

Report about our
Erasmus visit at Friedrich-Elvers-School, Heide, Germany
from 23. to 27. of September 2019

Together with our colleagues from Northern Ireland and Austria we arrived in time to our first “come together” at Friedrich-Elvers-School on Monday, 23.rd in Heide.

After the welcoming speech of the “Co-rector” from FES we got in an evaluation and reflection circle about the last projects after our visit in Heide last March. At the plenum we discussed how we could improve our communication, because the last project (letter-/communication tree) we took part in, is still in process. Of course it is difficult when colleagues involved in the project leave the school or stay in a long-term sick leave but the deadlines have to be respected. Otherwise the other colleagues had to complete a bigger part in the working process.

The leader of the Northern Irish colleagues, Mister Collum, gave us a clear view about the present working process and the further deadlines for the report to the Comenius authority to finalize this project after two years of school partnership between Northern Ireland, Germany and Austria.

He explained that the North Irish Team is going to develop a brand new Comenius project for another two years after this one will be completed. This time he wants to spread “communicate with us” also to East and South Europe (including school-partners in Poland, Spain and Ireland) and asked for our support. This point has to be clarified with the head principals of the German and Austrian schools before the project can be started.

The dinner took place at a wonderful restaurant in the centre of Heide so called “Wasserturm”, where the president of the district Dithmarschen Mrs. Ute Borwieck-Dethlefs gave us a warm welcome in the regional dialect of “Plattdeutsch”. This typical German dialect is mostly spoken in the northern districts of Germany (Schleswig-Holstein) near the border to Denmark and sounds a little bit amusing.

On the next day we traveled to the Eider-Nordsee-School in Hennstedt/Wesselburen <https://eider-nordsee-schule.de/> to visit a complete new and modern school building with “Laptop classes” for at least 300 pupils. The Laptops belong to the school are being used during the school lessons and are stored in several personalised slots. During the school lessons we noticed that the laptops are sometimes difficult to use especially for the pupils. Some of them are not able to use them in the right way. Sometimes they are not updated when the lesson starts. Other times the WiFi does not work or

they are not able to log in. In our opinion there are only two ways to implement or to use laptops in a meaningful way during a school lesson:

The teachers prepare their lesson very carefully and takes care that all Laptops are already updated, the WiFi works without any mayor errors, all pupils know, what they have to do to get the programmes started, ...

Or you use the Laptops only as a support for the regular school books, working papers and school supplies you normally use in your daily school routine.

Otherwise you lose a lot of valuable time and the pupils get bored too.

After lunch at the school Mensa where we got typical regional "Dithmarscher" meal we visited the art studio of Mr. George JONIETZ <http://www.thogde.org/jonietz/?Scheunengalerie>

As you can see on his website he is a regional sculptor and painter who works with iron, iron filings and iron dust. He also works in EFS as a teacher and helps the pupils to get in contact with arts and supports them to develop their own style of painting.

In the evening we were invited to a dance studio in Heide <http://www.theaterschule-heide.de/>, where we learned some kind of line and folk dance.

On Wednesday we drove to Witzwort (which in Translation means "joke-word"). <http://www.grundschule-witzwort.de/> A primary School with approximately 100 pupils in four classes (1st to 4th grade) and a brand new gym (after an fire accident). The principal welcomed us and all the pupils and teachers presented us their official school song combined with a little dance. In this school type we noticed the presence of additional personal so called "Schulassistentz" (school assistance). Their aim is to support the regular teachers in their lessons with pupils with special needs and social/emotional restrictions. (We were going to meet this kind of "support personal" on the next day in Tellingstedt again!)

In the afternoon we took part in some typical North German "Fungames" like "Ringreiten" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6l0Ye96JuUo> and "Klotstockspringen" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qaE0BiAC6uU> as you can see in this two YouTube videos.

On our last Day we visited a comprehensive school in Tellingstedt where pupils from the age of 6th to 15^{ten} (1st to 9th grade) are taught together in a big school complex with several classrooms and two big sports grounds around the school buildings. Here we met again with the school assistance and got informed that 69 pupils with special needs are among 600 students at this place. Only three teachers with a special education are able to teach them. For this reason they need the support of the school assistance to get along with the different challenge of the pupils with special needs.

At least we saw a lot of new approaches and methods by teaching pupils with special needs. We were able to discuss and talk over solutions, keys and new education forms with our colleagues from Northern Ireland and Germany. The school system and the educational problems that come with it do not seem so different in our countries and need a lot of money and support from the government and the authorities to get a long term success. Also the lack of teachers in all three countries is detectable and noticeable.