



Study abroad *in* *England*

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There were several students who had the chance to study at the University of Cambria in Lancaster during the 2013-2014 school year. Their English names are Monica and Jessica and they are a part of the Foreign Language School. We became mesmerized by their photos of such a colorful life on the internet that we decided to have this interview to learn more about how living abroad actually is. So let's begin this interview to probe into their educational experiences and what daily life is really like in England.



1. What is the most apparent differences of learning methods between China and abroad?

Jessica: I think the most different thing is, in Britain, students are expected to have more independent and free learning, however, in China we always have many classes and self-learning in the house.

Monica: In the class here, students can speak whatever they want, and the tutor will lead students to think, and give chance to practice.



2. Why did you choose to study abroad?

Monica: To tell the truth, studying abroad is a dream from my childhood. From the primary school to high school, it's an interesting thing that English is my favorite subject; certainly I can always do it well among Chinese, Mathematics and English. Therefore, this kind of situation arouses my interest of English. After entering the college, I chose to major in English. In my opinion, in order to learn English well, the best way is to go to the UK to experience the language environment of some countries which use English as a mother tongue.

Jessica: The reason why I want to go abroad, as an English major, I have always wanted to go abroad. Another reason is that I have always thought that language is a part of culture, as we all know the best way to learn about a culture is to stay there for some time. This is the main reason why I wanted to go abroad. I just wanted to improve my speaking skills, improve my confidence in English and also I wanted to broaden my horizons.

3. In what aspects do you think have improved through this year's learning?

Jessica: I think what I have improved a lot in is my speaking and listening skills, especially the listening. People here have such a heavy accent and every time I talk with or listen to others I get the chance to practice and improve my listening and speaking skills.

Monica: Certainly, the four essential skills, including listening, speaking, reading and writing, are all to some extent improved. However, the greatest improvement is the study methods and independent life.



4. If our school wants to learn from English schools for reforming the courses, what do you think is the most important aspects to focus on?

Monica: In fact, it is difficult to say something about reforming the courses in our school, because the courses and teaching methods nowadays in China are fixed and have existed for a long time. It is a big challenge to change this situation. I just hope that the courses can be practical and useful instead of inculcating the theories all the time.

Jessica: If our school wants to improve our courses, they can change their teaching methods, because in our school the teachers keep talking and the students just listen, while in the UK teachers use all of the methods they can think of to help students become the center of the classes.

5. Did you have any problems when you first came to the totally strange country, if so, how did you solve them?

Jessica: There aren't many problems in my daily life I think everything can be solved.

Monica: In terms of myself, I was not confronted with any difficulties. We can find a lot of useful information online, and these information are all from some experienced students who have been staying abroad for a period of time. Certainly, I don't appreciate the food in Britain, and I suggest that you can learn cooking some ordinary dishes if you are ready to go to Britain to study.



◎ What we learned

First, I'd like to extend many heartfelt thanks to my friends Monica and Jessica who are in the UK and my tutor Prof. Zhang Shunsheng. From this interview we can learn the lifestyle, the differing methods of education, and some new ideas from life abroad. As it turns out the environment in the UK can be of great help to open students' minds, broaden their horizons and renew the definition of culture-shock. As we are students, we should know the proper way of studying, the purpose of studying, and the passion for studying. Interest is a vital factor for a students' future career. Find your own interests from now on, then, become absorbed into it, and tell yourself what you do is finally meaningful. Someday, you will find what you have done astonishes you because it is more amazing than you could of ever have thought.