

SEP Final Report for the Binyang Team, Guangxi Autonomous Region 2010

The Team of four Jane Coates, Dot Stone, John McAleer and Conor McKinney were placed in a small town in Binyang County, Guangxi Province in the far south of China. It was the first time that an Amity Team had been placed in this specific location in this particular part of Guangxi although the Nanning Education Bureau, Guangxi has hosted Amity Teams for the past 9 years in different parts of the Province. As a consequence, our hosts were extremely enthusiastic about having a Team of four foreign Teachers, they were keen to make sure that everything was just right for the Team and that we were given the best possible care. We were accommodated in a brand new Four Star Hotel and were provided with meals in the Hotel Restaurant. We were collected by mini van each morning and afternoon and taken to the teaching site- a Junior Middle School complex. We were allocated four excellent Translators one of whom acted as a very competent Liaison Person with the Education Bureau in Nanning and also in Binyang. On the two middle Saturdays we were taken on excursions to local places of historical interest and on the Sundays they enabled us to attend two separate centres of Christian worship-one Catholic Church and a local Christian worship Church . We feel that our Hosts could not have done more to make the experience a really positive one for us as a Team and for our Chinese Teachers. We had almost one hundred Chinese Middle School and High School Teachers of English and we were able to place them in four separate almost equal sized Class groups. There were no Primary School Teachers in the group this year at all. All four members of the Team had the opportunity to teach all of the groups at some time during the week as we rotated the classes in the afternoon sessions and on occasions we doubled up two class groups.

We had some great teaching sessions with our Chinese colleagues and we also provided two informal workshops where we emphasized more practical skills and activities such as quilling, card making, calligraphy, card games, aerobics and music. These more informal sessions provide the opportunity to speak in a more relaxed and natural way with the Teachers and to get to know them on a more personal level. We were also invited to the home of two of the Teachers and it was good to meet with their families socially.

John and Conor, two new Graduates from Dublin University, did an excellent job. It is not an easy thing to teach a class of twenty five mature professional Teachers for five hours every day in a heat of 37 C for a three week period. That is a lot of lesson preparation when you are not used to doing it professionally. They are not Teachers and so did not have that background knowledge and experience to fall back on and had no bank of resources and materials to dip into. I felt that they both did an excellent job and it was my great pleasure to have them as colleagues and members of the Team. Dot and I, the experienced teachers on the Team, were able to support, resource and advise them as best as we could so that all four of us were well equipped for the job in hand. Their classes of Chinese Teachers spoke highly of them and because of their youthfulness and energy they were extremely popular. I have taught on the Summer Programme for the past six years now and so it is always refreshing to get a fresh pair of eyes looking at the programme and introducing some fresh new ideas and activities. They developed good relationships with their Teachers and they were very good and reliable team members. We worked very well as a Team and there were no problems. I believe that Dublin University should be very proud of their professionalism, commitment and their achievements.

