

## Exploring Wuhan #2

Experienced Chinese classrooms for the first time ever. Went to a University “lecture” room first followed by a Wuhan middle school the day after. Chinese classrooms are quite similar in general but for some reason, the Wuhan Middle schools had so much more funding to develop their classrooms in comparison to the University!! Seems entirely possible since University here is actually extremely cheap in comparison to Australia. Speaking of comparisons with Australia, Chinese classrooms have MUCH smaller tables, still use blackboards (which I find so much cooler than whiteboards), and has such an old-school design that I find surprisingly cosy. I have NO idea how these students keep awake during the classes.



*(Wuhan University – Urban Design Lecture)*

I was invited by Yinghui to join one of her Urban Design classes and although I probably only understood 50% of the class, I found it extremely intriguing. The perspective that China takes towards urban planning I feel (from my lack of expertise), vary slightly from Australia’s perspective of urban planning. China’s urban planning is focused on gaining the most money from surrounding properties by developing the urban space in between. It is heavily money-oriented and often, the developments are insufficient for the social sector to use. Examples of these are a lack of benches, trees, resting areas and shade in an urban park.



*(Hong Shan Middle School [vacated] Classroom – To be continued next episode)*

24<sup>th</sup> November – Easily the most intriguing morning of Wuhan

The objective of the morning was to make a simple 1 ½ hour bus trip to a school. But in this 1 ½ hours, I would say I finally took off my tourist glasses and viewed Wuhan for the dynamic city it was and the people within. The trip started on Bus 811. Not 15 minutes into this ride, another bus collided into our bus. I barely felt a thing but the bus drivers of both buses were off their seats, moving hastily towards each other and expressing themselves extremely angrily while signalling towards the damaged areas. Both the bus drivers then proceeded to take pictures and make phone calls, overhearing the driver of my bus saying (assuming to the other company) “Ey! One of your drivers hit my bus!! What are you going to do about it?”... and back he went towards the other bus. Fearing for our tardiness, we got off and waited for another bus. As I left, I looked back towards the damaged area and I realised all that happened was his window was twisted backwards. ARE YOU KIDDING ME?! Twist it back and move on!! I swear they get into arguments for the smallest of reasons.



*(A photo for reference, sorry, took it a little far away)*

~Bus Stop~

While waiting at the next bus, I saw the most f\*\*\*\*\* up thing yet extremely funny to watch. I was trying to take this photo and for some reason some girl dressed up in what looks to be extremely expensive clothes was walking briskly towards me. Wondering if I was in the way, I dropped my camera only to see her being chased by a guy that's trying his best to keep up and hold an umbrella over her head. I cannot stress how shocked I was when I first saw them run past me. I couldn't believe my eyes! I decided to find a better angle to see if my eyes had deceived me the first time and they definitely didn't. This woman then started to walk in a mazy way and I literally saw this guy running with an outstretched arm and an umbrella over her head AT ALL TIMES. How a guy does this I have no idea... he finally managed to convince her to stop though... relationships are complicated. MOVING ON.

That was more than enough drama for one day but it seems it wouldn't stop. We boarded the second 811 bus and paid again, only to find out from the lady behind us that you could tell the bus

driver that you were on the previous bus that was involved in an accident and the ride was free... doh. Nevertheless, not 2 minutes into the bus ride and a bus stop later, a guy boards and starts kicking up a massive fuss at the payment area, shouting, raising his arms at the bus driver who's trying to drive while dealing with this idiot! I was actually worried at one point when the bus was moving and I saw 4 arms moving around the driver's seat. The passenger spent a solid 20 minutes gesturing towards the money box asking the driver to open it and return him his money. It costs 2RMB to board a bus (\$0.45 AUD) and he's asking for his money back. Are you KIDDING ME. Giving him the benefit of the doubt, let's say he accidentally put in a 50RMB note (AUD \$12), that's on you man, the bus driver isn't the person collecting your money, why are you taking the piss out at him?? (I wish I could give you guys a better understanding of what transpired between them but they were speaking the local dialect) He's just trying to do his job to get us to our destination safely and on time. Eventually, an old lady and young male manages to separate them and I see this passenger pull out an iPhone 6. You cannot seriously have spent the last 20 minutes trying to get 2-50RMB back when you own a 4000RMB phone.

I've been asking myself this very question since I came. Why are the Wuhan locals so easily ticked off? They seem to get annoyed and pissed at the smallest things (eg. I witnessed a vehicle beeping the car in front because they were at a red light and the car in front didn't move to close up the 1m of space it had between itself and the next car.) It may be engrained in Wuhan's culture and how it makes Wuhan unique.

Also!! Check out this sweet security gig at a middle school in China for ages 14-17. Do they really need so much security DAMN...

