

IDIS 480 – Machu Picchu

Video transcript

I wanted to take a few minutes of your time to tell you about the beautiful photograph at the front of the course. It is an image of Machu Picchu: an historic anthropological site, which dates back to the 1400s. And it's used to represent our course Advanced Interprofessional Approaches in Healthcare.

I visited this amazing World Heritage site, located in Peru, a few years ago. It is a familiar photograph - you see it everywhere - which represents the Incan civilization. The site itself was thought to be a royalist state for the Incan emperor at the time and the centre of its civilization, which extended about 2,500 square kilometres throughout Peru. On the site is an intricate system of terracing and drainage, which was constructed for the maintenance of agriculture, to sustain the society. There is evidence of a culture, which included religion, astronomy, specialised workers, royalty, and families. Engineering was used to construct beautiful stone walls, which retained the soil on extremely steep slopes and without the use of mortar. The stones themselves were carved so that they fit together and would support the wall through even earthquakes apparently. Animals were cared for at the site and used for clothing and food. You often see llamas within the images of Machu Picchu.

Machu Picchu was connected with many other regions in the area through a complex system of trails that were built and maintained as well, one of which is known as the Incan Trail. We travelled on that trail as we hiked Machu Pichu and also took a longer trail called the Salkantay Trail. It took us about seven days to get there. Machu Picchu serves a representative hallmark for our course from the perspective of the use of complex systems in a society.

In this course, you will be asked to move to systems-level thinking and analysis and to apply them to improving mechanisms for health in local and larger communities. Perhaps if you keep the image of Machu Picchu in your mind, as you work through the course it may help you to apply systems-level thinking for current and future health needs for global society.

Best wishes in the course.