

Zak Brown's Bangkok, 5 – 10 January, 2015 Program T/R Report



I applied to the Teach in Thailand programme through ThaiJobs.co.uk The customer service and help that I received was excellent and I arrived in Thailand in the New Year period of 2015, with hopes and expectations of starting this new-year with an amazing experience teaching English here. However, like many others who have preceded and followed me on this TEFL journey, I was naturally anxious about a few things; as it was my first time in Asia and also my first time travelling solo. Would I make friends easily? Would I be in a nice school/area of Thailand? Will I find my feet pretty quickly?

I stayed in a hostel for a day or two before the course started so that I could get over any jet lag. I must admit that I found Bangkok pretty overwhelming on arrival - it was much bigger than I expected and I barely made it out of the street I was staying on for the first day! This made me even more excited/anxious to start the TEFL course knowing that I would meet other English teachers.

So the next day I arrived at the pre-booked hotel where we would be staying for the duration of the course and met my room-mate Jon. Straight away I was relaxed and relieved as he was a

cool guy and was in the same position as me, which meant that you could share any thoughts or feelings with someone familiar. We then met in the hotel lobby downstairs to meet the other TEFL teachers. I was soon pulled away from the group though, as Philip, the Managing Director at Island TEFL which is the sister company to Thaijobs.co.uk back home, had already sent my CV and profile to international schools before my arrival in Thailand; and I had a phone call from a potential employer in an international school! This ultimately didn't lead to a job, but it was so promising to know that I had interest in my services already and it meant that I was very hopeful of landing a good job in a nice school, which was one of my main concerns.



So I'd already made friends and had good job prospects, but Bangkok was still a bit overwhelming. Well this was sorted by Philip over the next couple of days as we had a very relaxed and enjoyable start to our Thai cultural immersion. We visited malls, markets and bars and were given the best tips on where to go to eat, drink or shop. We were shown the different methods of transport around Bangkok which is very efficient and will save you a lot of time and money if you get to grips with it, but it is honestly dead easy! I have been to so many areas of Bangkok in just the 3 weeks I've been here by BTS Sky train, MRT underground and ferry taxi, whereas tourists that I have spoken to have had to rely on more expensive means of transports with no set prices e.g. Tuk-tuks.



When it came to the actual TEFL course and qualification, again it was very relaxed and we had

opportunities to ask many questions about life as an English Teacher here. We had the benefit of two people's experience with Philip and Stephen sharing their tips and methodologies to juggle the various aspects of teaching in a Thai culture and education system.

I was offered three paid teaching job placements in schools through Island TEFL but I actually decided to do a lot of English camp work and a little bit of substitute teaching that was offered and arranged through Stephen at Island TEFL, as I only planned to come here for four months due to commitments back home. The camps are brilliant fun and I recommend to do these in any school holidays if you get chance and want some extra cash along the way. I've been to 6 provinces in Thailand already so get paid to teach and travel! However, if I was staying longer in Thailand I would most probably be working in an international school. I am already making plans to come back to Thailand for a longer period next year, which speaks volumes!



Philip assured me that he is happy to help with any queries or concerns even though the course has finished and he is just a quick phone call or email away. Everybody on my program received one or more job placement offers through Philip or Stephen at Island TEFL before the program even concluded.

I gained so much information and found the crucial contacts I needed in just a week during the Thai cultural immersion and TEFL course. I already have lots of teaching experience in England, but Thailand is a different world to England and that is why I love it! If you are new to travelling or teaching, I would recommend you to take the plunge with this course as you will get the help and support you need and hopefully make some amazing memories here in the land of smiles!

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