

Teaching English, China

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During the months of July and August 2019 I participated on a programme teaching English in China. The programme was offered through Gotoco (<https://www.go-to.co/>), who I first discovered at the freshers' fair on campus. In my case the programme involved six weeks of teaching English in a classroom to Chinese children and adults who were attending the school as part of extra classes over their summer holiday.



As well as a pre-departure TEFL teaching pack, we received three days of training on arrival at BOB Foreign Languages School, Shantou. Teaching averaged about 5 hours a day, with one and a half days off per week, one of which we would be taken on an organised activity which was a really great way to see parts of China I would not otherwise have visited.

One of the major ways the programme benefited me was being in an environment where I had to become very comfortable with both public speaking and leading discussions. This was not something I was comfortable with at the start of the programme, but by the end of the summer I found it a huge deal less stressful, even performing at the end of term show to a room of 400 parents.



Secondly the programme was a fantastic way to experience Chinese culture and working lifestyle, both of which are very different from that of the west. It gave me invaluable experience in adapting to and navigating around differences in opinions and methods of working. Furthermore, having an open mind was essential, with my pre-formed opinions of Chinese society being challenged every day. I also developed my organisational and creative skills, having to plan my lessons for the duration of the programme making sure they both met the level of the class and were fun for the students and myself!

I followed the programme with a month of independent travel in China. This brought about many occasions in which I had to be very adaptable to situations that did not go as planned, as well as

navigating the language barrier. Travelling solo, it was also a very good experience for learning to rely completely on myself in what could often be quite overwhelming situations.

