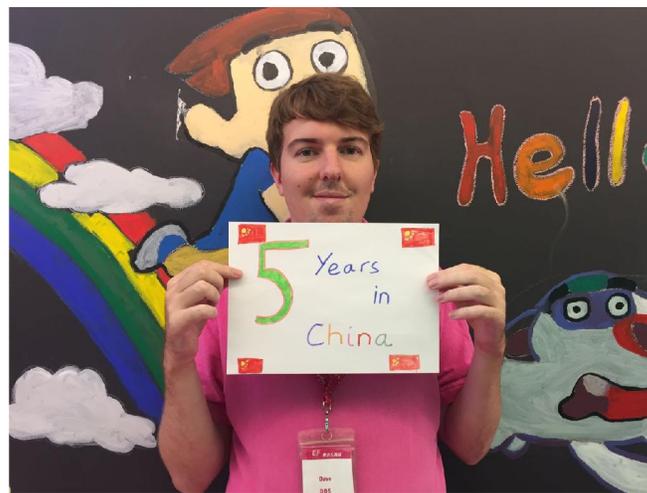


5 Years in China

By David Muir, 2012 Private School Teacher



Hi, my name is Dave and I have been living and working in China exactly 5 years this week. The last 5 years have been the best 5 years of my life so far. I have met some extraordinary people and had the best adventures of my life being in China.

I graduated from The Robert Gordon University with a 2nd class honors degree in Architectural Technology. Soon after working in a Jewish community care home I headed to Canada to seek my dream job as an Architect. I gained employment at a prestigious firm in Vancouver, working 60+ hours a week for reasonably good money. I thought this was happiness, however in hindsight I was always at work and didn't get to do many fun things while I was in Canada. My expat friends would always invite me out to do hiking or go traveling but I always had to turn them down because I would have to meet a tough deadline at work.



Spreading the Scottish Spirit in Canada.

My world came crashing down when I received a letter from the Canadian government stating that my work visa had expired and I had to leave the country or I would have been prosecuted. Avoiding a black mark on my passport I wound up my Canadian life and jumped on a plane back to Scotland within a week.

When I got home, I felt dazed as I had come off a high pressure job with a fast paced lifestyle into the quiet sleepy coastal town I was raised in. I looked at my options and wanted to get back into Architecture as soon as possible. I read that China's economy was booming and they were building things faster than they could design them so contacted many Architect firms there. They told me that I needed to speak a basic level of Chinese which I couldn't at the time. I then thought to myself, I could teach English for a year while I learn Chinese and then I can apply for Architectural jobs.

I researched agents who could help me find a job in China and I came across teach-english-in-china.co.uk. The website look really professional and I enjoyed reading through people's testimonies. I applied online and had an interview phone call with Arnold Vis. While I talked with him I could feel that he really knew the industry well and that he only recommended people to safe and established schools in China.

Soon after applying with Teach English In China, I was given an interview and an offer from a training school in Wuhan. I was told by Arnold I would be given a contact person in Wuhan if anything went wrong within my first year of being in China. This made me feel more secure as I had a safety net incase anything bad happened. I was invited to attend an ESL workshop in London however the training school wanted me to start work in China before the course. I did manage to arrange a 1 to 1 with Arnold right before I left which really showed me he cared about my welfare as an individual.

I landed in Wuhan China at 8pm on July 4th 2012. There was definitely culture shock but I was surrounded by people who had been through it all before and were really helpful to me.

Within three months of teaching I knew this was what I truly wanted to do over Architecture. The kids were so much fun to work with. Even if my energy was down they'd always make me laugh and brighten me up. Words can't describe the feeling of watching them develop and getting better at English because of you. It really is the most amazing way to leave your mark on the world.



Last time with one of my classes before moving to Chengdu.

My first year was probably the most challenging year but also the most fun. It was challenging getting to know a brand new job and a different culture however I was out every weekend enjoying adventures and experiencing new things. The training school I work for is a really supportive company which prides itself on developing and taking care of its staff. After every week was over I would head back to my apartment to freshen up and then head out with my work mates for food and a few drinks. We never knew where the night would take us. We would always end up meeting other expats and going with them to house parties and other bars. Meeting so many different people from different places really made me understand the importance of listening to others and respecting their opinion of the world. I continue to learn from other nationalities around the world even to this day.



On a motor biking trip in Yangshuo with an American, a Dane and an Englishman.

During the two and half years I was in Wuhan I met and fell in love with my now fiancé Nikka. She's from the Philippines and worked for the same company as me in Wuhan. We traveled all over China and South East Asia together.



Nikka and I camel trekking through the Gobi Desert.

After two and half years in Wuhan we wanted a move as we had hit the ceiling of development in our training schools and had experienced everything we could from Wuhan. Fortunately our training school is a large company so we were able to transfer to the same school in Chengdu very easily.

We both transferred in as senior teachers and within 10 months I had been promoted to Director of Studies into a brand new centre where I am today. 6 months after I was promoted, Nikka was also promoted to Director of Studies. This year I won the Star Director of Studies award in the city which made me very proud.

Everyday living in China is a blessing to us. We live a great lifestyle. We both work 40 hours a week while living a higher standard of what I lived in Canada and the UK. We are currently saving for our wedding on November 18th and we recently signed new contracts to stay out here longer.

Moving to China was the best thing I have ever done with my life. If you are reading this and you want a change, get in touch with Teach English In China right now.



This is me with my current team in Chengdu