

## TESTIMONIAL - JCU Career Services Center, Summer 2015



I firmly believe that in order to live life to the fullest, we must take risks and throw ourselves into the unknown every once in a while. Being a bit of an extremist, I decided to come to China for two months to **intern and study Chinese with CRCC Asia**. Being home to more than one billion people, China's diverse culture and geography greatly attracted me. You will hear **more than a hundred different dialects** when in this vast city. Mandarin is the official language and is very challenging to learn since there is really no direct translation to my mother tongue. I hear that after a fair amount of study and dedication, one wakes up on a regular day and it all clicks. Learning a language surrounded by native speakers and its appropriate culture certainly helps with the process. It definitely makes things more interesting too.

So far, **my experience learning Mandarin has been its own adventure**. Taking public transportation to class during rush hour can be quite exhausting, but it is an experience that I had to live through in order to truly live the culture. It is incredibly rewarding. My journey to class every day consists of seeing marriage markets, flash mobs and old men, all quite a sight to see. Never did I expect to be swimming in a sea of people all trying to get to different places all at once, nor was I expecting to be packed like a sardine inside a subway in order to get the train that gets me to class on time. Despite the foot traffic, **it is incredibly impressive to see how advanced China's public transportation is**: certainly more ahead than in America or Italy.

The **teachers at the Mandarin House are passionate** about what they do. They effortlessly provide me with knowledge that only a local could give. Growing up with a different dynamic in a country that is vastly misunderstood by outsiders is another manifestation of **cultural shock** that is presented to me in class. I greatly respect their passion and their eagerness to teach me about such a complicated language while making it personal as well.

As the sun sets, so do the jitters of cultural shock. The first week was a challenge to get through, but it all became easier once I started crossing paths with people from all walks of life. Not only did I get to mingle with fellow students from the program, but locals as well. I began to appreciate **the peculiar traditions of China**. Through learning about the quirks and beauty of such a multi-faceted culture, **I learned more about myself as well**. I realized that the purpose of this trip was beyond taking a risk – it was to learn about an incredible culture that will lead me to discovering new things about myself. The mixture of **the beautiful architecture, art, live musical performances and human beings** turned a new page and began a new chapter in my life. It has inspired me to continue traveling the world and never stop learning about different cultures. One day I hope to pass the knowledge to someone, so they too can experience the awakening I did while in my time here.

*Carlota Buroz*