I was actually so excited to leave for this project, but more anxious than I have been in a long time. Perhaps it is because I have traveled so often now that I packed the day I left ☺ I decided to arrive early for this project because many of my students are from Mexico and I knew that this was a city and a culture that I needed to gain more experience with in order to broaden my global perspective and better connect with my students.

My flight was about six hours and I arrived at 5:30am Mexico City time, which was 3:30am Seattle time, having barely slept on the flight. Moises and Alejandro arrived to the airport at 6:30am to meet me and make the drive to Teotihuacán—the Mayan pyramids outside of the city center. A little about Moises and Alejandro. Well, I had never met them. They were sons of a cousin of a friend of a friend. Yep, you read that right! My husband got in touch with a friend—and long story short, they picked me up and off we went. Our first stop was breakfast. But I felt so terrible that I couldn’t eat. And the altitude is at 7000 feet, so it was definitely a factor. So, we had a fabulous time climbing up the Temple of the Sun and also the Temple of the Moon. We took so many selfies and laughed a lot. These boys were “my people” and we bonded immediately. They also spoke amazing English and told me much about the area and the history of the Temples. And then I really started not feeling well and experienced about 10 minutes of throwing up all the water that I had tried to consume to combat the heat. Embarrassing. But part of travel to new locations and new experiences. So Moises left Alejandro with me and literally ran back to get the car to come and pick me up. I slept the 1.5 hours back with the window down until we reached my hotel. I felt miserable! I’m sure the combination of a red eye flight, no sleep, no food, excessive heat, and a hike in the altitude did me in. I rested for about 4 hours in my room—after having to change rooms due to hotel construction that was making my head pound—and then I bravely joined the boys again for dinner.

We walked to the park and were enjoying all of the people out and about when it started to rain. And then it really started to RAIN. People scattered, the streets and sidewalks flooded, and all of the sudden, the small dance festival that was going on under a tent had hundreds of spectators—including us! It was actually awesome and we enjoyed traditional dancing from Oaxaca, Mexico. We braved the rain to go to dinner, dodging puddles with our tennis shoes. Food was good, but I still couldn’t eat more than two bites of food, so I gave it to them to take home. They walked me back to the hotel, where I prayed that sleep would magically cure me.

So today….wow! It was just the best day I have had traveling in a long time! I laughed so much and was so silly and just had a great day with my boys. Alejandro is 17 and Moises is 20 and they are just so much fun! Moises is studying to be an actuary and getting a degree in mathematics, and Alejandro is entering his first year in University to study architecture.

I woke at 8am and managed to eat some breakfast and have some juice. And then they arrived and we started our day. It was full of walking, touring cathedrals, getting evil spirits removed, and watching traditional dancers. We spent about an hour and a half touring the Templo Meyor in the main part of the city learning about the history of Mexico City. We also happened to be in the plaza on a day when they were having Lucha Libre fights—like WWF, but with those silly masks. Most only know of the movie Nacho Libre—and, in fact, I kept referring to it as that! It was hilarious, and such a wonderful unexpected cultural experience. And the boys were so happy! We bought masks and took photos all over town—even with police officers and children. At one point, I made Alejandro put on his mask and lean again a police van and pretend to be getting arrested and then I did the same. It was so funny! My mask is from a well-known fighter called Blue Demon, so all over town people would shout out to me while walking! At lunch, which consisted of an incredible chicken mole tamale, we met up with Terry, another teacher from my Earthwatch project that had arrived early.

A little background. I sent a message to all 12 teachers asking if anyone was arriving early and wanted to do anything. Three teachers contacted me and we all corresponded meeting times and knew of each hotel accommodations. I arrived Friday, Terry arrived Saturday at 12:30, Kristi arrived at 3:30, and Christina arrived at 7:30. New friends every three hours! I actually planned a four hour bike tour on Sunday for all of us prior to heading to airport for our group meet-up, and all of them agreed to do it and were so excited!

So, Terry arrived at lunch—Moises and Alejandro couldn’t believe we had never met, and Terry couldn’t believe that the boys and I had only known each other for one day—and we set off exploring the city after. Terry saw our Lucha Libre masks, saw pictures, heard our stories, and asked if we minded going back for a mask for her. OF COURSE WE WILL! So, back we went—actually just reliving the tour we had that morning all over again with her, but just as much fun! Now we had a third mask to take photos all over town.

We ended up heading back to the hotel and taking their car to a part of the city known as Coyoacuan and spent the evening watching performers, eating quesadillas in a local market restaurant, buying corn and churros, shopping in the artisan market, and just having an amazing time with my new friends. We ended up not getting to see the other teachers as travel through security and traffic tired them out until our tour the next day, but everyone arrived safely and was ready for the journey ahead.

Bike tour day!!! Yeah! Moises and Alejandro were once again amazing! The drove all the way into the city to take us, even though the tour company was five minutes from their house! They even went to pick up Terry at a different hotel before coming to get me and Christina at ours. Truly, three days ago we weren’t even friends, and now I feel like I have family. They have been the best part of my time in Mexico City!

The tour was an absolute blast. The six of us—and Tommy from Hong Kong—were truly the best of friends on this tour. Lots of photos, food, and fun. I cannot say enough great things about bike tours. I just LOVE them. And that we all went and did it together was such a great way to start this project. Moises and Alejandro even borrowed their dads van so they could take all four of us to the airport for our project. I am sad I will not see them for a week, but we will hang out again next Saturday before I fly home.

We met up with the others at the airport and in the van it was apparent this will be in incredible group of teachers to spend the week with. We truly all bonded so quickly. We drove about an hour to our hotel—more about that later—and rested before dinner at 7. From 8-9pm we had a briefing on our project and realized just how busy we will be for the next five days! Literally sun up to sun down! I am just so excited to work with these people and for my experience with local farmers in the Chanapas (floating islands). The only thing that bothers me is how many times we discuss earthquake protocol! There was an earthquake just last Thursday….. yikes. So for now, I go to bed with my shoes and a flashlight close and knowledge of the exit routes and meeting location….. ☺ An early day tomorrow!