Before I took part in the JENESYS program, my main interest was to excel in conversation Japanese. With the practice I received in Japanese language classes in my University and interaction with Japanese people in Singapore, I was quite confident with my spoken Japanese. However, during the Discussion classes in the JENESYS program, I realized that my Japanese level still have much room for improvement. I had many thought and views in my mind, and I had to push myself to convey them in Japanese. It was difficult to do a discussion in Japanese, but at the same time it was really challenging. I started out being weak in conveying, but I believed I have improved during the 6 weeks. The Discussion classes made me want to continue to strive for improvement in my discussion techniques.

Similarly, the Speech classes have helped me boost my confidence. The 2 Japanese speeches were the longest I have ever written. For the first speech, the first comment I got from the Okano Sensei was that it was too simple and safe, and that I should try to challenge myself and write a more in-depth speech. I was shocked, but I realized that Sensei was right. I should not stay within my comfort zone and instead I should venture out. Thus, for the second speech, I made every effort to make it a more comprehensive speech. I think I did it when Sensei complimented me, I was really happy when I heard it.

The class that I was most worried about was the Interview class, but in turn I also learned a lot from it. I was nervous about speaking polite language to the elders, because that was my weakest point. Thankfully, the Japanese people that we have interviewed were all friendly and helpful, which made the whole process very enjoyable. The interactions with the University students and neighborhood volunteers, like exchanging information about our own countries, were really enriching. I feel the best way to learn about Japan is through its citizens, and that makes me want to improve my Japanese so I can discuss more in-depth topics with them in the future.

Furthermore, besides the standard Japanese, students of JENESYS program were exposed to the Kansai and Senshuu dialect. Being an avid fan of Japanese comedian, I have some exposure to Kansai dialect. However, this was the first time I got to hear Senshuu dialect. During the trip to Kyoto, I had also come across a bit of Kyoto dialect. From all these exposures, they made me interested in learning more about the different dialects in Japan and comparing them with the standard Japanese.
Last but not least, the cultural experience also made me want to learn more about Japanese history, culture and habits. In order to have an in-depth understanding, I strongly believe that Japanese language is important. In order to take my Japanese level to a new height, I first need to improve on my reading and writing skills. If there is a chance, I would love to learn the olden Japanese as it will definitely come in handy when I am doing research for Japanese history.

During the JENESYS program, I updated my Facebook with pictures frequently in order to preserve the wonderful memories. My friends and classmates always commented that the program looked really fun, and it seemed like I really enjoyed myself. After returning to Singapore, and describing the experience I had obtained, my classmates got really interested in the program. Looking at my JENESYS handouts and homework, my classmates were impressed with the exposure I had. In Level 4 Japanese in my University, discussion techniques, long speeches and interview were not yet taught, thus my classmates envied that I have the chance to do them during JENESYS. My friends also commented that instead of just studying throughout the 6 weeks, there were sufficient free days and field trips to relax. There was a good balance between work and fun which I agree fully.

Looking at the frequent conversation our JENESYS group had on Facebook, my classmates also commented that we seemed to have a close relationship. JENESYS gave me a chance to make friends from Malaysia, Myanmar, India, Brunei, Vietnam, Australia and New Zealand, and learnt about their society and culture. My friends also pointed out to me that the Singaporeans got along very well. I felt that the program helped us forge a better Singapore unity too, as we have to look out for each other in a foreign country.

If there is a chance my classmates said that they would really love a chance to join JENESYS. The JENESYS program is going to end next year, but if it could continue, I believe it will benefit more students all over the world.