day visit from its formal opening and from the longer duration recalled by one interviewee.

Materials and staff accounts

The material comprised curriculum documents and retrospective staff accounts collected in August 2026 (Tables 1 and 2). The documents describe intended provision. Staff accounts explain how those responsible for the programme interpreted its delivery. The two sources support an analysis of planning and teaching, with classroom responses reported through staff recollections.

The camp roster was used only to derive anonymised totals. Participants were not interviewed or surveyed for this study: They had returned to Russia before the research began. There are consequently no first-person participant accounts or post-camp assessments in the dataset.

Table 1. Materials used in the case study and the questions they can address.

Source	Materials	Analytical use
Curriculum documents	Seven sets of slides (228 slides): two versions of the first Chinese lesson, food culture and pastry, coffee making, two transport lessons, and character-and-pattern design. Chinese-Russian daily timetable, version 10, with separate schedules for Classes A and B.	Planned content, sequencing and language support; discrepancies between plans and staff recollections
Staff accounts	Five staff contributors in August 2026: four written responses and one audio self-narration (21 min 49 s). The narration was machine-transcribed; quoted passages were checked against the recording.	Design decisions, recalled classroom episodes, reported difficulties and follow-up arrangements

Table 2. Staff contributors to the retrospective accounts.

Code	Role	Teaching or programme responsibility
T1	Teacher, School of Tourism and Arts	Chinese food culture and pastry: peach-blossom shortbread and steamed buns
T2	Teacher also represented the teaching staff	Coffee making: pour-over, espresso, milk frothing and latte art
T3	Teacher and camp coordinator	Transport-themed Chinese lesson; timetable, staffing, procurement, ceremonies and liaison
T4	Teacher also prepared tie-dye materials	Cultural-creative design: characters, patterns and light boxes
T5	Programme lead and curriculum designer	Overall curriculum, timetable, resources and liaison with Russian group leaders

The teacher guide asked staff to reconstruct a lesson, identify the most and least engaging episodes, and explain the cues behind those judgements. It also asked for an episode in which understanding appeared to improve, content that participants had merely imitated, arrangements for later tasks or contact, and proposed changes. The programme designer was asked about curriculum strands, course selection, language support, intended outputs and follow-up arrangements.

Four staff members provided written responses. The fifth contributed an audio self-narration lasting 21 minutes 49 seconds, which was transcribed by machine; passages quoted in the manuscript were checked against the recording. These formats provided retrospective accounts of different depth. The written responses did not allow live probing, and the recorded narration was not a conventional interviewer-led conversation. The question about the most and least engaging moments also encouraged contrasting examples, which must be considered when interpreting agreement across teachers. Some discrepancies could be resolved against documents, while others remained. T5 twice described a fifteen-day programme, whereas the schedule and roster establish ten days. T1 recalled “thirty-odd” beginners, exceeding the Class B roster. T3 described a transport lesson designed for Chinese proficiency test levels 2-3 with allowance for beginners. These differences reinforce the need to distinguish the documented class composition from recollections that may combine experiences across the two classes.

Analysis

The analysis combined comparison across the staff accounts with thematic reading of the curriculum documents. Responses were first compared question by question using the interview guide as an initial frame. Meaning units were then coded, and related codes were

grouped under the research questions and the four analytical dimensions. A residual category accommodated material that did not fit those dimensions.

Curriculum documents were compared with staff accounts to examine planned content, language presentation and timing. Accounts of classroom participation, task completion and emotional responses came from the staff. Where the documents and recollections differed, the discrepancy was retained in the interpretation.

One researcher conducted the coding. There was no independent coding check or return of findings to interviewees. Comparison across accounts and source types helped qualify interpretations but cannot remove the effects of retrospective recall or shared institutional interests. The findings retain discrepancies and identify unverified recollections where these affect the argument. Quotations are the author’s English translations of the Chinese staff accounts.

Ethics and researcher position

Ethical approval was obtained for the study, and the staff contributors consented to the interviews. Photographs and videos involving minors were excluded from the analysis. Staff are identified by codes T1-T5, and no adolescent is named. A participant’s words recalled by a teacher are treated as part of that teacher’s account, including where a translation app was used. They are not direct participant testimony.

The author was one of the camp’s curriculum designers and was not among the five staff contributors. This involvement provided knowledge of the planned curriculum, while creating a possibility that the analysis would favour the programme’s intended aims. The account is therefore an interpretation from within the host institution. The author’s position is considered alongside the staff’s own involvement when assessing their

recollections.

Findings

Curriculum design and classroom adaptation

(1) Course selection and language support

T5 described three curriculum strands: First is traditional culture, the second is the new technologies and new formats of the culture-tourism industry, and the third is to let the students experience Beijing's culture-tourism industry in person. The timetable put related content in different settings.

Transport vocabulary concerned movement around the city, cultural classes introduced topics encountered on visits, and digital activities offered ways to record experiences. These links were not always reflected in the sequence. The transport lesson on 8th July and tea class on 7th July followed the main visits on 4th and 5th July, limiting their potential as preparation for those visits.

The choice of coffee and Chinese pastry illustrates how the designer balanced familiarity and difference. T5 described coffee as “a rather good point for connecting Chinese and Western cultures”, while pastry offered an occasion to introduce differences between food traditions. This was the designer's rationale. The study did not establish how familiar either activity was to each participant. Both courses used existing training rooms and teaching staff, supported by student volunteers from hospitality and baking programmes.

Language provision varied by course. T5 reported “no unified requirement”: Teachers used Chinese, Russian

interpreters were assigned to selected practical classes, and Chinese-language teachers were encouraged to use Chinese “as far as possible”. The pre-camp survey was circulated so that teachers could adapt their content to participants' language levels.

The seven sets of slides show different approaches to written support. The first Chinese lesson presented characters, pinyin, Russian and English. Of the two transport sets, one included trilingual section pages, whereas the other used picture-based vocabulary without pinyin or Russian, despite T3 description of bilingual slides. The design slides included pinyin and one Russian expression of thanks. The pastry slides used pinyin and photographs. The coffee slides were entirely in Chinese. Written support was uneven, with some courses relying on interpreters and assistants during teaching.

(2) Engagement during practical work and games

All four class teachers placed their most engaging episode in an activity requiring participation (Table 3). For pastry, coffee and design, this involved making something. In the transport lesson, it involved games. Their least engaging episodes concerned extended vocabulary work, theoretical explanation or a demanding transport task. The common feature was active participation, although its form differed across courses. The agreement should be read alongside the interview prompts, which explicitly asked teachers to choose contrasting episodes. Neither time spent on each activity nor engagement across all lessons was systematically measured.

Table 3. Episodes of higher and lower engagement as recalled by class teachers.

Teacher	Higher engagement	Lower engagement and reported cues
T1 (pastry)	Making and tasting shortbread gathered at the bench, handled dough, shaped petals, photographed pastries and used translation apps to express appreciation.	A block of ten or more ingredient words: looked away, read along faintly, did not answer and looked at phones.
T2 (coffee)	Latte art brought surprise, raised phones, laughter and cheering.	Theoretical explanation remained difficult after translation; no specific behavioural cue was described.
T3 (transport)	Movement-based games, including “number hugs” and “Simon says”, drew exclamations and participants helping one another.	Subway transfers: many lines and station names, more demanding grammar, tiredness and difficulty finding stations.
T4 (design)	Independent creation showed drafts to classmates, drew faster and tried several combinations.	Theoretical concepts: blank looks, frowns, heads down, difficulty following slides and few volunteered answers.

(3) Demonstration and supported task completion

Teachers commonly described demonstration as a response to difficulty with verbal explanation. T1 account of teaching the action of wrapping a filling is the

most detailed. Participants initially could not tell what the action “wrap” meant at all. T1 slowly made the complete wrapping movement while repeating the pinyin bao, displayed a photograph with characters and pinyin,

and asked assistants to guide the movement within groups. Participants practised the sentence “I am wrapping the filling” while performing the action. T1 recalled that “after just five minutes, all the participants could complete the wrapping independently and say the sentence in full”. This is a teacher’s retrospective account of an immediate response, not a timed assessment of every learner.

T4 described a participant who initially placed a character and a decorative pattern side by side. The teacher drew at the desk, laying the lines of the pattern directly over its strokes, after which the participant embedded the pattern inside the strokes. In the transport lesson, T3 demonstrated “Simon says” for two rounds before reporting that everyone understood. T2 similarly attributed participants ability to perform a pour-over to demonstration and supervised practice. Across these accounts, a modelled action gave participants a route into the task when verbal instruction had been insufficient.

Support was distributed among teachers, interpreters and student assistants. T1 described one baking-club assistant per group of six to eight and called the assistants “the core support”. The same account’s recollection of “thirty-odd” beginners prevents that ratio from being treated as a verified staffing level for Class B. T2 reported that “the whole course had an interpreter”. T1 and T4 also described gestures and translation apps, while T3 referred to volunteers modelling greetings. The accounts suggest that the accessibility of a lesson depended on this support as well as on its slides.

(4) Finished objects and expressed enthusiasm

Several teachers associated enthusiasm with a participant’s finished work. T1 recalled a girl who initially avoided kneading dough but completed a pastry with an assistant’s help. The teacher reported that she photographed it and used a translation app to say that she wanted to make Chinese pastry for her family. T1 considered this response more than an isolated occurrence, although the material does not provide a count of comparable episodes.

T4 described a participant who combined Chinese character patterns with decorative motifs from their own country, then brought the work to the teacher. T4 also qualified this example as “individual rather than typical”. In another design activity, five participants’ light boxes were arranged to form “Beijing welcomes you”, prompting a group photograph. T2 recalled participants photographing coffee making, latte art and etching. T3

noted that some participants continued to wear reward wristbands and asked to keep vocabulary cards and tracing sheets.

The accounts associate pride and interest with work that participants could show or keep. T5 explained that immediate outputs were an intended feature of the curriculum because participants could “produce something right away and feel a strong sense of achievement”. Teachers’ descriptions of the practical courses were consistent with this intention.

(5) Recording and presenting the experience

Teachers described opportunities to record and present activities during the camp. T1 recalled a participant filming pastry shaping “wanting to share it back home”. T5 described closing presentations that combined tea art with new-media assignments and games. These accounts document staff recollections of recording and presentation. No participant-produced recording was analyzed.

Teachers also encouraged later sharing. T1 supplied bilingual recipe sheets and suggested showing recordings to family and classmates. T4 invited participants to combine Chinese motifs with Russian decorative art at home, describing this as “an open invitation, not an assignment”. These were openings for further activity. No subsequent retelling by a participant was available for analysis.

Reported understanding and the limits of follow-up

(1) Performing an action and explaining it

Teachers distinguished completing a task from using its language independently. T1 recalled that, away from the pastry bench, participants often could not explain an expression or construct a sentence of their own. After a break, many confused the words for sugar and butter. T4 reported that participants “remembered the drawing operations but found it very hard to remember the pronunciation and the cultural meaning behind the characters”. These accounts suggest that language use was sometimes tied closely to the activity in which it had been practiced.

The other accounts were less specific. T3 recalled “two or three” participants following without understanding, without a class-specific denominator. T2 expected that an unpracticed, multi-step pour-over would be forgotten quickly. The latter was a prediction, not an observation of forgetting. The material therefore supports a distinction between immediate task performance and independent explanation, but not a measured comparison

of procedural and linguistic retention.

Staff described other signs of engagement: Attempts after an initial failure, questions about the peach-blossom pastry shape, and requests to keep learning materials. T1 recalled a participant who “remade four pastries” after the petals cracked. T3 characterized participants as “orderly, positive, independent”. Reported attendance and orderly behaviour describe how the camp was run. They are not measures of cultural understanding. The effective-learning literature offers questions for interpreting these observations, but participants’ own accounts would be needed to examine their feelings and learn more closely.

(2) Continuity after departure

The staff accounts described little direct follow-up with individual participants. T1 and T2 reported none, and T4 reported “no direct individual contact”. Within the courses represented in these accounts, staff described no required post-camp task. Teachers’ suggestions about recipes, recordings and designs remained voluntary invitations. This establishes a gap in the follow-up arrangements described by the staff. It does not establish that participants stopped discussing the visit or forgot what they had learnt.

Some opportunities to apply course content were also limited within the visit. T3 reported that participants did not remember their Chinese names outside class or take their desk cards away. The transport lesson introduced transfers and ticketing, but the group did not ride Beijing’s subway. Travel to the Great Wall was by coach. The lesson therefore lacked an opportunity for practice

in the setting it described.

Staff also described continuing institutional contact. Contact details were exchanged with the Russian organisers, a seminar was held with three group leaders during the camp, and degree programmes were presented at closing. T5 described the last activity as an attempt to plant a seed. T3 reported a subsequent enquiry from a Russian leader about online courses. These accounts describe institutional communication and express interest, not later enrolment or participant learning. Interviewees also differed over whether a satisfaction survey had been designed. The study cannot confirm that such a survey was administered.

Difficulties and proposed changes

The accounts identify uneven language support, a crowded programme and limited opportunities to use or revisit course content.

T5 judged the timetable very full and worried that participants might only have had a taste of each topic. Teachers described adjusting lessons in response to difficulty: T1 placed vocabulary beside the practical step that required it. T2 added etching practice. T3 replaced a scripted dialogue with a game, and T4 reduced oral explanation of pattern history in favour of examples and practice.

Their proposals for another camp are summarized in Table 4. Some extended adjustments have already been tried, such as reducing vocabulary load. Others, including a longer module leading to certification, would require development and evaluation in a subsequent programme.

Table 4. Changes proposed by staff for a future camp.

Code	Proposed changes
T1	Introduce three or four words per ten minutes and reuse them during practical steps; use games for grammar; prepare assistants with shared gestures and bilingual phrases; keep fixed groups; place short cultural stories between practical steps
T2	Assign a student assistant to each group
T3	Link lessons to site visits, including a subway journey; survey participants and group leaders; consider teachers’ experience and willingness to teach again
T4	Use step-by-step illustrations and less verbal theory; offer templates at three levels; allow more observation and recomposition; invite combinations with participants’ own cultural references
T5	Expand selected modules, including a proposed five-day new-media marketing module with an entry-level certificate; include more local Beijing culture; recognise staff development

Discussion

Supported participation and the limits of experiential learning

The case brings a distinction within experiential learning

into focus: Completing an action with support and using its meaning independently are different achievements.

Kolb connects experience with reflection, conceptualisation and further experimentation. T1’s account of

successful pastry making alongside difficulty recalling ingredients away from the bench is consistent with the need to distinguish these processes. It does not demonstrate a completed learning cycle or establish where learning stopped. It suggests that visible success in a workshop is insufficient evidence that the experience has become knowledge a learner can use elsewhere.

Classroom support helps explain this distinction. Teachers modelled movements, interpreters supplied language and assistants corrected actions as they occurred. Successful performance could therefore depend on resources distributed across the classroom, even when a participant appeared to complete the final step independently. This interpretation identifies dependence on immediate support as a condition to examine when applying experiential learning theory to brief visits. The educational resource is the workshop together with its arrangements for mediation. The accounts cannot isolate the contribution of each arrangement, but they show why equipment and a practical task alone provide an incomplete explanation of accessibility.

This also qualifies the use of cultural distance and cultural discount. The latter explains the appeal of cultural products across markets. Its application here remains an analogy. Neither concept licenses attributing a classroom difficulty to national difference alone. In the recalled episodes, difficulty concerned a particular word, movement or explanatory demand, and teachers could alter those demands. Curriculum adaptation can thus be understood as working on the relation between a task and the support available to perform and interpret it. The distinction matters because easier participation need not mean a corresponding change in cultural understanding.

Material expression and the conditions of negotiated meaning

Transcultural perspective directs attention to participants capacity to reshape cultural material through encounters. The account by T4 of combining Chinese characters with Russian decorative motifs offers a limited example of such reworking. Read alongside the discussion by Zhang and Yang of construction and negotiation, it raises a question about who can contribute to a cultural representation. The teacher supplied the task, materials and technical guidance, while the participant reportedly

altered the composition. The account suggests room for contribution within a host-defined activity. It does not establish equal interpretive authority or a transformation of cultural identity.

Finished work may make this contribution available for discussion across a language barrier. A design can preserve a choice that an adolescent cannot readily explain in Chinese, giving teachers and peers something specific to ask about. This is compatible with the attention by Du and Cui to dialogue in museum learning, although a classroom workshop cannot simply be equated with a museum's third space. The theoretical issue is whether material participation opens opportunities for interpretation. Combining motifs could express a deliberate cultural connection, aesthetic preference or compliance with an example. T4 called the episode exceptional, and the participant's explanation is unavailable, so these readings remain unresolved.

The reported pride in pastries and designs also speaks to affective learning, but enthusiasm cannot decide between those readings. Byram's distinction between attitudes, knowledge and interpretive skills helps avoid treating a positive response as evidence for all three. In this case, finished objects may have linked effort with an occasion for expression. The accounts do not establish that this produced cultural understanding. The contribution is therefore a conditional interpretation: Practical work can create an opening for negotiated meaning when learners can explain question or revise what they make. Producing an object alone does not establish that such negotiation occurred.

Continuity across settings as an open theoretical question

The relationship between participation, emotion and later retelling should remain open to different pathways. Educational-tourism research distinguishes several kinds of outcome, while experiential learning directs attention to how experience is reconsidered and used. The present accounts illustrate why one outcome cannot stand as evidence for the next: Photographing a pastry indicates a reported act of recording, and wanting to make it at home indicates a reported intention. Neither establishes subsequent practice or retelling. A sequence from activity through enthusiasm to lasting learning is a proposition to investigate, rather than a mechanism demonstrated by this case.

Continuity also has different institutional and learner dimensions. Contact with Russian organisers and an enquiry about online courses show that organisational connections persisted. Recipes and invitations to redesign objects offered possible resources for participants, but their use is unknown. From a learning perspective, the relevant issue is whether an experience can be revisited in another setting with sufficient cues, materials and opportunities for expression. From a transcultural perspective, retelling would also allow the experience to acquire meanings shaped by a new audience. These are analytical possibilities; the dataset documents neither their occurrence nor their absence.

Taken together, the case suggests distinguishing conditions for participation, opportunities for interpretation and occasions for subsequent use. These dimensions may be connected without forming an automatic progression. Immediate support can enable action while leaving independent explanation uncertain; a finished object can invite interpretation without revealing its meaning to the learner; institutional contact can continue without documenting individual learning. These distinctions refine what curriculum adaptation needs to explain in this setting. They support attention to reflection and continuity while preventing the absence of follow-up evidence from being recast as proof that educational effects ended at departure.

Implications for curriculum design

Language support should follow the demands of each task. Teachers could identify the words needed for a practical step, introduce them during demonstration and use them again in related activities. T1 suggested pace of three or four words per ten minutes offers a starting point to try in another camp. Illustrated instructions and Russian interpretation should help participants recognise what to do and ask for assistance. The amount of text on slides can then be chosen to suit the activity.

Assistants and interpreters would benefit from a shared briefing on the lesson sequence and likely points of confusion. Consistent demonstrations could reduce variation between groups. Fixed assignments may also help assistants notice a participant who is copying without understanding. Recording the actual class size and number of assistants would make successful arrangements easier to repeat.

The transport lesson gives a specific reason to reconsider

sequencing. A lesson on tickets and transfers could prepare participants for a suitable journey or a realistic classroom exercise. Other courses could return to material encountered on site visits, allowing participants to connect an object or expression with a place they had seen. Fewer topics might leave more time for these connections. The choice would depend on whether a module is intended as an introduction or as sustained practice in a skill.

Follow-up could begin with a closing explanation of a chosen work and continue through an optional partner-school activity. Participants should be able to use a language in which they can express their ideas. For minors, communication should use agreed school or guardian channels with appropriate consent. A satisfaction questionnaire would provide a separate source of feedback on the programme; explanations and later tasks would address understanding and use.

The vocational setting makes longer work on selected skills feasible. T5 proposed a five-day new-media module leading to an entry-level certificate. Developing this proposal would require a clearly defined skill, enough practice and an assessment suited to the participants. Any credential should state whether it records attendance or assessed achievement. The presentation of degree programmes at closing reflected the institution's interest in longer-term cooperation; its educational and recruitment consequences remain to be examined.

The 2026 consultation draft offers a related policy reference through its recommendations on course allocation and cultural adaptation. It concerns inbound study-tour services provided by travel agencies. A separate service assessment would be needed to establish its applicability to this college programme. The classroom arrangements documented here can inform course planning alongside the relevant service requirements.

Limitations and future research

This study draws on curriculum documents and the host institution's retrospective accounts of one camp. Staff involved in its design and delivery may have favoured successful episodes or interpreted participants behaviour positively. The author's participation in curriculum design may also have shaped the questions asked and the interpretation of these accounts. The class teachers taught

both language groups, and their recollections could not consistently be assigned to the beginners. This limits the precision of the class-specific account and precludes comparison between the groups.

Four written responses lacked live follow-up, while the audio contribution was a self-narration. Course documents describe planned provision; accounts of classroom participation depend on staff recollection. Neither source establishes the distribution or duration of engagement. Participant interviews, learning assessments and post-camp accounts were unavailable, and the site visits lacked the detailed staff accounts collected for classroom activities.

One researcher conducted the analysis without an independent check or participant feedback. The framework may have directed attention towards expected connections between activity, emotion and retelling. The findings therefore concern the delivery of this curriculum and staff interpretations of immediate responses. Their transfer to other programmes would depend on the learners, activities and support available.

A prospective study could collect participants' oral or written explanations in Russian alongside classroom field notes, then revisit comparable tasks after departure. Including difficult episodes as well as successful ones would reduce reliance on memorable examples. Clearly assigned notes and information about prior experience would permit a comparison between language groups. This would help examine how practical participation and reflection contribute to understanding beyond the original task.

Conclusion

The case shows how a Beijing vocational college used practical courses to engage Russian adolescents during a short study tour. Existing workshops support the activities, while demonstration, interpretation and student assistance helps participants take part. Staff associate making and games with interest and described finished work as an occasion for showing and discussing an achievement.

The study offers a conditional account of curriculum adaptation: Support can make participation possible, while interpretation and subsequent use require distinct opportunities and evidence. This connects practical teaching arrangements with questions raised by experiential learning and transcultural communication. It

does not establish a causal sequence from activity to lasting understanding. Coordinated language support, discussion of participants' works and opportunities to revisit course content follow from these distinctions. Their value for learning beyond the original task remains to be assessed.

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Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Declaration on the use of artificial intelligence

AI-assisted tool (Codex, OpenAI) was used for language editing. The author is responsible for the interpretation of the source materials, the accuracy of the manuscript and the final content.

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