

Global scholars turn to ASU center to learn award-winning active learning techniques

International interest grows in adopting ICAP framework developed by Regents Professor Michelene 'Micki' Chi

By Anna Cearley-Rivas, ASU News
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A team of Fulbright Scholars from Brazil's Universidade Federal de São Carlos recently set out to find the best ways to bring active learning into their classrooms.

Their research led them to Arizona State University's [ICAP Center for Teaching and Learning](#) — created by Regents Professor [Michelene “Micki” Chi](#) and housed within the Mary Lou Fulton College for Teaching and Learning Innovation.

The ICAP framework Chi developed (which stands for interactive, constructive, active and passive) has become an internationally recognized model for understanding how students engage with learning.

The scholars' visit builds on ICAP's growing global footprint¹ and demonstrates how ideas developed at ASU are influencing teaching and learning around the world.

These scholars reached out to the center because they see ICAP as a way to rethink how engineering is taught, Chi said.

“That is exactly what we want to do, is to provide global educators with the research-based frameworks to help create more effective learning experiences through a greater understanding of different ways to engage in active learning,” she said.

During their visit, the team learned how ICAP principles are being applied to teaching and research.

Chi and the ICAP team introduced them to several of the center's ongoing projects, including the development of an AI-based, self-paced ICAP tutor for educators, and a short training script to

teach students how to collaborate. The scholars also participated in an applied design workshop, reimagining lessons from their own engineering courses through the ICAP lens.

The scholars' emphasis on active learning came from national-level recommendations calling for this type of curricular innovation.

The group came to ASU as part of the Fulbright Modernization of Undergraduate Education Program supported by the Fulbright Commission in Brazil, the Brazilian Ministry of Education, CAPES, the U.S. Embassy in Brasília and the National Council of Education. The program connects engineering faculty across Brazil with U.S. universities that are leading innovation in undergraduate education.

The visit also reflects the broader international reach of the Mary Lou Fulton College, whose initiatives have included collaborations on teacher preparation and education research in [more than 80 countries around the world](#). Together, these collaborations advance the college's mission to connect global innovation with local impact.

Chi is a cognitive and learning science researcher who studies how students learn complex concepts. Her widely adopted ICAP theory of cognitive engagement has set a benchmark for defining active learning, giving teachers a stronger understanding of how students learn and how to design lesson plans and activities to better engage them.

She is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the National Academy of Education, and she is the recipient of numerous recognitions and lifetime achievement awards in both psychology and education. In 2023, she was awarded the [2023 Yidan Prize for Education Research](#), an international honor that is supporting the national scaling of the ICAP model, for her innovative approaches that help learners reach their full potential and break down barriers to higher education.

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

¹ Which includes international keynotes and workshops in France, Portugal and Germany, and participation in the global Bridge the Gap online summit with more than 900 attendees from Africa, America, Europe and India.

Main image



A team of Fulbright Scholars from Brazil's Universidade Federal de São Carlos recently sought out the expertise of ASU's ICAP Center for Teaching and Learning Innovation, led by Regents Professor Michelene "Micki" Chi. Photo courtesy of the Mary Lou Fulton College for Teaching and Learning Innovation

Text image(s)



Visiting scholars from Brazil's Universidade Federal de São Carlos were (from left): Marcella Gaute C. Xavier, Talyta Torrezan, Murilo Henrique Moreira and Ricardo Felipe Lancelott. Photo courtesy of Mary Lou Fulton College for Teaching and Learning Innovation