台留学生勤练英语 克服语言障碍
28 December 2007
黄慧君

10年前随父母从台湾移民到新加坡的曹宁静说，当初上课听不懂课。

今年20岁的曹宁静已是新加坡管理大学（SMU）的三年级生，修读经济系，并活跃于校内的活动，前阵子还参与“Not the Stuffy Guide handbook”国际学生生活指南手册的制作，负责到小印度（Little India）收集文化与餐馆的资料。指南将会派发给就读新加坡管理大学的新国际学生，协助他们适应新加坡的生活与文化。我们稍后会为你介绍这本手册，记得锁定动网的《融入狮城》。

10年前，曹宁静初到贵境，当时对新加坡的俚语一窍不通，因此觉得有需要出一份力，参与手册的制作，让新同学更快融入新加坡的生活。

当时来到新加坡后，她就进入国际学校。她坦言，刚开始时，不懂英语，由于在国际学校里老师主要以英语授课，“上课时听不懂。”

不过，在老师的悉心教导，花时间用简单的英语向她解释后，她便渐渐上了轨道。

能学好英语是她的最大收获，她说，学好英语见识会更广，尽管台湾也有不少翻译本，不过有限。

为了加强英语能力，曹宁静在学校里也尽量不跟讲中文的同学一起，让自己有多点机会运用英语。平时在家里还继续讲中文，看中文小说与报纸，来保持她的中文水平。

不过，就算掌握了英语和中文，也不见得就能完全了解新加坡的文化，因为在新加坡有不少人是讲新语(Singlish)的，特点是，新语汇集英语和以福建话为主的本地方言，以及融合马来语和印度语的词汇，而且一些英文字或用法也加添了本地的意思，因此会是造成语言不通的情况。

曹宁静举例表示，“BOTAK”一字是马来语，指秃头，像这类字刚开始是听不懂的。

她因会听福建话，因此一些用词会听的懂，例如“KIASU”（怕输）。

毕业后打算到美国深造的曹宁静喜欢新加坡的生活，“我喜欢这里的环境，交通很方便，不一定要买车，因为公车系统好，厕所又干净，附近都有购物中心和菜市场。”

“新加坡的教育环境比较好，这里的治安也好”，对她来说，新加坡为她提供了一个好的成长环境。”
When Tsao Lin Chung, first migrated to Singapore with her parents 10 years ago, she could hardly follow lessons here. Today she is a third year economics student at SMU and actively involved in campus activities. She was recently part of the team for Not the Stuffy Guide handbook, researching on Little India. The handbook is given out to international students in SMU to help them adapt to life in Singapore and on campus. We will bring you a feature on this handbook shortly, stay logged on to xin.sg Be Part of Us.

Lin Chung remembers how lost she was when she first came to Singapore and joined the handbook team to help other new foreign students adjust to life in Singapore faster. Then, she studied at an international school. Classes were conducted in English and she could not understand anything. Under her teacher's patient guidance and explanation, she finally got the hang of it. Becoming proficient in English greatly benefitted her as it opened her to more learning avenues and books which were limited in Taiwan.

To strengthen her language ability, Lin Ching also tried to meet non-Mandarin-speaking schoolmates to increase her opportunities to converse in English. She only reverts to speaking Mandarin and reading Chinese books and newspapers at home to maintain her mastery of Chinese.

Having mastered both languages did not really mean she fully understood Singapore culture because many Singaporeans spoke Singlish, which was a mix of various local languages and dialects spoken in Singapore and has its own local flavour and interpretations. She initially did not understand what certain Malay words such as 'botak' (meaning bald) meant, but she knew what certain Hokkien words such as 'kiasu' (afraid to lose) meant because she knew the dialect.

Lin Chung plans to further her studies in the US after she graduates. However, she reveals she loves the life in Singapore for its environment, convenient public transport, clean public toilets, and many food centres and markets. She also highlighted that Singapore's education scene is also better and there is much peace and security, making it an ideal place for her to grow up in.