



I was struggling with my learning of the Chinese language through my studies at Deakin, partly possibly from a slight lack of interest but most probably because it seemed that almost all of my classmates were so much better than me that I almost felt like giving up. But when I realized that one thing most of them had in common was that they had all been to China at least once, often for more than just a holiday, I knew what I had to do. When the opportunity to travel to China with the Intensive In-country Language program came up, I jumped at it. I figured that it would give me that edge I needed in order to survive this major. This thought came to fruition 10 fold.

Since enrolling in the Arts (Chinese)/Commerce double degree at Deakin I had found that

learning a language was much harder than I initially thought it would be, while also being more rewarding. I have found the course of Chinese interesting and insightful.

Traveling to Nanjing to study was a great boost to furthering my language skills and I believe it has given my degree an edge above many others.

I believe going to China was the best thing I could have done for both my language development and appreciation of the Chinese culture. Being immersed in the culture of a language you intend to learn is definitely the best way to accelerate that learning and it allows you to really understand where the language comes from. As China is fast becoming a world economic powerhouse, having a commerce degree coupled with the ability to communicate with the Chinese people on a level much deeper than many others with just a business degree, should prove to be a great advantage.

The Nanjing Normal University is a beautiful campus with some ancient styled 100 year old buildings and gardens, supported by great staff and surrounded by all the necessities. We had class for 3 hours each morning Monday to Friday then had the afternoons off to do what we pleased, sometimes going on excursions with the university to historical/tourist sites. During the first class, when the teacher spoke almost all Chinese, I thought maybe I was in over my head, but she told us that in about 2-3 weeks we will understand what she was saying. I was skeptical but hopeful and it turned out she was right.

After improving my Chinese tremendously through the in-country program, I now feel that I can achieve anything. To go from a very basic understanding to being able to have full conversations in another language in 6 weeks is a very rewarding experience. This program that Deakin provides is a fantastic opportunity and anyone that has the chance to take part should take it.

All the students on the course were great and I'm sure the friendships that were made will last forever. We met many people from all around the world as there are many overseas students studying at the university.

I now have a deep seeded love of the Chinese people and their culture, saddened by their struggles and elated by their triumphs. The in-country program was an experience ill never forget, and if all goes well I would love to attend the program again.

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