Language-learning and living in China; my experience as a Worldwide Bursary recipient.

Initially, I certainly experienced a large culture-shock. The colourblind-style attitude towards traffic lights; the say-it-as-it-is attitude towards manners - Chinese culture was certainly far different from what I’d experienced back in the UK.

Whilst I was learning about Chinese culture in class, and experiencing it first-hand, my trip sparked an interest into global cultures through the stories of my classmates.

In class, we shared parts of our own countries’ culture, each of us delivering weekly presentations covering areas such as food, transport and politics. By hearing about my classmates’ homes, it inspired me to visit their countries for myself one day.

I attended 4 hours of class every morning, spending the remainder of the day completing homework, working on presentations, or using new vocabulary while out-and-about in the city. The course at Beijing Normal University was created to give me all of the practical tools I needed to live in China. It was easy to apply my new knowledge every single day.

Day by day, my shaky Chinese speaking became more intelligible. I felt confident using China’s vast public transport network to visit the neighbouring city: Tianjin.

The contrast between Tianjin’s winding streets and Beijing’s gridlocked highways is stark. Everywhere you look in Tianjin is a snapshot of history - large European-style buildings and strongholds - a remnant of the Opium wars. My short weekend in Tianjin reminded me that there is so much more of China for me to see.

I hope to encourage anyone studying Chinese at Warwick to visit China for themselves. This immersive experience advanced more than just my language level. My first time in China showed me more than any book ever could.

- Nick Glasson