

EAP and the power dynamics of transnational (cross-border) collaboration.

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Context:

collaborators in two UK-China Joint Institutes



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Overview

Our context

TNE context

TNE and EMI

Boundary spanning

Decision-making and balance of power

Professional impact

Conclusion

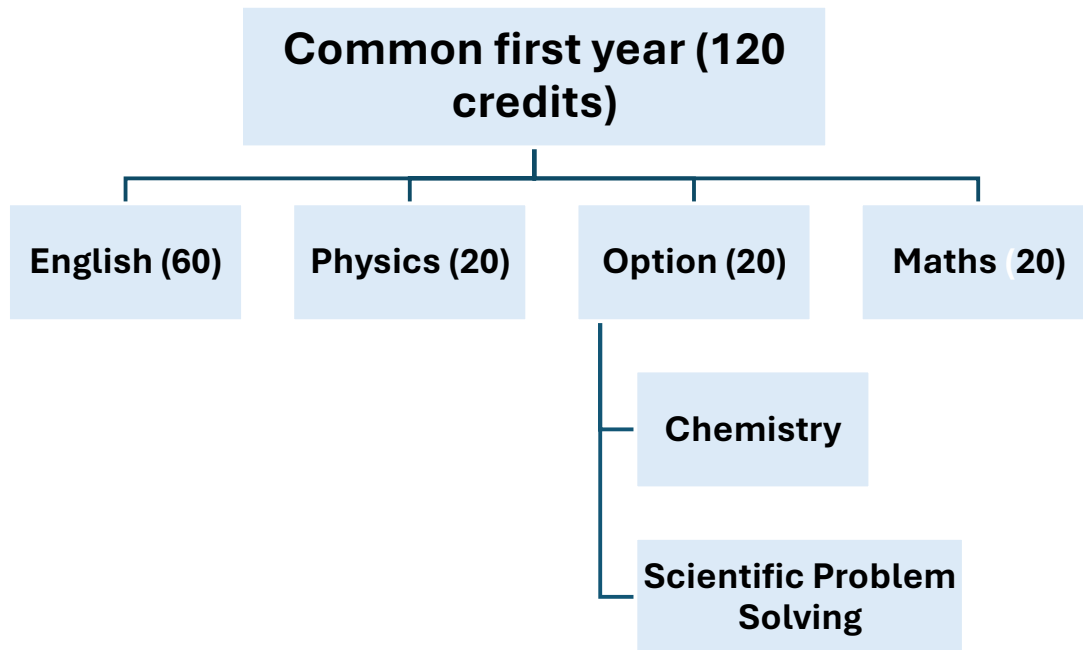


SWJTU- Leeds Joint School

SOUTHWEST JIAOTONG UNIVERSITY • UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS
西南交通大学—利兹学院
SWJTU-LEEDS JOINT SCHOOL



Collaborative teaching: one third by University of Leeds, two thirds by South-West Jiaotong University



Dual Degrees in Engineering and Physical Sciences, Years 2, 3, 4

Mechanical Engineering

Electronic and Electrical Engineering

Civil Engineering and Transport

Computing

Materials Engineering

EAP in English module and language learning outcomes in all other Year I modules

Insessional EAP support in Years 2, 3, 4

NUIST Reading Academy



Sino-UK joint educational institute

- 380 students
- Dual degrees with option to transfer to UK

Year 1 (Foundation): 100/120 credits EAP

- English progression requirement

Year 2 (Part 1): 20 credits ESAP

BSc Atmospheric Sciences
BSc Applied Chemistry
BSc Business Economics and Trade
BSc Environmental Engineering
BSc Mathematics and Applied Mathematics
BSc Data Science
BSc Human and Physical Geography

UK: Programme Director
and Module Convenors

China: Programme Lead, Module Leads
and English Teachers

TNE Context

Transnational Education (TNE) is “the mobility of education programs and providers between countries” (Knight 2016).

TNE is a significant feature of HE and EAP:

- 2021/22: **558,215** UK TNE students, including **72,205** (the largest cohort) in China (UUKi 2023).



TNE and collaboration across borders

Working across institutional **and** national borders adds new layers of complexity on top of the “uncertain identity and position of the EAP practitioner” (Ding & Bruce 2017)

TNE is a “particularly intriguing context for conceptualising borders and power relations in knowledge production” (Leung & Waters 2017)

TNE boundaries are fluid and subject to negotiation: a 'collective performance' (Keevers et al. 2019)

Power relations between TNE partners are fluid, with both having agency (Djerasimovic 2014)

The TNHE context is made up of layers of power structures and identities, with shifting asymmetrical forms of interdependence (Caruana & Montgomery 2015)

Borders can act as axes of stratification or hierarchy, but can also be generative spaces for bridging differences and making changes (Leung & Waters 2017)

TNE and EMI – where does EAP fit in?

- Links between TNE and EMI – English as academic ‘lingua franca’
- Patterns of English language support in EMI (Macaro, 2018)
- Where is the intersection between English Medium Instruction and EAP ? (Galloway & Rose, 2021, Wingate & Hakim, 2022)
- TNE - ‘out of the comfort zone’ (Smith, 2009)
- Collaboration with content specialists (Zappa- Hollman, 2018)





Boundary Spanning in TNE & EMI

Some members of the organization occupy 'boundary-spanning roles' that enable them to transfer information from one constituency to another (Hayes, 2018) thereby linking outside organisations

Within the organization, there are also roles that straddle the boundaries between internal constituencies (Hayes 2018)

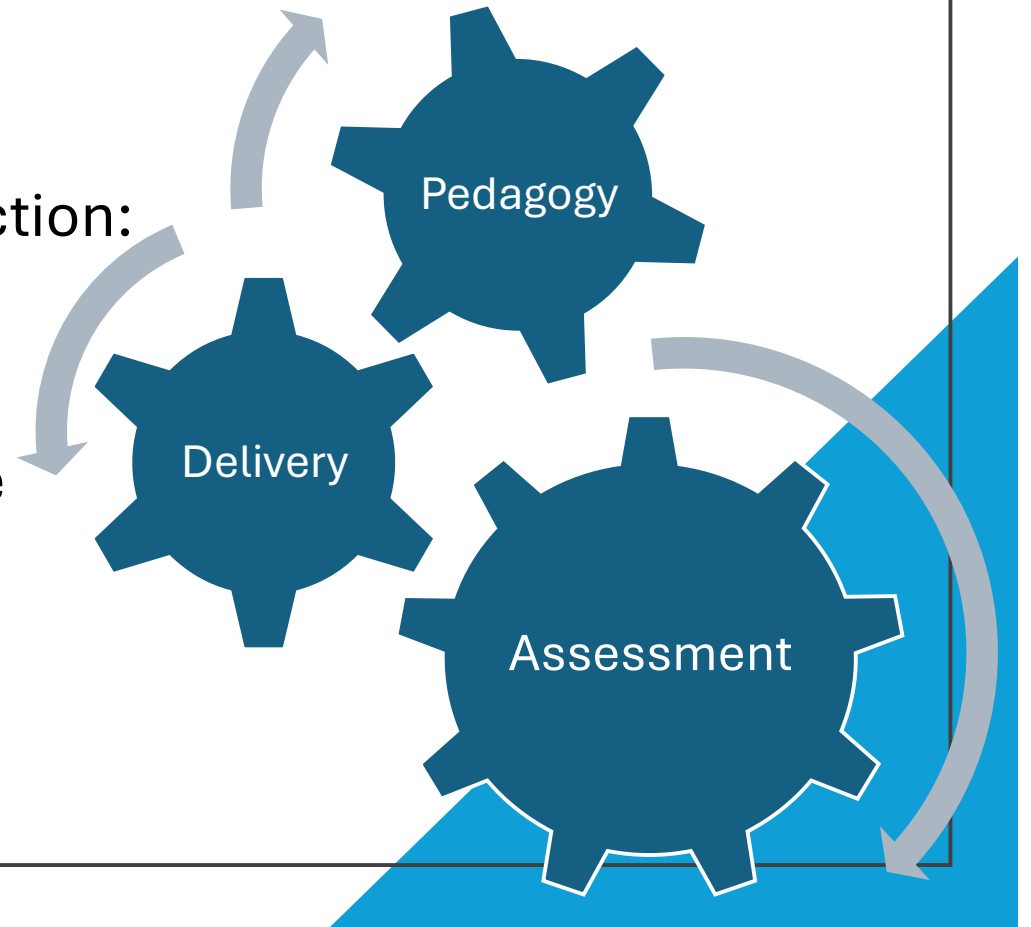
Duchek (2015), based on evidence collected from two German engineering firms, identified boundary spanners and gatekeepers as important facilitators of cross-functional communication and cooperation.

Bordogna (2019) – development of partnership relations between operational staff members key to TNE success

Decision-making and balance of power in TNE partnerships

Collaboration and boundary-spanning in action:

- Sharing knowledge
- Questioning assumptions
- Managing disagreement and compromise
- Communicating and developing trust
- Building bridges
- Finding creative solutions



Decision- making in Transnational EAP

Who decides? Which partner 'knows best'?

Pedagogy

- Morning reading

Delivery

- Role of the teacher

Assessment

- Formative assessment



Decision- making: NUIST Reading Academy

Assessment

- UK EAP assessment in a new context:
 - Replacing IELTS → ***Assessment Literacy*** project
 - Introducing the ‘journal’ assessment → later withdrawn
- Burden of working in two systems

Delivery

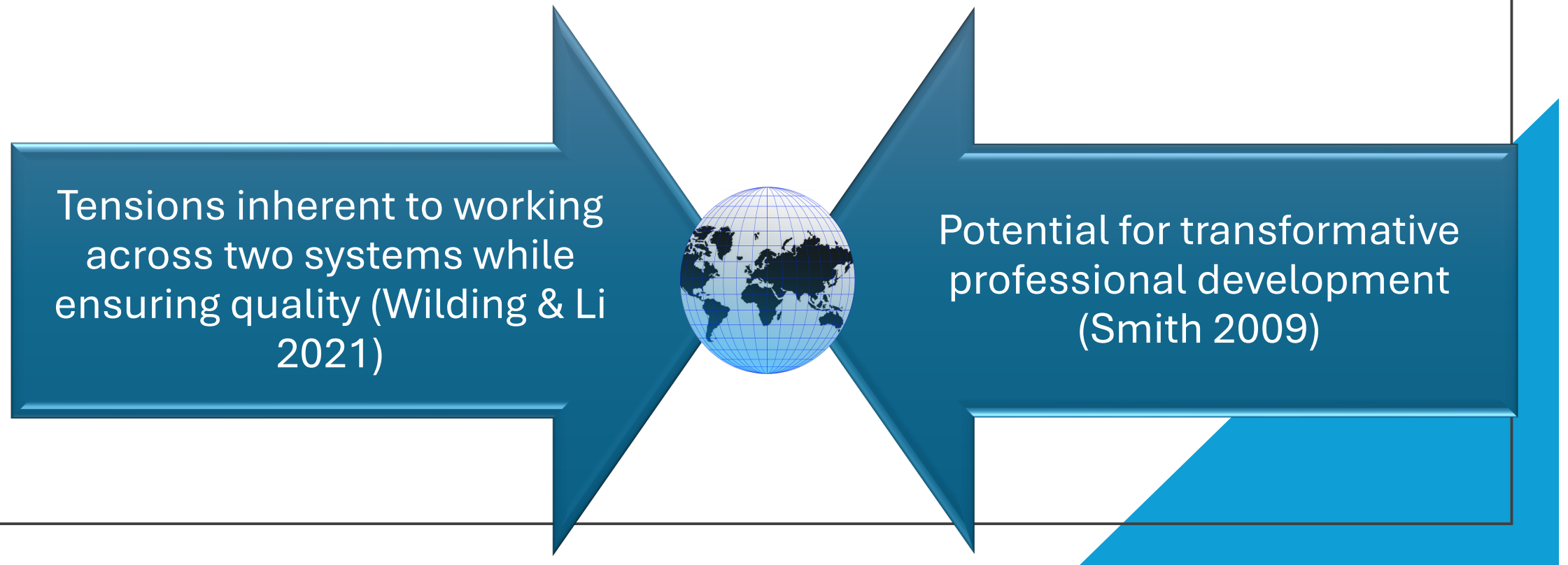
- Class sizes
- Weekly class hours

- Imposition
- Hybridisation
- Transformation

(see Djerasimovic 2014)

Professional impact and individual status

TNE as a challenging but potentially transformative experience:



Professional impact – SWJTU - Leeds

Shen Yixin

Increased visibility in SWJTU through Joint School

- More opportunity to apply for university projects
 - Two important projects
 - 2 EAP textbooks
 - 2 MOOCs

Joanne Shiel

Recognition in University of Leeds/Advance HE:

- Keynote speaker at Student Education Conference 2017
- PFHEA - 'You are a very experienced educator in your specialist field and your application demonstrates a deep commitment to student learning and contributions to curriculum development in STEM in a local and transnational context, as part of broader international educational activity'. (Advance HE)

Tangible benefits

- Promotion to Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor



Professional impact –NUIST Reading Academy

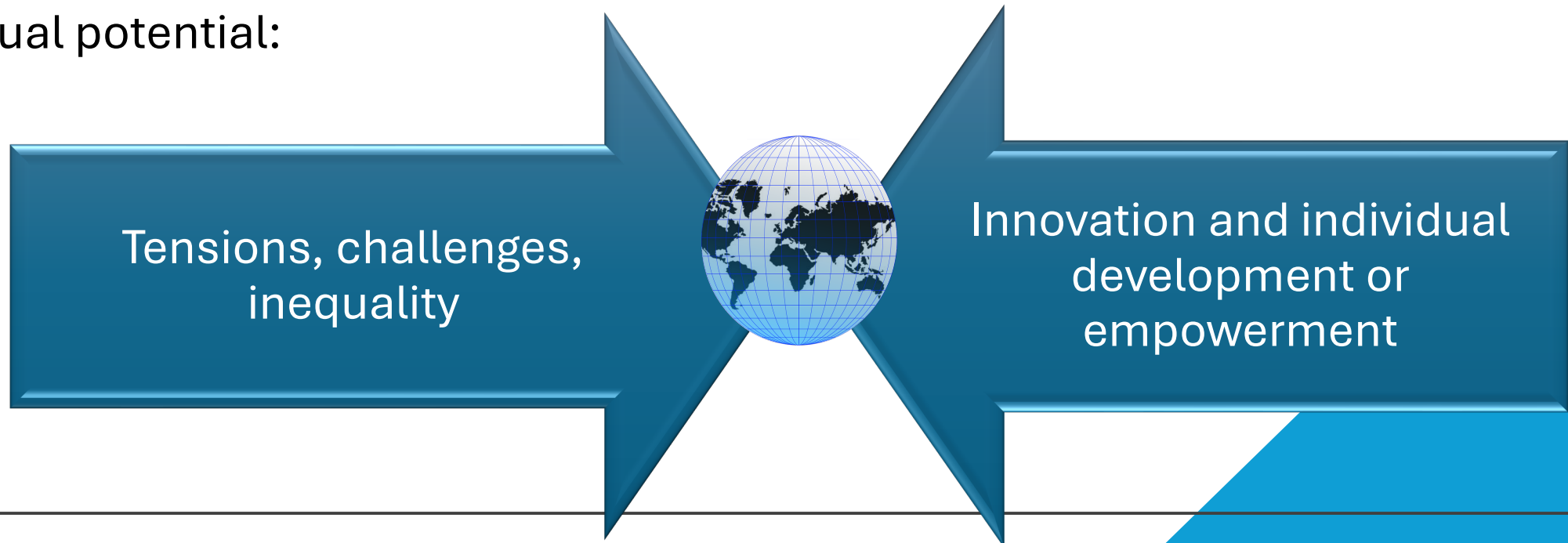
- Shared positives of learning from our TNE experience, e.g.
 - Ouyang Ting – benefits to teaching and increased confidence
 - Liz Wilding – increased openness to different perspectives on teaching; greater understanding of a new context
- Differing experiences of rewards:
 - NUIST – more tangible benefits
 - Reading – more professional advancement, e.g. promotion case and UTF



Conclusion

As **hybrid educational spaces**, Joint Institutes form a complex and multifaceted collaborative environment.

Dual potential:



TNE in action: Any questions?

High profile activity:
team-based, with
potential for
individual reward or
failure

Support and trust
are essential

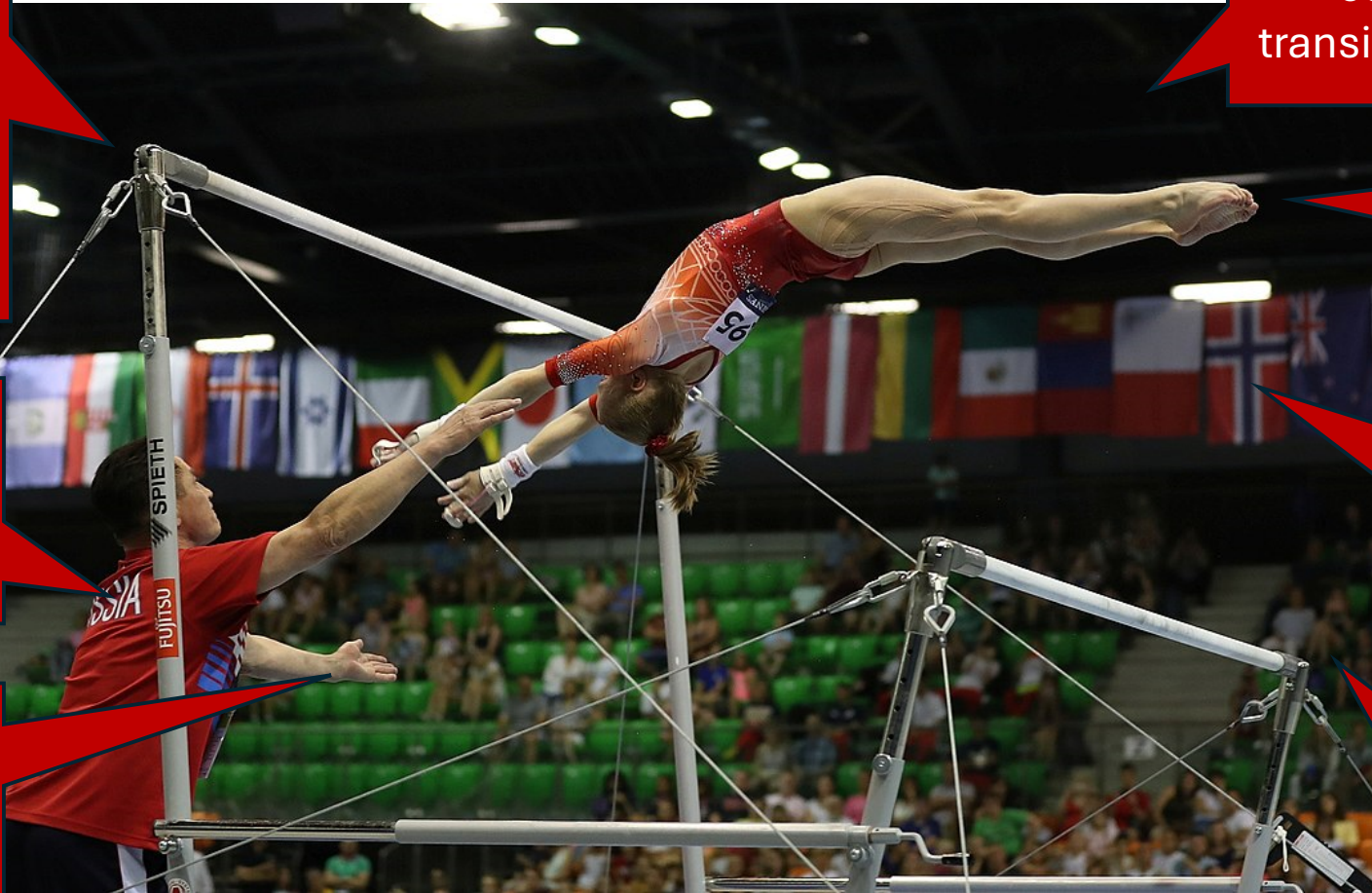
Requires balance
and flexibility

Involves the performance of
complex connections,
transitions, and 'release skills'

Positioning is key

Stress fractures
are possible

Requires navigating
structural asymmetry



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