



Post Fellowship Reporting - Project Summary

Report Title: Mr. Ross on the Silk Road **Name:** Tim Ross
Other Team Members:
Program: New York City Program
Trip Dates: 11/30/-0001 - 11/30/-0001 **Location Visited:** China
Post Fellowship Reporting Template: PFR Template 01

Project Summary: My Global Studies students study the people, places, and cultures of Ancient China through an Ancient China/Ancient Egypt museum project. In this project, the students work in groups to study and prepare a presentation that explains Ancient China through particular lenses such as belief systems, architecture, labor and food. Students create exhibits out of air-dry clay that resemble an artifact from the ancient period to serve as jumping-off points for their research and presentations.

Much of the study of Ancient China has a connection to the Silk Road trade route. To learn more about this passage I traveled the Silk Road in China from east to west. The motivation for this trip was to bring back an in-depth understanding of the experiences and artifacts of the Silk Road. This Fellowship has provided me with a multitude of colorful stories to share with my students and colleagues.

Some of the highlights of my travels include visiting the Great Wall (both near Beijing and at its western terminus near Jiayuguan), the easternmost point of the Silk Road at Xi'an where the Terracotta Warriors have been keeping watch over Emperor Qin for two thousand years, visiting the sand dunes of Dunhuang and viewing the fourth century Magao Caves adorned with Buddhist artwork (and evidence of cultural diffusion in some of the murals, camel rides over the sand dunes, experiencing Uighur culture and visiting the ancient ruins of Jiaohe in Turpan, sleeping in a yurt hosted by a Kazach family at Heavenly Lake, crossing the Taklamakan Desert during a sandstorm, and experiencing the ancient livestock market at the Silk Road westernmost Chinese outpost of Kashgar. Photographs I took and artifacts I purchased at these sites continue to bring me joy and it is my hope that they will help to inspire my students' interest in Ancient China as well.

Career Impact: The fellowship challenged me personally in that it required me to function in an environment where I couldn't count on being able to effectively communicate. In my previous travels, I have been able to navigate my surroundings either by using Spanish or by the use of travel books. In China, however, I had absolutely no language training and not even an ability to muddle through the Chinese alphabet. I found few who could read the "pinyin" in which my maps were printed, and a reluctance to appreciate my pantomimes. Although I managed to find alternative ways to communicate, this experience helped me to relate to many of the students who come from other countries with no understanding of the English language or New York's version of American culture. Professionally, I have found this year in my classroom I am more prone to sit down and spend more time with students that do not share a language with nearby colleagues. In addition, I also have a greater understanding of cultural differences that come into play with some students' learning styles. By traveling with a group that often interacted with locals, I now have the ability to recount personal narratives related to many of the various sites in China.

Classroom/Community Impact: Thus far in the semester, I have discussed my experiences in China while discussing the use of advanced technologies during the Age of Exploration that were brought to Europe via the Silk Road network. In addition, I now have a special connection with my Asian students. Before this year, I feel I had something special to offer my Spanish-speaking students because I had lived in El Salvador and spoke the language. Now I have some common reference points with Chinese students. In general, I feel I have begun to open doors for my students virtue of the fact that I traveled to a far-off place where I did not speak the language. Although all of my students are immigrants to the U.S., many of them do not consider leisure travel as a life-enhancing experience. Several of them have asked me questions about my experiences and have expressed interest in international travel themselves.

Open Response: Based on my travels and some of my colleagues, my principal has agreed to begin a travel series at my school. The travel series will feature presentations from faculty about the various places they have visited. The travel series melds nicely with the culture of the school, as it is international in nature and will hopefully inspire students to participate in presentations as well.

I began a travel blog (www.rossonthesilkroad.blogspot.com) before I left for my trip. I informed my students and encouraged them to visit the site. As I posted to the site, I received postings from a few of my students. This was a pleasure for me, and I believe introduced the students to a new way to use a technology that they are familiar with - blog as learning tool. I will continue to enhance

the blog as I assemble more of my video and photos.

Quote: It's clearly changed from the days of Marco Polo, but the Silk Road still hosts a fascinating array of Chinese culture

Photos:



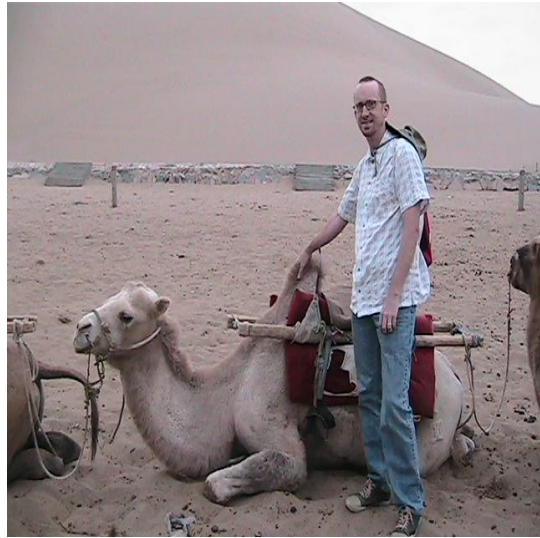
Kashgar market - 2000 years and still running!



The westernmost stop on the Silk Road in China



Heavenly Lake was a nice change of temperature from the desert heat



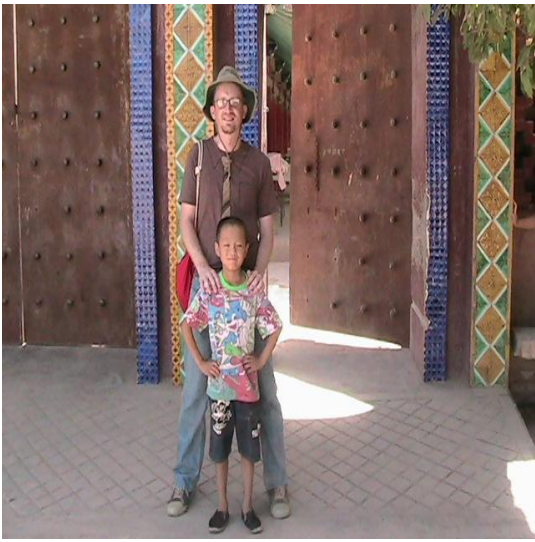
The sand dunes of Dunhuang, seen via camel



Dancing with Uighur performers in Turpan



The Silk Road tour group with Intrepid Tours - hi guys!



A curious youngster at the White Horse Pagoda, Dunhuang



Sampling some curry chicken at the Kashgar market