

# Montgomery College/Macau Millennium College 2019

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## **I. PREPARATION BEFORE TRIP**

- a. Useful to have a sit down/or email with previous professors (esp. from the last years). Get detailed information. This is the best source for answers to specific questions.
- b. Take all your own materials (books, activities, lessons, flash drive, games)
- c. See our THREE binders on arrival (we left them behind FYI in the teachers' room.) It would have been tremendously helpful for us to have had these during our own stay! We virtually created a textbook of materials and activities, which proved very time-consuming. We left behind one binder of the lessons week by week with all materials, and two binders of our diagnostics, tests and exams containing all original graded student papers.
- d. Materials need careful preparation.
- e. Be prepared with many more materials than you think you need. While you are there, coursework needs constant adjusting and flexibility. There are several potential challenges resulting from culture, learning differences and ideas, infrastructure in the college admin, classroom management, and student needs.
- f. The three hour sessions are long and tax the concentration and energy of exhausted students who have full time jobs and families. You need to prepare multiple short activities (30-45mins) that integrate different skills and wind down the demands on the students as the session progresses with activities that require them to get up and collaborate in pairs or small groups, and also activities that they find fun like games, tasks and goals that will energize them. We brought lots of these with us, including 1000 scrabble letters, magnetic word cards, and other sentence building games requiring counters, pictures etc. (all available on Amazon)
- g. Visitors: If you are planning to have any visitors from outside Macau, they must be organized beforehand because there are many steps clearing any guests with the Admin and college.

## **II. VISA**

- a. If you want to travel to China, a visa is necessary, which in our case cost \$140. If you want to go more than once, you must have a multiple visit visa. If you are not planning to travel to the mainland, no visa necessary for Macau and Hong Kong, but this is likely to change in the future.
- b. Macau residence permit is for tourist, NOT work. At present the Macau admin. gives 30/15/7/2 days. Current situation will cause more difficulties in future. If you leave Macau for whatever reason, your present allocation of days is cancelled. So you need to leave at almost exactly 30 days, 15 days, 7 days. If you leave early, you will lose those days you have been allocated, so that if you leave before 30 days, your re-entry will be for 15 days with no accrual for the rest of the 30 days, which are then automatically cancelled.

- c. For the renewal of visa Can cross over to HK, Zhuhai or Guang Zhou all in a single day. However, crossing the border into China is becoming increasingly complicated and lengthy, especially for Americans. Be well informed with the latest updates before you leave. If you organize the stipend carefully, it would be possible to go to nearby places that are not in China like Taiwan, Thailand etc.
- d. Applying for China visa needs a visit to Consulate office downtown which requires detailed preparation as they are not flexible about rules, eg type of photograph, no. of pages in application and formatting etc. This needs at least two visits, initial one can be very lengthy.

### **III. BOOKING A TICKET**

- a. **STIPEND** (2000 dollars)
  - i. Can be used to take two trips out of Macau if savvy with the tickets and prices
  - ii. HK is cheaper to fly into and out of than Macau airport. Macau airport is in Taipa, which is a separate island connected to Macau by a bridge and will need transport, either provided by MMC for first arrival and final departure, or by taxi, bus or free shuttle to/from one of the nearby hotels.
  - iii. HK tickets cost about 1200-1300 dollars and flights from HK to other countries vary from 200-450 dollars.
  - iv. You can save receipts and have money left over on your stipend. You can be reimbursed once you arrive home.
- b. **TRAVEL COMPANY**
  - i. It is a good idea to do research (momondo app, skyscanner app, not kayak) before talking with the agency.
  - ii. Their computers and information are limited and do not always give every flight and deal. It helps if you can provide them with the itinerary you have mapped out and then get them to book IF they can, which is not always.

### **IV. ARRIVAL AND MACAU LIFE**

- a. MMC staff will meet us at airport or ferry in Macau to take us to the apartment on M-F office hours. Weekend more difficult.
- b. Arriving in HK has two ways to get into Macau: (i) Bus: MACAU PASS Card essential for travel or (ii) ferry. Advise carrying HK currency before leaving US to purchase tickets for either on arrival and avoiding taking taxis.
- c. Free Shuttles from Hotels and Ferry to and from Macau Airport and border gates with China.
- d. Getting to work: 4 stops on bus from very near apartment, or 10 min walk (Taxi is not needed unless an emergency). Purchase bus pass on arrival at 711 or other outlets. Bus has wifi.
- e. Great apps to use for directions, bus information, times, calling and video overseas and texting etc. : Moovit app Whatsapp or Wechat. The Klook app is useful for booking events, show tickets, boat rides etc.

- f. SIM card necessary. Your phone will not work even with an international plan. Your provider might tell you that you have text and data but it will not work in most places unless you can get internet access (not always available without a password.) The SIM cards are cheap and have different amounts of time. Can be purchased at airport or at Ferry Terminal.
- g. Wifi – in the apartment is good, the college has wifi, bus has free wifi that can be used, hotels too have free wifi.
- h. Phone given by MC is only for local calls and is not very convenient. No internet, no texting.
- i. Ferry Terminal- information counter has a good amount of tourist information, maps, restaurants, and atms, SIM card access.
- j. Supermarkets: some 24 hour, several in walking distance of apartment.
- k. Red Market: This large open air market is open from around 8 am and is the best place to buy fruits and vegetables, fresh fish and meat as well as several small stalls for clothing, souvenirs etc. Accessible by bus, about 6 stops from apartment.
- l. Excellent bakeries are everywhere.
- m. Restaurants mostly have menus in English. If you are looking for authentic Chinese you will need to have a picture or help from someone.
- n. Buffets in hotel: most hotels have a special rate buffet for breakfast or dinner. Prices are good value between \$20 and \$50. Promotions usually available.
- o. Grocery cart can be bought in many locations and helps carrying things back and forth.

Maps and GPS: Sign names in Portuguese are not used and no one knows the English version. You need the address you are looking for (even the airport) written in Chinese or Cantonese if using a Taxi. Apps like Moovit are in English

## V. ACCOMMODATIONS AND LOCALE

- a. Apartment very basic: four separate bedrooms, shared bathroom and living space. No cooking facilities except perhaps microwave and kettle. Has fridge. Serena bought an electric rice cooker which also steamed fish and veg, and Jeremy bought an electric cooker plate with a pot. These are available everywhere, including stores near Red Market as well as the Department Store New YaoHan which is central. The voltage is different from USA, so you need to take a converter for your computer eg Bestek.
- b. No other appliances, no silverware or dishes. Red Market or bigger supermarkets best place to buy dishes, bowls, boards, knives etc.
- c. Washer but no dryer. Need laundry line with clips. Takes long to dry because of humidity. Need light umbrella- tropical rainstorms are heavy and frequent!

## VI. SETUP AT MMC

- a. Language for everyday use is Cantonese, not Chinese.
- b. It is vital to take your own laptop and several flash drives. The classroom set up has a computer with Chinese interface and even if switched to English program, the English is only partial. But the in-class computers work with flash drive and have a projector. Even Word is difficult to follow, and formatting and instructions all in Chinese. The

- teacher's room has nothing for work purposes except a desk and lockers, but all the old handouts from previous MC teachers are there. Not very helpful.
- c. Staff are very friendly and extremely helpful. Dr Fok, the president, is a passionate educator and has student success very much in view. He is the authority for everything that happens in the college.
  - d. Have realistic expectations. Two classes three days a week, three hours each. We taught Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 10.30am-1.30pm and 6.30pm-9.30pm
  - e. Two good copy machines that can print off a flash drive. We did our own printing as this was much faster and more efficient.
  - f. There is an IT department that will help you if you need.
  - g. In class computers work the best.
  - h. Classroom: projector/microphone/standard desks
  - i. Equipment incl photocopier: in Chinese
  - j. Front desk: helpful but not always a good understanding of English
  - k. Office managers:
    - i. Nana: Experienced
    - ii. Nora: Good English

## **VII. STUDENTS AND FIRST WEEK**

- a. **STUDENTS ARE NOT PROVIDED WITH A TEXTBOOK.** Everything needs handouts and photocopying. Integrated skills textbook (with audio) would be beneficial.
- b. Background and levels:
  - i. Multiple levels of the students in the class. Will not have the opportunity to separate the higher and lower levels of English.
  - ii. Levels range from high intermediate (980 level) to Low level with no English skills. Huge disadvantage to the higher levels
  - iii. About 30 percent are high and 30 percent are real beginners.
  - iv. Not a lot of motivation. They do not need much English for their jobs as most guests in casinos are Chinese.
  - v. Most do not have good L1 literacy skills.
  - vi. Older students (families and jobs)
  - vii. Not feasible to expect much if any homework.
  - viii. Their interaction outside of class is in Chinese or Cantonese. Necessity for English use is very limited. Very little opportunity to practice with native English speakers. Oral skills better than written skills.
  - ix. EN 101 is a mandatory class and students are given a maximum of two tries in order to pass
- c. Repetition of same class morning and evening is necessary as students can switch back and forth from one to another due to scheduling.
- d. Students energy level is often low: they come from or are on their way to work. Their schedules change frequently. They often have to eat quickly before class or during break as they have not had an opportunity for a meal. A variety of activities with regular changes in pace and content is essential.

- e. Students' background: culturally most of them learn Asian style, i.e take notes, rote learning. But most of them become engaged and are active participators. Some are exceptionally shy to raise their hands because of losing face, fear of errors, or lack of practice. Presentations very weak. These are better in small groups as they are very reluctant to speak alone. Not good with powerpoint or pictures from internet.
- f. **As much communicative speaking practice as possible, to generate their own usage of new forms and vocabulary. Many of them need to be forced to participate orally.**
- g. Most of them would do well in our 970 or 980. The majority are not students, but working adults with travel and life experience, so discussions and assignments can be more interesting.
- h. Make sure give students a break and have activities for later in the class to keep them going (linking form and meaning). Thematic content is valuable as are integrated skills to practice using in multiple contexts, both receptive and productive; these help to embed the target forms in long term memory. We started each class with quick revision of the last.
- i. Communicative English more necessary for their needs than academic. Vocabulary teaching is very important and very necessary. Many of the students are better at oral fluency- in general, writing skills are low, and academic writing structure is almost non-existent as it does not form part of their own educational system. Even in oral form, however, the most common errors are fossilized eg. 3-person singular verb form, use of articles, past and future tenses not used, no complex sentences.

## **VIII. TIPS FOR TEACHING MATERIALS**

- a. Proper lesson planning is essential and even these need adjusting from class to class. We did a comprehensive diagnostic which helped us set our expectations and level.
- b. **TEAM TEACHING**
  - i. We made an early decision to team teach from the beginning throughout
  - ii. We taught about 15-20 students twice a day for each class.
  - iii. Preparation was a creative exercise.
  - iv. We are in general free to create our own syllabus and lessons using any materials we wish. In the end, Dr Fok is realistic about expectations. The final exam is more problematic as it is internally and state examined and controlled.
  - v. Refreshing to have a second team member to take over or jump in to add any thing missed or needed to be explained
  - vi. Students responded well to the team teaching.
  - vii. It is undoubtedly very important to choose professors that have worked together or would be able to do so in terms of their similar work ethic and desire to reach out to and do the best for the students. Each brings their own experience, energy, expertise to each class and each lesson, but it is much more effective if they can combine these well.

- viii. We appreciated the openness with which we were allowed to teach and thereby allow us (as experts) to make decisions and modify our methodology, materials and classroom styles.
- ix. In addition, both of us have discussed the efficacy at least one of the team members returning the preceding year because it is easier to hit the ground running immediately and maxing out on the small window of teaching time with the students. By the time a new teacher gets used to the layout of the program, setup, students, and culture, it will be at least into the second or third week. MMC is a unique college and situation due to Dr. Fok's philosophy has some western elements, but at the same time still very much Oriental. He is largely uninvolved with the day to day running of the college.
- c. Thematic lesson planning would be beneficial on subjects that are relevant to everyday life, jobs, travel, cultures.
- d. Good flow from one activity to the next
- e. Integrated skills for lesson planning
- f. Communicative and ESP (business English, reports, interviews, resume, promotion letter, recommendation, meeting and greeting clients) all important. They must practice speaking as much as possible in these contexts.
- g. General Service List vs AWL: the former is more useful to them.
- h. Field Trip: we did a class trip to the maritime museum, which was a great success. The students really loved it and participated with great enthusiasm. (The Macau Museum is also a good choice). We preceded this with an oral and written introduction of two pages, and a vocabulary sheet. Students met us there and we spent the three hours with an introductory tour given by us (we had gone previously to research this) followed by small groups (we allocated them, allowing at least one higher level student as group leader in each). They did an in-museum questionnaire and a scavenger hunt which was handed in. We based the next lesson on an in-class writeup of their museum experience, oral discussion and followed up with an oral group presentation. The museum had beautiful brochures for each section which we gave to the students for a reading activity with our questions for comprehension and critical thinking.

## **IX. GRADING AND FINAL EXAM**

- a. Created a grading spreadsheet with weighted the categories and sub-categories.
- b. We had 19 graded assignments using a variety of skills. Grades were well representative of students' ability due to this.
- c. Final exam is a major event and seriously considered by the Admin and students. The final examination needs to reflect all aspects of teaching drawn from the coursework. It must be reviewed by Professor Fok and one other board member before giving this exam. We set a three-hour exam with reading comprehension, critical thinking, grammar and essay writing.
- d. The grades themselves are later adjusted and readjusted to reflect a pre-existing curve that is not necessarily indicative of their output. The grades are according to the British

system: 80% plus is A; 70% plus is B; 60% plus is C; 50% plus is D. Below 50% is Fail. 50% and higher passes the course. Only 2 As are allowed to be given for the entire group. This was disappointing because it did not accurately reflect the students' achievements and gains during the semester. Individual grades are rounded down, not up. No category is allowed to approach too near the next: 58, 68, 78 are the highest for each grade.

- e. Grading chart and final exam papers are critically overseen by board members and Chinese education department.

## **X. FINAL ANALYSIS**

- a. Students were extremely responsive, receptive and respectful to our teaching and rewarding systems. They participated actively and worked well together. We separated pairs and groups by reassigning different students to work together for most activities, and also made them change their seats regularly. They really appreciated humor together with a serious dedication from us to get the job done, but using a wide variety of creative and interactive activities.
- b. We saw major gains in all of our students. The six weeks is actually five due to diagnostic, first week activities, and final exams, which was too short. We highly recommend a follow up in a second course, either as a second summer course (optional) or a two-tier strategy in one session for beginners/low intermediate and high intermediate in a second class. It might also be possible to use the graduates from ENGL101 to do an ENGL 102 the following year.
- c. We did feel a tremendous sense of satisfaction, backed up by students' comments and feedback, that we had largely accomplished what we set out to do and had provided them with a motivation, higher skills and a better awareness of English and the American culture to aid them moving forward.

## **XI. TIPS FOR FUTURE TEACHING AND STRATEGIES**

- a. Careful textbook evaluation (previous teachers should have a hand in the process)
- b. Previous teachers could be involved in the selection process for the potential applicants to the program
- c. A "PR" feedback session should be conducted using as many past teachers to the program as possible to show the program to potential applicants.
- d. MC could give a special folder with dividers to help students be organized and drop the card.

## **XII. CONCLUSION**

- a. It is absolutely vital that the two teachers are well suited in personality and teaching style. Even if they do not team teach, they need to be supportive of each other in and outside the classroom. We felt that we have similar approaches, creative energy, humor, experience at multi-levels and learning styles, and a variety of approaches. The collaboration we formed was instrumental in our being able to keep up the intensity of a multi-level, integrated skills three-hour class.

- b. This ground-breaking program has an incredible potential and educational value. Despite political problems, education and educators should rise above these and be able to work together internationally for teacher and students' programs, sabbaticals, and study abroad programs. MC could and should look into expanding this program and others like it. Suggestions that are recommended are to look into cultural exchanges with teachers and students and partnering with other programs offered by institutions like the Smithsonian and UN educational programs. It is an invaluable experience for both teachers and students and we are sure that many other countries would be glad to participate.
- c. In Macau in particular, even 1-3 week study abroad programs are possible.