UAL Student Voices: Wenxuan

SPEAKERS
Wenxuan, Victoria (Academic Support),

Victoria 00:00
Okay, hello, Wenxuan, I'm really interested to hear you tell your story. So, welcome.

Wenxuan 00:07
Hello, I'm Wenxuan. I'm currently in the first year of Media Communication at LCC. I come from China, there is a small city next to Shanghai, which is called Wenzhou and I moved to London four months ago.

Victoria 00:26
So, tell us a little bit about growing up in China and your education.

Wenxuan 00:32
Starting in Wenzhou, I do a lot of academic studies, like I do economic, history, calculus, physics, nothing related to art. But at the very first stage, I want to study fashion design, because my mom is working in the fashion industry. And I love fashion and like to follow the new trend.

Wenxuan 01:01
I think the fashion design is only for those very talented people to do because it's not just about joining or design the clothes you want in the sketchbook. But it's also to tell people it's to try to make a concept to make a storyline about your product, about your clothes. So, at the end I kind of gave up of doing this. So, I back from my normal academic studies. But I still want to pursue my art dream here.

Victoria 01:42
Clearly you were succeeding academic subjects. How did you decide to take the risk and to go into art and design? Was there a sudden moment in your life? Or was this happening gradually over time?

Wenxuan 01:59
Actually, at first, I choose to study an international course. The normal high school student in China, they need to study a lot of compulsory classes, which I really don't like. So, I chose study internationally. And there is a moment here when I go to the museum with my friend, she was a fashion designer before, I think the project was really, really cool. And that inspired me to become an art student. And also, this is inspired by my mom, because she's working in the fashion industry.

Victoria 02:40
So, tell us what it was like? Because it sounds like there was some struggles involved to how did you cope with those and what happened?

Wenxuan 02:49
Because I don't have portfolio. So, I studied harder than before, to try to get a higher GPA than before, what's the GPA? GPA is kind of, ah, it's about it your academic score, general academic score. Actually, my parents don't want me to go to Art University because they think you can't make money when you graduate from this university, but I have the... I have the gene about pursue the aesthetic
here. So like, I found a tutor, which is teaching me about design, a general design. And she is very strictly pushing me to do the project. And I wrote my personal statement by myself very carefully.

[03:53] Those are the struggles here about pandemic, my parents don't want me to go London, and they're saying gap for one year and you can go to London next a year maybe, or, you can go to college in China. So, don't go aboard. This is dangerous. I decided to go to London by myself. So, I buys the ticket by myself and go there and I promise I will stay carefully and I will study harder. I make those promises to myself and to my parents.

Victoria 04:41 You got in you didn't think you were gonna get in but you got in and you promised your parents that you would be careful. And you bought the ticket. And you came.

Wenxuan 04:52 Yeah.

Victoria 04:54 What was it like coming to London from home?

Victoria 04:56 It scared. Is scares me because everyone here, they don't wear masks, and they don't care about pandemic. So, at first, I care very seriously about washing my hands and wear my face mask. And I don't like to go to outside because I'm afraid of COVID-19. Actually, I don't have any social activities. So, it's kind of boring being here, a live alone, at first, in studio. So, I kind of depressed at that time because there are a lot of essays, and I do not have any social activities to do. I under a lot of pressure, but I can't tell my parents about that. Because they will think about, that it's your decision you needed to take care of yourself, you need to cover those all things by yourself.

Victoria 06:08 So, what happened?

Wenxuan 06:09 I started to find my tutor. And keep ask them the questions. Because English is not my first language, I'm afraid of speaking in the public. So, I will always ask them questions after the class. So that is really helpful for me to understand what they are already talking about because sometimes I don't know about the assignment, even though they put the assignment brief into Moodle.

Victoria 06:45 And have you started to meet new people? Do you feel part of your course?

Wenxuan 06:50 Yes. After that, I moved into our new apartment. And now living with my friend who is also study at LCC, he study game design. And he's a very socialised people. So, I starting to make new friends here that are very generous and very open. I find a lot of, like, pleasure of studying in London. Because like, before, I think maybe the people in the school, they will party on might and do not focus on the study. But it seems not really like that, people here, they study very hard, and they work hard on their assays. They have the critical thinking when they attending the classes. So, I learned a lot from them.

Victoria 07:59
I imagine coming from an education, which is very academic, moving into an art and design college with a western approach to education, it would be really useful to share the differences that you’ve observed in the two systems.

Wenxuan 08:16
I think the teachers or the staff here, they will not be pushing you to do your work. When I do my project or do my assignment, the tutors will not tell you to do what they want you to do. But they will give you the instructions or the advice for you to develop your idea by your own self.

Victoria 08:44
That must be quite difficult to adjust to at the beginning. So how would you suggest to somebody from China coming here to approach the first few weeks when it comes to adjusting to this different education system.

Wenxuan 09:01
I think is all about like time management. Because when I'm in China school will design a timetable for you and the teacher will give you the pathway for you to achieve your goal. But here they gave you a long time to explore your own assignment or project. So, at the first week I come here actually, I did nothing because I'm a procrastinator, and I always do my assignment at the last few days, even like the due is tomorrow, I work tonight. But this well not works here. It's too late and you will find your friends he's already done it. And so, take care of your time, take care of your time management here, because no one is pushing you to do your assignment.

Victoria 10:09
And how do you take care of your time?

Wenxuan 10:13
Now, I get used to this kind of style or system here. So, I designed a timetable. And there is a reminder, for me, I make a list of what today assignment will do, at what date. I will keep checking of my reminder. And also I will have a group study with other friends, because you're feel more motivated, then you study alone.

Victoria 10:49
What is a group study? How did you organise it? What does it involve?

Wenxuan 10:53
It's kind of like, everyone have a different, they from different university, but they want to study in this time period. So, we will be super focused on the study, during this time. I can post like, I need to study from 10am to the 10pm today. Whether someone is similar to me and want to study with me, sometimes those online groups have the international students like me, but also have the home student here. We're kind of like the partnership. So, you are not study alone. But actually, in physically, you're studying alone in your home.

Victoria 11:45
And have you made friends that way?

Wenxuan 11:47
Yes, definitely. I make a lot of new friends here. So, I understand a lot of culture stuff here.

Victoria 11:59
And what sort of culture stuff?

Wenxuan 12:02
Like in London, people are very polite. They will have greetings when they email, they have a certain format. But in China, we are more casual, you'll just say what you want it to say, there is no certain format. So I learned this from other friends. It's great for me to do this group.

Victoria 12:32
Sounds really successful. Congratulations for getting that organised. You mentioned earlier about critical thinking, and the importance of that within this system and also within your course. Tell us a little bit more about it. Is it something that you could easily move into? Or did you find it quite challenging?

Wenxuan 12:53
I think it's challenging for me because I didn't know the language. Like the critical thinking is to think deeply and challenging yourself again, again. But sometimes I will use Chinese logic to think about the question, but I can't express myself during the class. And when tutors asked you questions, I may feel that I didn't do a lot of research. So critical thinking for me, it's kind of challenge.

Victoria 13:37
When you say Chinese logic, what do you mean by that?

Wenxuan 13:42
English because you think I'll like a linear. Because a Chinese system when you get a question, so we will all think in the same way. But here everyone have a very creative thinking about what happened about that question. I observed in our class, many Chinese students well think in similar way, when you express yourself.

Victoria 14:23
It's gonna take time to understand and to practice, because it's a different language, it's a different system, it's a different country, it's a different culture. It's a lot.

Wenxuan 14:35
Yes. So, I'm trying to kick me out of my comfort zone. That's why I come here today. And now my English is not quite good. I can't express my emotions sometime. I'd love to do those activities, to practice myself, and to share the you experience that I have. Maybe you might also have, even though you're not Chinese, but we are international students or maybe some home students who also felt in the college life.

Victoria 15:18
Can you see room for, were you able to use your knowledge and experience of Chinese theories and ideas, in your practice? Is there opportunity to do that?

Wenxuan 15:29
Yes, because when I study Media and Communication, there are a lot of series that come from China. There is a term called warm home, which is similar to English word to celebrities. So, we're talking about celebrities a lot in our courses. I think, all the Chinese students in our class, do a very great job because this is familiar for us. And we can develop the idea and to share our own culture during the classes. The tutors here are very, kind of different culture.

Victoria 16:17
It's quite a diverse community of students here, isn't it? And what does that, what does that offer?

Wenxuan 16:25
When I come here, I will feel like I'm a Chinese student, I do not like to speak as much. Maybe other students will think, oh, yeah, Chinese students are always very shy during the class. But what I find, is there is a lot of international students here. And some of my friends is from India, from Dubai, or Tanzania, they are not quite good at English as well. But they are not very shy to express themselves. So, like, in the end, I find your need to be confident during the class, and you need to be more creative, and be more creative to think about the questions and try to share with everyone.

Victoria 17:26
You've expressed some really important ideas, in a way that I understand very clearly and I'm sure other people will.

Wenxuan 17:37
Thank you.

Victoria 17:39
What are your plans moving forward? You're only in the first year, so you have two more years at least to go. What are your hopes? What do you want to achieve in the time that you're here?

Wenxuan 17:48
I'm now planning to have an internship during the summer holiday. I want to study and say, fashion industry, maybe the journalism, it's very hard for me to go back to China, there is no tickets available online. So I'm trying to find some things to do during my summer holiday that is helpful for my future career.

Victoria 18:22
And are your parents happy with how you're doing so far? Are they less worried?

Wenxuan 18:30
Yes, they are less worried because they're saying, I can do everything very well by myself and saying, oh, yeah, you're grown up. You're very independent. So, you can do it by yourself.

Victoria 18:45
Well, congratulations. And I wish you every success in the coming years.

Wenxuan 18:51
Thank you