Over the past few years the Centre of Languages of the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau has organized summer study trips and local English summer immersion camps for Macau students. The purposes are to enhance students' interest in English language learning, to increase their language skills and to broaden their views by experiencing different folk customs and cultures. This year, 20 senior secondary school students were selected to participate in the study trip to Cairns, Australia while 20 junior secondary school students were sent to Singapore. At the same time, a total of 119 secondary school students participated in the local summer camp immersing themselves in an English language learning environment in Macao. In order to let you have a better understanding of these programmes, we have invited three of the students who participated in the above programmes to share their valuable experiences with you. Enjoy their contribution.

2012 Singapore language and culture tour

Adrian, Kong Kai Chuen

As ordinary Macau students, our typical school life is study, tests, study, tests and study. Though we all hope for an exciting school life which involves learning through exploring or visiting new places and experiencing different cultures and events, the reality is our school life is usually dull and boring. We all hope for an exciting trip and finally the opportunity came! Thanks to the DSEJ, 20 students were able to join the 2012 singapore language and culture tour - an amazing trip!

We came from different schools and backgrounds. Through this trip, we developed our relationship from strangers to friends who know each other well. By the end of the one-week tour, we were no longer shy or embarrassed to talk and share with each other,. I think this is amazing!

When I first arrived in Singapore, what I saw was different from what I expected. I thought Singapore was a small country full of buildings, just like Hong Kong. However, the view I saw from the moment I got off the plane was one of the wonderful places that's full of extensive green lawns, trees and flowers. It was beautiful! Citizens gathered around and enjoyed having picnics with their friends and families. They seemed to enjoy their happy and peaceful lives.

We began our trip visiting sites of Singapore, tasting various yummy local foods and experiencing the many different interesting activities. For some of us, this was our first trip to a foreign country; while for others, this was the first time on a plane. Riding on a roller coaster for the first time was another experience. It was terrifying for some of us and it caused us to freak out. Thanks to this trip for giving us so many precious experiences!

The main purpose of this tour was to give us the opportunity to improve our English. We had lessons at Dimensions International College every morning, and we made a lot of new friends from many different countries and cultures. We were lucky to have a very wonderful and capable teacher, Nick. We had a great time during the classes though sometimes it was a little bit boring. The camp was very different from our school life in Macau. We did not have to raise our hands and get the teachers' permission before we could express our opinions. The Singapore experience really helped us become active in speaking English.

We also had English activities in the evenings. We were forbidden to speak other languages but English or else would have consequences. Luckily, no one broke the rules. Besides playing interesting games, we also learned English and Singlish vocabularies. We all had a great time and learnt a lot of things.

Because of this trip we all became friends; we overcame our fears and learnt to better communicate in English. We improved our social skills and experienced a lot of things that we can not experience or learn in Macau. I hope this trip can continue so more Macau students can have this precious, unique opportunity to learn English and to experience different cultures; to see the horizon beyond Macau and meet the international community.