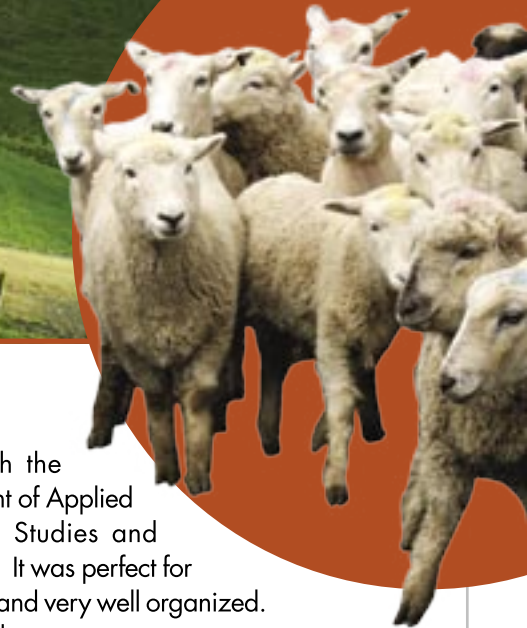


A Study Trip to New Zealand

(Auckland)

By Andrina Isabel Lou



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ew Zealand – Auckland –The University of Auckland.... These places were quite strange to me and I had never thought that I could have a chance to go or study there. But it came true. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau because they organized a study trip for the English teachers in Macao to have a chance to study at The University of Auckland. In addition, I have to say thank you to the principal of Instituto Salesiano (Father Chow Pak Fai) and the vice principal (Mr Chan Peng Kun) because they recommended me for this study trip. It was a great and truly unforgettable trip, not just for sightseeing or traveling but a trip for learning teaching methods and techniques as well.

The University of Auckland offered the programme for

us through the Department of Applied Language Studies and Linguistics. It was perfect for our needs and very well organized.

I say this because our programme was designed by a famous professor — Professor Rod Ellis. He is an expert in second language acquisition and the author of many books. He was currently professor and the director of this Department. Our programme was mainly composed of two integral strands: language proficiency and TESOL methodology. The aim of this programme was to enhance the development of English language and to enhance the development of current teaching methodology for the English teachers. It also aimed to improve teachers' skills in speaking, comprehending spoken English and to improve teachers' skills in using a variety of methods and classroom activities in the teaching of English in Macao schools.

There were twenty teachers including myself from different schools in Macau participating in this study



trip; ten of us were secondary teachers and the other ten were primary teachers. So we had the chance to communicate with each other and to exchange each other's teaching experiences, which was also a great help to my teaching. All twenty of us were caring for each other throughout the journey and we were co-operative in doing our group projects too. At lunch time, we usually had meals together at the campus canteen or outside restaurants. As a result we had more time to get to know each other. After school, we often walked to the bus stop together and we shared our home stay family's happiness or bus trip home experience with each other. It was really enjoyable.

Besides learning from school, we also had other kinds of activities arranged, such as home stay accommodation, an overnight farm stay experience, school visit experiences, a visit to a Honey Bee Centre, farm show and city tour of Auckland.

The home stay accommodation gave us a chance to live in the home of New Zealand people which made us know more about their lifestyle, their food and their culture. It was really a good experience for us.

In order to know more about the culture of Auckland, a social programme and some cultural activities were included in the trip. We visited the Auckland Museum which houses a large collection of exhibits relating to New Zealand's indigenous Maori people as well as its Pacific heritage and history. We also went to the Sky City tower, which is the tallest tower in Auckland.

We could see the whole view of Auckland from the top of the tower. It is really great.

New Zealand is famous for its farming culture and has unique flora that makes its honey distinct in flavour and health properties. We visited the Honey Bee Centre where we could see an inside view of the production of honey and the largest live bee display set. We also watched a lively and exciting farm show about New Zealand's traditional primary industries of sheep and cattle rearing. The show included audience participation so I had a chance to participate in the feeding of a baby sheep with a milk bottle. It was really interesting.

School observation experiences were also included in this trip. We visited two schools: Newmarket Primary School and Selwyn College. Newmarket Primary School is a school for year 1 to year 6 students. This school is quite special among those primary schools in Auckland because it is situated in a busy part of town. The principal told us that this is an advantage for them because they can make good use of the resources around them when teaching. For example, they brought the students out to the nearby shops or market when teaching "Buying and Selling". During our visit to this school, we were able to have a chance to participate in the lessons with the students and we had the chance to communicate with the teachers there. As a result, we could share our education system in Macao schools with them and knew more about theirs.



New Zealand

Selwyn College was a college for high school students. This college was also special because it was not just a language school for students from different nations but also a school for refugees. They had education programmes for refugee adults and families, and a Family and Children's Centre helped to look after and educate the children while the adults are studying. There are no fees for refugee families. So after visiting these two schools, I knew more about the education system in Auckland and I learnt some teaching methods during my observation which could have some help in my teaching in the future.

I would also like to talk about the professors and teachers who taught us during this course. There were nine teachers in total. Professor Rod Ellis taught us SLA and task-based teaching and grammar awareness. Prof. John Read taught us vocabulary teaching. Dr. Jenefer Philip taught us oral interaction. Dr. Helen Basturkmen taught us listening. Dr. Jenefer Philp taught us writing. Jan Steiner taught us pronunciation. Rosemary Wette taught us teaching. Lizzy Roe and Neil were the two main specialist tutors teaching us. Both of them were in charge of the language proficiency. Neil was mainly in charge of the secondary teachers and Lizzy was in charge of the primary teachers. They were very kind, humorous and caring. I learnt a lot from all those professors and teachers. They taught us many games and gave us a lot of teaching materials and aids which were so useful for our future teaching.

Throughout this course, we had to write a journal reflecting on our experiences. It was really good for us because we could keep a record of the activities that we had learnt during our lessons or the things that happened during this trip. So in the future, we may have a way to recall the things that we learnt and maybe they are useful in our future lessons.

We had micro-teaching during the last week

of class. We grouped ourselves into two or three. In our lessons, we had to include the things that we had learnt from the teachers or professors. Then we had to present it in class. All of us did very well in our presentations and we were highly praised by our teachers.

One last thing that I want to share in this trip was the farewell party. It was really unforgettable. All the programme staff attended the party and all the home stay families were invited to join us, too. Through this party, we came to know more about other teachers' home stay families. They were so kind and nice. The professors and teachers were so humorous that night. Since we didn't have much time to talk to them in class, we could talk to each of them and asked for their contact numbers or e-mail addresses. This was also the day that we had our certificate from The University of Auckland. I was so happy to receive this certificate because it recognised my efforts in these three weeks.

Overall, the experience of working with my colleagues has been a challenge but in these three weeks I have been introduced to many new techniques to enhance my teaching and my pupils' learning of English. Finally, I have to send my gratitude to the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau and the principal of Instituto Salesiano (Father Chow Pak Fai) for giving me this chance to join this study trip. I would also like to thank the programme staff who arranged this programme for us, the teachers and professors who taught me in this course, the home stay father and mother (Andrew and Claire) who took care of me, prepared delicious meals and provided comfortable accommodation for me during these three weeks' stay and lastly my nineteen caring companions who gave me happiness and fun throughout this trip. 🌱

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