

New Zealand Educators' Delegation to China 2019

I loved China; the people, schools we visited, children we met, food, history, museums, buildings, stories we were told and every experience that was part of our program. From the minute we landed to the minute we departed, I was so pleased that I was part of this experience.

The Delegation

Seven educators from Whangarei down to Auckland participated in Confucius Institute in Auckland's (CI) Educators' Delegation from 8 to 20 October. Led by CI manager, Janine Chin, the group included:

- Anthony Keung, Onehunga High School
- Jane Butel, Meadowbank Primary School
- Jonathan Jackson, Edendale Primary School
- Patsy Torrie, St Heliers School
- Tracey Richardson, Tirimoana Primary School
- Viki Trainor, St John's School, Mairangi and
- Wiremu Rankin, Whangarei Intermediate School.



Coincidentally, all the schools in this year's group have an established Chinese program but none of the delegation had been to China except one, but only for a quick stopover.

The intent, therefore, was that the trip would provide participants with a 'China experience' to raise an awareness of the country, its culture and people to further enhance their school program.

The Program

As in previous years, Fudan University had overall responsibility but a new agent, Schengen International Group NZ, was tasked to facilitate the program this year.



The itinerary included visits to Beijing, Jiaxing and Shanghai to observe and connect with schools, experience and appreciate culture sites, to participate in events and to meet 'New Zealanders in China' such as those in the NZ Embassy, NZ Central and Zespri. Hanban was also key in the program to acknowledge their generosity in supporting the delegation visit, Mandarin Language Assistant (MLA) program and other initiatives to support Chinese in New Zealand schools.

Unique to Beijing was participation in the 2019 First NZ-China Principals Forum to foster cross-cultural communication and future education, held at Beijing 101 Middle School and supported by the Haidian District Foreign Affairs Office and Education Commission. Several of the delegation spoke on New Zealand's education system with a focus on globalization and internationalization in schools. This was a full-on formal day with a lot of input from various sectors.

Trip Highlights

I truly appreciated the work the teachers had put into preparing for our visit and I felt very humbled by the hospitality bestowed upon us. I learnt so much from these visits, in particular, just how similar the NZ and Chinese education system really is.

The group enjoyed every aspect of the program. Highlights were:

- Schools visits: an insight to compare practices, to share ideas, to 'understand', to interact with the children and reflect on own practises.
- Cultural: Great Wall, Huangpu River cruise
- Opportunity to network and share with other members of the delegation – the learning and the friendship.



Recommendations going forward

- Accommodation closer to town /local community /public transport so able to explore on own in free time, observe /interact with locals and avoid travel time that was long and tiring.
- Fewer 'formal' meals so able to explore and sample 'street' food!
- Better understanding of gifts required – number and type.
- More notice /information on the forum so able to better prepare.
- Less time in Beijing and more in Shanghai.

Learnings

- *On a personal level, I think the trip has helped me to understand more about the culture of our visitors from China. I am better able to support our Chinese program at school and keen to learn more Mandarin.*
- *What we observed in China were resilient, motivated and determined children who were extremely aware of the need to work hard and apply themselves. The children in NZ appear suitably relaxed in comparison.*
- *This experience has really stimulated my interest to learn more about China; the Cultural Revolution and Current Day China. I plan to find books, online sites and PodCasts on China to further increase my knowledge*



of such an incredible country.

Feedback

Prior to my trip to China my understanding of China and Chinese culture was:

Low	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	High
		57%	14%	29%						

After my trip to China my understanding of China and Chinese culture is:

Low	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	High
						14%	29%	43%	14%	

Overall satisfaction of the New Zealand Educators' Delegation to China programme.

Low	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	High
								14%	86%	

Delegation actions going forward

I have already signed a MOA with a Chinese School to have Sister status and may have another one in the pipeline. We are very keen to deepen the relationship between schools in China and our school. We have a school coming to visit in August next year and we may reciprocate also!



- Investigate the possibility of sister-school relationships and/or welcome/ host Chinese students for short study tours.
- Continue to provide Mandarin in our school for our senior students and cement in lower levels as an introduction to lead into the senior classes. At the same time, to focus more on Chinese culture as well as the language.
- *I have learnt the importance of providing my students the opportunity to learn another language to prepare them for a global future. I know that I must put measures in place to be able to sustain a programme in my school.*
- *I enjoyed and loved the visit to China and would advocate it to other school leaders. I would love to revisit there as a tourist one day.*

A post-trip meeting is scheduled early in 2020 to share further reflections and actions going forward.



Overall impression

The trip was extremely well organized, informative and engaging. There was an excellent balance of activities, visits to local historical sites, cultural experiences, shopping and school visits. As a group we felt safe and we had trust in our guides and schedule. The sight-seeing was complemented by informative guides and amazing support from Janine. We had the opportunity to eat local food without the stress of choosing a restaurant or what to order. There was the perfect balance of work and play and I feel so honoured and lucky to have been a part of the 2019 trip. Our group was wonderful!



THANK YOU!

*Confucius Institute in Auckland
17 December 2019*