

It is not always rainy in Belfast!

Joyce G., January 2015



Auszüge aus dem Erlebnisbericht über den Studienaufenthalt in Belfast

Study and Work Experience

I have chosen the European and Irish History courses. The EU History was good for my learning, because I knew some of the topics already, and this course acted as kind of a repetition. However, Irish History was a totally new place for me, and I had to do some reading to understand the topics. But it was so interesting to get familiar with the past of Ireland and its collaboration with England. The class Divided Society gave me an insight into the situation of Northern Ireland. Moreover, I got a greater view about all the riots in the world, and we compared it with Northern Ireland as well. A great challenge was the presentation in English about the Somali Civil War, because it was hard to condense this huge issue into a ten minutes presentation. Nevertheless, I have to say it was a good practice for my future of teaching in English. For me, as an upcoming teacher, the most interesting classes were the music and the school based work courses. Actually, we had a lot of fun and practical experience in the music lessons, and I know now more songs and also teaching methods of music lessons. Here I have to say, it was similar with my music lesson at home, and I knew some things already, but it was nice to repeat that. Furthermore, I appreciated that I felt involved in the class with this active method of teaching, and I had good conversations with the native students. The School Based Work gave me an insight in the school system of Northern Ireland and allowed me to see the different ways of teaching. The school experience in December was so remarkable. The first visible difference between Switzerland and here is that the children are wearing school uniforms and the teachers'

dress is smart casual. The school is surrounded by a fence, and to get in the building I have to sign in and out in the reception. In my home, there are no receptions in the school and you can walk in without any registration. I was in a P3 class with 31 pupils, and that is in comparing with Switzerland a huge class in this age. It was so interesting to see the teaching methods, also the behaviour of the children. I often saw that the children are walking around, going to the toilet without asking, having their head on the table, sitting backwards on the chair and so on. Personally, I was kind of dazed to see that but here it is normal. Also watching movies and playing games are important for the pupils here. If it was bad weather, they had the opportunity to watch a movie in their classroom. In Switzerland is it something special to watch a DVD, and during the breaks you have to go out also in rainy weather.

The houses for the Erasmus students are very close to the school. Our house was only a three minute walk to St. Mary's University and a ten minutes walk to a shopping centre. That was really comfortable, and the other students lived next to our street and that was also very nice to keep in touch.

We were three Swiss guys and one girl from Kentucky. I appreciated the people of similar cultures living in the house, so we did not have any problems with cleaning, noise and purchases. Besides this, I really enjoyed every dinner together when we always spoke for hours and had such good conversations about God and the world. It was perfect to have 5

During the week or also at some weekends I stayed in Belfast. I have to say that I have never felt bored in this city. Belfast offers a lot of possibilities of pubs, restaurants, cinemas, churches, shops, markets, prison, castle, museums and more attractions. I tried to see everything of this city. In the North of Belfast are mountains which have to be climbed. In the first month we did a lot of hiking tours up to the top of the mountain, and it was great! For sure, there were some rainy days or evenings and I did not want to go out. If you also experience that here: Invite your friends to your home and cook together, watch a movie, play some board games or go for a drink to a close pub from your home, and you do not notice the rain outside.

I would recommend to everybody to take this opportunity to go for this adventure. That is something you will never forget and you will have experiences which bring you further in your personal growth. My expectations of my stay are fulfilled: I improved my English, met some new people from all over the world, got familiar with the school system of Northern Ireland, learned something about the history of Northern Ireland, travelled around and saw the country, did the Advanced Exam...and one more thing I learned after this three months: It is not always rainy in Belfast!