

'Softly I am leaving,/ Just as softly as I came;/ I softly wave goodbye/ To the clouds in the western sky.' - Xu Zhi Mo, *Taking Leave of Cambridge Again*

It is difficult to compute that by the time you read this blog, our visitors from Singapore Chinese Girls' School will have left the warm embrace of [Reach Hall](#). For the last week or so, we have had the pleasure of hosting 28 students and 3 teachers from SCGS, who have been on their very own [tailor-made program](#) here in Cambridge.

Though this has been my first time working on a Reach tailor-made program, I have been told many times by my colleagues what a pleasure it is to see a tailor-made program through from inception to completion. This has certainly been my experience. It is still quite stunning to me how thoughts and wishlists, conveyed in email conversations and Skype calls, can take shape, as stars make a constellation.

The tailor-made program for SCGS this year revolved around the theme of 'World Readiness.' This overarching focus meant that the pupils engaged with lessons in political philosophy, art history, ethics, and analytical engagement with the media. Of course, 'world readiness' is not simply about knowledge; the students were also given many opportunities to unearth and develop their skills of public speaking, presentations, research, data-gathering and critical thinking. The breadth of the program necessitated a range of skilled teachers and academics, and gave rise to several exciting excursions, including local museums and even a culturally-enriching trip to Radley College in Oxford. This is not to speak of the increased confidence in themselves and their abilities: self-belief which is perhaps the most important yet ephemeral part of 'World Readiness.'

As you can imagine when viewing this packed schedule, the days could easily have proved long and intense. The homely environment of Reach Hall meant that students were at ease to relax and have a giggle with their friends (so much giggling!), as well as learning the habits that make up independent living, such as dishwasher-filling (no World Readiness course would be complete without comprising such skills).

It was so fulfilling to see a program we have worked hard on as a team come to fruition. Even better, though, was seeing these teenagers, who started out so quiet and shy, growing in confidence, ability and cheerfulness even in their short time here. I cannot help but feel envious of

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the incredible opportunity they have had to experience the beauty, history and focus of Cambridge in a way that fuses perfectly with their school's values, and all with their closest friends. Indeed, I dare say we have all been left with happy memories to treasure. It may have only been my first foray into the world of tailor-made programs, but it's definitely encouraged and inspired me to make the [Spring Program](#) just as enjoyable and enriching.

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