

## Spring 2019

In the spring term of the academic year of 2018-19 we launched our first International Erasmus + Semester at AVCC. We had five pre- and primary school teacher trainees from Ghent University. They were offered the following modules:

- Developing Intercultural Competences
- Storytelling and Drama
- Hungarian Culture and Education
- School Experience

### Developing Intercultural Competences

In the general multicultural environment Europe and the world is facing, intercultural dialogue is of cardinal importance. It is important to develop cross-cultural empathy and behavioural flexibility. And it is always interesting to learn about each other's customs, social behaviour and conventional norms.



The course included visits to Budapest (Heroes' Square, National Gallery), Révkomárom (Slovakia) and Csörög. Students also had the chance to attend guest lectures on intercultural dialogue and critical thinking. The project work focussed on culture shock and role models.



Meeting Hungarian students of English language and literature and their Head of Department, Andrea Puskás, at Selye János University, Révkomárom (Komarno, Slovakia)



Ice-breakers always come in handy... (Selye János University)



At Europe Place in Révkomárom



A visit to Csörög School for Children with Special Needs



At the school thirty children are taught by 4 permanent co-workers and 21 teenage volunteers



Developing basic competences is part of the complex personality development



Besides teaching, the school aims at helping socialization, career building, transmission of culture and community development

#### Storytelling and Drama

During the course students were taught to use different planning and analysis tools to discover the structure and the plot of stories, to be able to tell stories in an attractive and creative way. Visual prompts and accompanying actions make the story more memorable. The three key skills to storymaking were also taught. Project work included a preparation for a workshop at the International Week.



Storytelling and Drama – How to tell stories in a creative and attractive way?



Storytelling and Drama – preparing a Kamishibai theatre



Almost ready ...



Project work: preparation for the International Week

Storytelling and Drama – Workshop at the International Week:

“Green Peter” – Kamishibai, Shadow Play performances and story innovation in groups led by Erasmus students



The Shadow Play



Fun and team-building: making a story-map at the International Week workshop



## Hungarian Culture and Education

The course aimed at giving a comprehensive picture of Hungarian life, broadening the student's perspective and developing intercultural competences in a colourful, experience-based way. It included sightseeings in Vác and Budapest, visits to the National Museum (The History of Hungary), the National Theatre, to PIM Museum (Puppets and Tales), the Great Market Hall in Budapest, a Carnival at Újlaki Primary School (Budapest), and students tried Hungarian folk dance at Fonó, a Hungarian folk dance club. For the students' special request arts and crafts activities were also included.



Dancing “gyimesi” at Fonó

As a project activity, students wrote blogs about their experience in Hungary, here are some passages:

We like Vác a lot because it has a certain charm. In the winter there were not a lot of people here but when Spring arrived, the town was blooming. There were tourists everywhere and everybody was enjoying the sun. The Danube runs through this little town, you can walk along this big river and enjoy the pretty view. What's so spectacular about Vác is the architecture, the squares are very nice and there are a lot of beautiful churches.

The dorm was located nearby an impressive cathedral. If you walk around you see colorful houses, a lot of museums and bakeries and beautiful nature. A 5-minute walk from our school and you could wander next to the Danube. In summer you could take the boat to Budapest! Sadly, we had to take the train to go there but it is only 30 minutes away!

Typical Hungarian meals are the chimney (that you can easily find in the streets of Budapest), Goulash soup, lángos, paprika chicken, Túro Rudi... They also have certain drinks that are remarkable like Palinka, Unicum, Fröccs,.. Some of them we like, others we dislike.

When you're in Hungary you have to adjust to certain things. For us the biggest problem was money, we use Euro but in Hungary they use Forint. The prices of the food are cheap but the prices of the clothes are similar. Daily life in Hungary is cheap for Western-Europeans. We have to take the train to Budapest very often, a train ticket for students is about €1, it's about

30 minutes on the train. In Belgium the trains are much more expensive, for the same route it's at least €5.

We learned that Hungarian is one of the hardest languages to learn. The alphabet has way more letters than ours. We learned some words, like: asztal (table), baba (baby), cica (cat), doboz (doos), fa (boom), kutya (dog), lámpa (lamp), mama, óra (uur), zokni (sok), zsák (zak)... We also learned a short sentence: én Belga diák vagyok (I am a Belgium student). We also tried to learn the numbers, but they were too difficult.

In Budapest there was a lot to see for us. The Danube splits the city in two parts, the Buda and the Pest side. Let us start with the Buda side. When you climb up the hill there is the most beautiful view over the city. You can also go by bus or take the funicular. There you can also find The National Gallery. Inside there are a lot of beautiful art pieces, almost all of them are paintings. We really liked the stunning landscapes, for example The Poppy Field by Pal Merse Szinyei. In the lessons we learned some bits about the Hungarian art and painters. A Lanchid alapkoletetele by Miklos Barabas is also a very famous one. The longer you look at it the more interesting this piece becomes.

We went to a national museum with paintings. There we saw a lot of beautiful paintings by famous Hungarian painters. In the museum there were a lot of dark paintings, but we learned that they were painted with tar and that's why they get darker over the years. What we remember the most is the painting by Anna Margit (Fisherman) because we had to make our own version of the painting.

After we discovered Budapest several times, we wanted to see more of the country. So we started traveling, first we went to Szentendre. The small city, on the banks on the Danube. Without knowing we ended up at the annual Szentendre carnival party. Which meant loads of food trucks, and especially a lot of tourists. Despite the big amount of tourists, we enjoyed it. The colorful houses, and picturesque streets and – shops were worth it. When we planned on leaving, we even got to see a performance on the main square. There on a stage, a group of people was telling a story. Which was in Hungarian, so we could not understand it. However we could deduce it was a folktale, many parents knew the text by heart and we could hear a lot of repetition. Once again an example of the folk tale culture that lives in Hungary.

We had the luck to experience the national holiday (15th of March). Something new was celebrating the name days. They celebrate Catholic holidays in a very traditional way. For example on Easter Monday the boys sprinkle the girls with perfume or cold water, in return they get a beautiful painted egg. They eat traditional dishes on the holidays. Hungary has a similar version of Sinterklaas, here he's called Mikulás.

Something we found remarkable in Hungary are the typical dogs. They have very long hair and they look a bit funny. When we went to the zoo, we also saw a pig with sheep wool, that was very strange.

In a nutshell, we learned a lot about the Hungarian culture, but in that way, also a lot about our own culture. It was worth the effort to follow these lessons, because they helped us to understand the daily Hungarian life more.

... we learned a lot about the Hungarian culture. By visiting, learning, reading or hearing about it. So we understand better why in Hungary certain choices were made in the past, and are even made today. Furthermore we will never forget this enriching experience, and recommend it to anyone.



After seeing so many portraits at the National Gallery, students decided to draw one



'Every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist ...' (O. Wilde)

## School Experience

The module included lesson observations and teaching practice at pre- or primary schools. Different institutions were visited during the course: international, bilingual and average Hungarian (pre)schools. Here follows a short account about the school experience:

In Budapest we went to 5 different schools and later in the Erasmus program we taught there. There are a lot of similarities and differences with the education system in Belgium. The lessons in Hungary are shorter than in Belgium, they last 45 minutes, in some schools they can eat breakfast because school starts very early; they have 15 minute breaks after every lesson.

We liked the teaching very much and we learned a lot of new things like using a lot of games and they give a lot of positive feedback.



The primary teacher students were even shown on the local television channel...



The pre-school teacher students did a colourful circle time in Habakukk Kindergarten about how the flowers grow.



Pupils of neighbouring Karolina Primary School performing Sebastian the Dragon Slayer at the International Week



Sebastian the Dragon Slayer