

Cultural Interview #2
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The kids were outside playing and had been invited over into the neighbor's house. I did not feel comfortable with them being there by themselves so I went along with them. The adult, Kim, was happy to have me and engaged me in conversation immediately. I was thinking this is the perfect time and opportunity to do a cultural interview. I was excited to make the discovery. Later, I found it funny that Kim needed us too.

Kim is from Taiwan. She and the children with her come to the United States every year for about a two-month period of time. They come in order for the children to learn English. The children are all related to her but none are her own. This is amazing! I had just finished language training, and now I am stumbling across a Taiwanese woman, allowing me to put some of the things I had learned into action. The group has a language helper. In fact, there are two different people coming to the home for a total of nine hours every day and working with them on language acquisition. The reason that we were invited in, I found, was our language skill. Kim wants the children to converse and play in English. They were engaging the culture. It is working. The children and Kim are very competent in English. Some are better than others, due to the number of summers they have come, but all were speaking to us.

I was glad to help out with their English practice and thought no better way to practice than to have Kim answer some questions about herself. I found out that Kim worked for her brother back home in an administrative role. He is an orthodontist who has made quite a name for himself and is able to afford the finer things in life. One of these is the ability to send the family to the US every year. Kim is well-educated and has done some of her study in the United States. She says that the people of Taiwan love the US and the American people. It is not often that you hear these words. She says the hardest thing about coming here is learning the language. Even now, after fifteen years of living and visiting for long periods of time, there are some things she is still not able to understand. She told me it was difficult for the children to engage the culture at first because of language. It paints the picture of the difficulty we may have if we are not purposeful in our pursuit of Spanish.

She is interested in why we are here, but quick to share that she is not a Christian. In fact she does not hold any belief and changed the subject quickly. She thinks what we are doing is admirable and focused in on our work at the schools in Belize. We talked a great deal about education and I soon found that is her passion and possibly the thing she worships most in life. This is speculation and may be an unfair conclusion but is one that stands out in my mind.

The kids finished up playing several games and as the hour was getting late, we wrapped things up for the night. We talked about getting back together and I hope that will transpire in the weeks that we have remaining. Kim was a pleasure to engage and she shed some light on her culture for me, as I am sure I did for her.