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Cursing Kiwis in New Zealand

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Sarah Sharman

Canterbury, New Zealand

October 4, 2016

Cursing Kiwis

My experiences in New Zealand so far have been incredible. I cannot believe I only have a month and a half left in this beautiful country! I have learned so much from this experience, and it is one that I will cherish forever. One thing that surprised me about the different lifestyles between my flat mate, Aimee, and myself, is the use of vulgar language. I have noticed since being in New Zealand that many Kiwis use more curse words in a casual way, especially words that people at home tend to stay away from. I am in no way trying to say that people don't use bad language at home, but words are thrown around more casually here. This was one of the things that I quickly noticed while living in a flat with three Kiwis, as it shocked me the first few days; then I became used to it.

When I arrived in New Zealand, I expected to see many more cultural differences than I noticed. One of the main differences is that in New Zealand people drive on the left side of the road. This was apparent to me when crossing streets, because you have to look right then left, rather than left then right. Another difference I noticed is how laid-back Kiwis tend to be. They are always so friendly and willing to help, which made the transition really nice. During the interview, I asked my flat mate, Aimee, the main cultural difference she saw between me and other Kiwis. She responded that I seem to be "more outgoing than the standard Kiwi." I also noticed that many Kiwis tend to keep to themselves. Obviously this is not true for everyone, and I have really gotten to know Aimee well. My other two flat mates from New Zealand tend to stay in their rooms with the door closed. Most Kiwis I have met are very friendly, but they tend to be quieter and not as outgoing.

One similarity between these two cultures is amount of time spent studying. Kiwis generally spend a lot of time at the library studying throughout the day, as do most students back at Linfield.

The interview experience was very casual, since I talk to Aimee every day. She did not point out any major cultural differences that she noticed. This interview also reminded me of the idea of how laid back Kiwis can be. Aimee's comment about how I am more outgoing made me think about the stereotype of Americans being "loud." It made me think about my perception of the U.S., and how the average person tends to be a little louder. Culturally, there are not many drastic changes. I am so incredibly thankful for this experience to study in such a beautiful country!