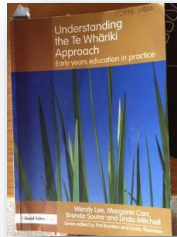


NZ Conference and Study Tour Attendee List

Name:	Major:	Grade Level:
Jennifer Escamilla	Early Childhood Studies	Senior
Silvia Trujillo	Early Childhood Studies	Senior

Title: My Journey in New Zealand

Date: 04/21/16



The beginning of this journey started when I had to fly for 13 hours. This was the farthest I've flown away from home. When I was on the airplane I felt anxious about thinking how it was going to be in New Zealand. The people, language, food, and weather all crossed my mind. When I arrived there, I was very tired since I didn't sleep on the plane. This was my first challenging experience, trying to stay awake since the time was different in this country. It was daytime not nighttime and I had already lost one day. I had to get used to the new time. Right away when I arrived, my teacher already had plans to keep our bodies busy so I couldn't fall asleep. I went to the Auckland Museum where I had the opportunity to see a traditional Maori cultural performance. The people were wearing the traditional customs and danced and sang traditional songs. I also had a tour around the museum where I learned more about the history of the Maori culture.

Then, the following days were full of learning experiences by visiting Maori, Reggio Emilia Inspired and Montessori preschool programs. The Maori programs have unique traditions where they begin with a Powhiri (welcoming ceremony), where I listened to the traditional songs in Maori language and learning about their rituals, which was amazing. One of the rituals that I had to do during my visit to the Maori program was to say hello to them by pressing our noses, (the Hongi) and saying, "Kia Ora", which means, "Welcome". Then at the end of the visit, we were asked to sing songs in Maori. So I learned a Waiata song. On this trip, I practiced my self-confidence skills, since my group asked me to teach them a song in Spanish, "De Colores" as well as the Waiata, so we could all sing when we visit the programs. I felt pretty good sharing my native language even though I was sick and I didn't have a great voice. My other experience in practicing my self-confidence was when I had to present my learning story in front of my colleagues, my teacher, and Margie Carter. This

was a big thing for me because I wanted to do well. I was feeling very sick that day but, I wanted to support my group with the presentation. I didn't want to miss this opportunity of expressing my process of writing a learning story.

Another thing that I had to learn in this country was how to use the currency to pay at the stores. Sometimes, I would just hand the money to the cashier so they could help me to count the money. Since this is a well-known trustworthy country, I trusted them, and they proved it because on one occasion, I gave more money to the cashier and she gave me the money back. Also I had to learn to use the public transportation like the bus or the ferri. One night, we went out for dinner and we almost missed the last bus to go back to the retreat center where we were staying. I also had to learn how to walk on the streets because in this country they walk in the opposite way, on the right side. Also the cars have the steering wheel on the right side. I also felt very safe in this country because everyone was very kind and welcoming, I only saw one police car during my whole trip and I was very surprised that there is no need for supervision, everyone follows the rules. I wish that the whole world lived in peace and harmony the way New Zealand did.

What I learned about this culture was that the families are very close to each other; they like to keep their traditions. Furthermore, in the early years of the school program, they tried to teach the children the Maori culture and the teachers see the children like a family. It was really nice to see the interactions of the children with the peers and teachers. Everything was so calm and engaging. The children were risk takers by doing outdoor play that I've never seen before in the U.S programs. For example, the kids climbed on trees and used construction tools.

I also liked the Te Whāriki curriculum approach and their documentation in the programs; it was so great to see the display of the learning stories of the children. I had a better sense of why learning stories are important for the teachers, families, and children. The sense of belonging was happening in the programs that I had visited. I came home with many ideas to apply in my classroom and bringing back what I learned to my community. I feel so thankful for this great opportunity that I have in learning a new culture and making new friendships.

Response from Jennifer:

I was so happy to have spent the time with you over the last few weeks. I saw you take a flight across the world which took a whopping 13 hours. Such a risk taker. I also saw you the smile on your face when we arrived and were so tired arriving but you were also too excited to explore New Zealand you couldn't get to sleep. You did manage to get sick for a few days but that didn't stop you from making new experiences. It was so much fun when



we took the public bus by ourselves. You took your time making decisions about what ice cream to choose from the local dairy. You even argued with the worker at the dairy on

exactly what “passion fruit” was. You also became a vocalist for everyone on the bus leading the song , “De Colores.” I was so impressed with how funny you really are. you took every experience and soaked up the memories as much as possible. I enjoyed being a part of those memories with you.

-Jennifer

Response from Dr. Annie White

Silvia- I was so inspired by your tenacious spirit! Even though you were not feeling well during the NZ Study Tour and presentation, you persisted because of your deep commitment to your learning and to others. I appreciated your thoughtfulness, the sharing of your culture, home language, and all the ways you have overcome though out your life. I saw in you, a curiosity and openness to others throughout this NZ learning experience. Your ability to reflect, ask questions, and seek others point of view was demonstrated in the small group and large group discussions. You took time to carefully look at the learning stories documentation and together, I felt like we were researchers on this quest for new knowledge. You quietly reflected and took careful notes of all that you observed during our visits to the NZ childcare centers. It is so evident of your dedication to children and families and I am a ally here to support you as you begin to put into practice all that you have learned and transform your work as a teacher~ Kia Ora, Annie

What it Means

During my journey in this country, I used a variety of emotions like anxiety, happiness, joyful, sadness, and worried because for the first time I was far away from home in a foreign country with a different culture. I also used my language and cognitive skills

when I had to learn and sing the Waiata song and when trying to communicate and learn some of their rituals and traditions. I also used my cognitive skills when trying to learn in how to use the money and transportation system and the new documentation based on the principles of Maori culture. I also had to use my social and emotional skills when I built new relationships with teachers and children. I used my physical development and nutrition skills when I had to walk to places and ate exotic foods. Another area that I used during my trip was the visual and performing arts when I admired the amazing culture and nature of this country and when I sang to the people in the centers that I visited.

Opportunities and Possibilities

I really enjoyed being in New Zealand. It was a great experience learning a different culture as well as learning key words from the Maori language. I enjoyed visiting new environments in the preschool programs and learning a new way to do documentation. I also liked eating new foods, learning how to use different money and transportation, and building new relationships. If I have the opportunity to come back next year, I will prepare myself better in continuing to learn more about this culture by reading articles, watching movies, and practicing key words in the Maori language. This way, I can be able to communicate with the Maori people and learn more about them so I can feel more confident.

A Journey of a Lifetime

Travel to Auckland, New Zealand

Age: 39

Date: 4/24/16



Auckland Here I come

April 7-17 2016



On our Way to the Airport

As I started leaving home, I noticed I had butterflies in my stomach. I couldn't tell if I was sad I was leaving my husband whom I have never been apart from and in addition my separation from both of my dogs "Pretzel and Schnitzel." We began to traveling to the airport in my husband's car. I was studying the weather, and every feeling. As we were headed out near Malibu, it was drizzling and out of the corner of my eye, I saw a white car which passed right by us, stopped in front and attempted to make u- turn. Yup she did it. The next thing I hear is my husband's breaks and then we slammed right into her car. It was hard enough I couldn't open my door. They had to help get me out. Luckily, I didn't feel any pain at the time. My husband was OK, as well.

Witness: "Do you want me to call the police?"

Husband: "No, you don't understand, it's very important I get my wife to the airport. She can't miss her flight."

My adrenaline was so high I couldn't even feel the butterflies in my stomach or respond back. Before I knew it, we were headed out to LAX. My eyes were watery, and I silently was crying inside with sadness. As we approached the airport to get dropped off, I had to pretend I was emotionally OK and my husband hugged me goodbye.

This trip is also the first time I had ever traveled outside the country. As I walked in, I got my ticket, went through the TSA check. I was proud of myself and told myself, "I did it!"

I walked over to our gate and I sat at the terminal for a while. Evening had set in, and I could see our plane being checked outside. Was I nervous? No, my adrenaline had come back down and I had actually been crying because I felt so bad that I left my husband after the accident. Ironically, I got a text from Rachel (my supervisor and mentor) to see how everything was going. Somehow she always seems to check in when I need it. As I was in such deep thought,

I saw two familiar faces, in walked Silvia, and Annie. I could see how they were so excited about the trip. All I could do was look at them with a sad look. I had explained to them what had happened and I was comforted with hugs and a hot tea.

13 Hour Adventure

Before I knew it, the time came and it was 9:45pm and time to board; we walked inside the plane, and suddenly I thought to myself, "WHAT AM I THINKING!" I am going to do a 13 hour flight over the ocean. Am I crazy? I mean at work I'm known for being a risk taker, but c'mon. Most people start off small and take a trip to Mexico. I did it BIG and it's to New Zealand. All buckled in and engines started. I find it amazing when the plane is on the tarmac there is complete silence with the passengers. Faster and faster we went, and then it was lift off. We were finally off the ground. There was no going back now. As I began to open a special journal I got from some special people I work with, I began documenting all of my feelings and thoughts. As I looked up, a flight attendant brought me a bag of ice for my neck and back after I began to feel slight pain from the accident. After two hours, I was curious what they were going to feed us on the plane. I heard the pilot announce today's dinner. "Beef stew, corn bread, Cobb salad, dinner roll, cheese, and brown cake." I was so excited about flying and eating, at the same time. Before I knew it, my plate was empty. Yawning after yawning, my eyelids were so heavy; I just couldn't keep them open anymore. The light turned on for our seat belts to be on. We experienced a little turbulence along the way. I couldn't sleep much. I looked over and I could see Silvia next to me with her sleeping mask, covering her eyes, and tightly wrapped up she looked mummified. There she laid for a few hours, face down on the empty seat. I looked a few seats back and I could see Annie, but not really, her face was covered up by her hooded jacket for hours. I did keep myself entertained for few hours. I watched *Hateful 8*, *Devil Wears Prada*, and *Pulp Fiction* which kept me busy for a few hours. Somehow I must have dozed off because I was woken by some sneezing and coughing from a passenger behind us. I could see daylight from the cracks of the windows so it must be daylight outside. The flight attendants began to walk around and offer a continental breakfast or an egg omelet meal. I chose the Continental breakfast. An hour left and we were going to be in New Zealand. It is possible we came so far and I actually did it? Before I could even absorb this thought, we landed.

Auckland, New Zealand

As I was walking out, I felt as if it was weeks ago since I saw my husband. All Silvia and I would do was to desperately try and connect to WIFI to call our families. We did and I was so happy to hear from him. I held my US Passport so proudly and confident. I couldn't wait to have it checked and stamped. As we walked through customs, I got my passport checked and I felt like an official world traveler. As I approached the guard:

Guard: "Do you have any meats, vegetables, fruits, any seeds or plants?"

Me: "I have pumpkin seeds"

Guard: "Can I see them?"

Me: "They are just David's pumpkin seeds"

Guard: "Please wait in lane 3"

Annie said, "We will wait for you over here"

As I walked into lane 3, I realized I was behind eight other people with boxes upon boxes of who knows what. Twenty-five minutes passed and in came a guard.

Guard: "Are you Jennifer?"

Me: "Yes I am"

Guard: "What country are you from?"

Me: "I'm from the United States"

Guard: "Come with me."

I felt like first class, jumping to the front of the line.

Guard: "What were you pulled aside for?"

Me: "For pumpkin seeds"

Guard: "The ones you eat?"

Me: "Yeah"

Guard: "Let's check them"

A brief check and the guard escorted me outside of the check.

Outside was Annie with relief. Her worries were over. She thought I had been taken by security.

Finally cleared and walked outside we were in Auckland and free.

Headed to the Langham Hotel, I looked at everything and anything that my eyes could see. Twenty-five minutes of a shuttle ride, is it possible I saw the impossible? I couldn't believe my eyes, there were no Fast food chains anywhere.

As we got in the hotel, I was fascinated with the chandelier, and pink hotel.

Annie made it clear to me and Silvia, "You don't want to sleep until later. Or your time will be off."

We walked to the Auckland museum. On our way we saw a cemetery, a dairy. Oh, how I wanted to try an ice cream so bad. We continued walking. An elderly man with tubes in his nose and a blanket over his lap passed over onto the crosswalk. I then realized we were right in front of Auckland hospital. Another block and finally we finally arrived at the entrance of the Auckland Museum. Exhausted and excited, all at the same time, we walked through museum, and explored the animals, the Maori Culture, and even got to see a performance from the Maori Community.

Afterwards, we went back to the hotel. Silvia began to get sick and wanted to rest. We stayed in our hotel for a while before making it out to dinner. We ended up at a small Turkish Cafe. I was so interested in trying a food I never had before. I tried a Turkish pizza. It was really delicious. Silvia managed to make it for dinner that night but barely touched her plate. After dinner, we headed up back up to our room. There we slept for hours until the following morning.

As we were walking outside with our entire luggage a bus was waiting for us and we were greeted right away with Margie Carter. I couldn't believe this was the author of many books that is known in our field. We boarded on the bus, and we were off. The bus was driving and I began to soak up anything and everything of the town. Raining lightly, I couldn't help but

notice, black birds, red flowers, a dairy, a produce market, and churches, and traffic signs that were very different than ours, for example, license plates and the streets on the opposite side of the road. We approached the park, and the bus driver had pulled into the drive way where we were going to stay, because he was told her could make it. As he turned, we heard a loud noise outside... He quickly got out and we had hit the front gate. In the rain, all of us had to get our luggage and walk up the drive way. By the time we got to the top, we were soaked, and luggage was covered in raindrops. Silvia was still not feeling well but, she managed to get her luggage to the top. We check in our rooms, and I texted my husband immediately to tell him about our adventure to get there. We had dinner that night all together and did a meet and greet activity.

Each day we were in a lecture, and then visited some amazing schools, which were inspired by Reggio Emilia. We got a culture shock from our schools in the US. From children who climb on ropes, use safety pins and bead those, glue guns, etc. To finding out police are unarmed, no graffiti, and stores shut down early enough where you could be with your family. Silvia was feeling better one night; she wanted to go shopping with us. We all ended up taking bus to a town called, "Brown's Bay" we told everyone to meet back at a certain time however, when the time was close, we turned around and Annie and I couldn't find anyone in site. We saw someone from our group, but she walked by us with a bunch of bags, and then "poof" she was gone. We couldn't find her either. We saw a few finally meeting at the bus stop, but we were still missing one person. The bus came and went, and we had no choice but to wait for the last one. Finally the bus showed up, and we boarded. Heading back to the park, we were laughing and couldn't stop talking all the way back.

As we continued the week, I continued to get texts from my husband, Rachel , and my dad. It almost felt as if I wasn't too far away from home. We had visited more schools but also went on a tour. There we ate lunch at a place called, "The Riverhead". I had a Fish burger with fries. What a break it was from all of the salads we ate for lunch and dinner. Everyone ordered something that had fries on their plate. It was as if we were going though withdraws. When we were done, all of the plates were empty, and you were lucky if you saw a fry left on a plate. We boarded the bus, and we headed out to the beach. There we ended up on at the Muriwai Beach Doman. What a breathtaking view. Black Sand was down below. I couldn't believe what I saw. I have never seen black sand.

It was winding down to our last day or our trip. I wanted to make the most of it, so I had taken a morning walk by the beach, and we had gone to a Thai Restaurant for dinner. I ordered something called, "Volcanic Chicken". As we socialized, I couldn't help but notice the waitress she came out with a whole chicken and she lit the chicken. Flames must have been a few feet up, everyone was laughing and eyes were as wide as owls. What a chicken entrance, it got huge applause as if someone famous walked in. Someone shouted, "It would be Jennifer to order it!" It was also so delicious. The chicken looks like a carcass in the desert as if a vulture had their way with it when were done eating it. Throughout the night, songs and wine was passed around. Even back on the bus, singing continued and into the night. We were taking this experience in as if we knew it was going to be the last night together.

In the morning, it was so quiet and empty. Some had departed the night before. The shuttle was here for us and we headed out. Many goodbyes were given. Silvia was finally feeling better; we managed to take a small trip with Annie across a fairy to “Devonport.” We ended up at the first place we saw. I had seafood chowder and it was so delicious. There was nothing left on my plate. We scrambled around to get back to the fairy on time to get the shuttle.

We headed back to the airport and I knew we were hours away from boarding. As the time came, we told Annie good bye, and we were all checked in for our flight. We waited to see what gate we were going to be at. Then there was an announcement our flight had been delayed for 4 and a half hours. We were given vouchers and I went to Burger King hoping to bite into a hamburger since I haven’t had a burger in a few weeks. As I bit into it, I discovered there wasn't any meat in side. It was a meatless burger. Only onion rings inside. I was so disappointed. I couldn’t wait for a real burger when I got back home. While we were waiting for our light, we saw friends from our study group. We all met up for a while. We were the last ones to board. Finally, our time had come and we were on our plane heading back to LAX. When I arrived, I couldn’t get my luggage quick enough. I walked out and there I saw my husband and two of my cousins waiting for me. I was so happy our hugs were so tight. I reflected as everyone was talking in the car, about my whole experience as if it seemed like a dream. My husband said I have a surprise for you. We ended up at Bob’s Big Boy. I got myself a Super Big Boy Combo. My husband asked me after I was done eating “Did you have fun?” My response, “I did so many fun things and it was an unforgettable trip of a lifetime.”

Response from Dr. Annie White

Jennifer, you are so courageous to have made this trip to NZ. Right from the beginning, you had challenges. However, you never gave up. You demonstrated great strength and persistence. I was amazed at how observant you were. You have a hawk eye and can find the finest detail that many of us were unaware of. Your ability to compare cultural differences, from food, cars, signs, classroom environments and teaching practices, to name just a few, is a true gift and a delight to have witnessed. I hope that this NZ study tour is just the beginning, a new chapter in your life and that you become a world traveler. Remember, no matter where ever you go, always have an open heart, mind and keen eye. As you said, you can never go back, only forward. So, fly on Jennifer, the world is at your wing tips. Kia ora~ Annie



Response from Silvia

Jennifer, I admire you for your determination in taking this long trip even though you have never been on a long trip before. Especially, after having your car accident and not feeling well. You decided to continue with this adventure. I like how you kept up with all the activities we had during our stay in New Zealand. You were very excited to try new foods, and I will never forget the day when you ordered the volcano chicken. It was amazing to see the exotic chicken in front of you. I also like how you handled walking to places even though you have knee problems. Our first day there, we had to walk to the museum after our long flight. I enjoyed your enthusiasm in taking pictures in the NZ environment, looking for things that were different from our country. You did a good job exploring and asking questions in the programs that we visited. You also took your responsibility very serious and are a very professional person, who I enjoy working with a lot. I think we make a good team together. You can also be a writer or journalist since you are excellent at managing your time to write in your journal. You are a very strong person for being able to handle all the challenges that you encountered along this trip. I enjoyed having your company and I'm glad that this trip gave me the opportunity to get to know you better. I wish you the best in your future and I'm glad that you overcame your fears of flying so you can continue exploring more places. ~Silvia

Response from Rachel- Employer

Jennifer, every step of this journey you embarked on is due to your self-motivation, willingness to have a personal vision, and the ability to advocate for yourself in the New Zealand project. What you did, showed courage, umph, a spark, risk-taking, a commitment to the Early Learning field, and motivation. For some of us, you are showing that one can be in this field a long time, but we should never stay stagnant in our learning...in fact there is so much to learn from , literally, the world...

Thank you for reminding us that in order to provide the highest quality learning environments for our communities, it takes a willingness for our leaders to investigate, explore, take risks, ask questions, and to create journeys for ourselves. How lucky we are to have you as a mentor! ~Rachel

What it Means

I demonstrated Attention Maintenance when I took the flight, I also self-comforted myself when I was writing in my journal. I also demonstrated curiosity and initiative in learning when I was observing the city as well as the schools we visited. I also showed knowledge of the natural world, as well as nutrition when I tried new foods. I also demonstrated a sense of place and belonging and I also demonstrated relationships and social interactions with familiar adults when I would call or text my family and friends.

Possibilities and Opportunities

Now that I have flown across the world, I am interested in flying to other countries. Possibly Japan, England, and maybe across the US and visit New York. I never thought I would accomplish this goal. I did it. The biggest fear of my life.