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Dr. Cripps

ASL 3030

Reflection 10

I cannot believe we have already been in New Zealand for 10 days! Time has really flown by and I have enjoyed every minute of it. Today we started our day off at AUT with some of their New Zealand Sign Language students. We had time to chat with them and learn each others' languages and every person I met was very nice. I think they have a cool program because most of their students are training to be interpreters, which New Zealand has very few of. Hopefully, these students can disperse throughout New Zealand and make things more accessible, like on Parliament TV. I also enjoyed talking to one of the NZSL professors and we talked about how different sign names tend to be in New Zealand and America.

After we finished morning tea with the NZSL students, we went to a flipped class where the students were supposed to have read some articles before class and then discuss themes from the articles during class. There were lots of different people in the room, and it was packed. We talked about things like sign language policy, signing schools, and language acquisition for deaf children. It was interesting how even though everyone came from different backgrounds, we all appreciated the importance of sign language and its universal accessibility. Amy even shared her own story of learning English at a later age and how much

harder it was for her. I think her testimony may have helped some of the people in the room who were hearing understand how hard it is to learn language later in life, but it is essential to have a strong base language before you can learn another. This is true for all languages, but for deaf children especially. If deaf children do not have early access to sign language, they face tremendous barriers when trying to acquire written language.

After the AUT visit, we had a couple of free hours for lunch before we had to meet again. Emma and I decided to walk to the Auckland Art Museum since it was nearby. I did not expect much because I didn't really like any of the art in the Wellington museums, but I was shocked at the big names on display in Auckland. There were pieces by Picasso, Matisse, and Monet, my favorite. I enjoyed walking through the art and then in the park behind the museum. It was beautiful and a nice break from our busy schedule.

We met again to go to the Auckland Deaf Club. It was a wonderful experience and I enjoyed meeting so many locals. I feel very grateful that I was able to experience not only one, but two, Deaf Clubs. Seeing everyone together having fun and socializing was really special and I am glad New Zealand is keeping their Deaf Clubs alive. Sadly, their numbers are dwindling due to technology, Covid, and times changing, however, the Auckland Deaf Club has a rich history that members are dedicated to keeping alive. After Dr. Cripps' presentation, I felt like members were more pumped up and motivated for change than the members at Wellington. Auckland Deaf Club already invites

NZSL students and interpreters to their events, and Dr. Cripps' message about the importance of a signed language community resonated well with most people. I think that the members of Auckland Deaf Club care about their community and have cared since its establishment. They used to have housing for members who didn't have homes, and it seems like they come together to take care of each other. That is why Dr. Cripps' message about the importance of having as many signers as possible made a lot of them excited for future generations of signers.

After the presentation we got to socialize for a few hours, and ended up getting back to the hotel pretty late. We met an American CODA, a few more AUT NZSL students, and some really nice Deaf people. Everyone was super friendly and we worked together to overcome our language differences. I had a lot of fun chatting with some older adults, including Sarah and Darnell's parents/in-laws. It was really cool to have connections link up in different parts of the country. I loved all of the activities we got to do and I look forward to the rest of the trip.