



De Springplank

Pilgrimscourse Canterbury from the 25th October
Until the 30th of October 2009
Part of the lifelong learning program Comenius

Teachers:

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Target:

To improve our classroom English and to improve our teaching of a second language for the benefit of our pupils at our school.

Day one: Sunday the 25th

Depart from Holland:

On Sunday the 25th of October we met with our colleagues from the Boemerang at their school. We had arranged our transport to Schiphol ourselves so we travelled with a bus and a car.

At Gatwick we collected our pounds from the wall...and we were brought by a taxi bus to Canterbury. So far so good!

In Canterbury near Victoria West Station we had to wait for a little while for all the taxis to bring us to our host families. There was some confusion about our arrangements but on we went. We had a big laugh in the taxi because of our first meeting with the taxi driver:

"I've arrived at the address but the stupid woman is at the station because there wasn't enough room for her friend!"

We were all brought to different families and we all had to have our first introductions with our guest families at the front door. I saw one of our teachers laughing and standing nervously at the front door and we had to encourage her, "Come on, off you go!"

Some of us had a meal and a chat and after our trip a good night's sleep.

Day two: Monday the 26th

We met each other at 9.00 o'clock in front of the Pilgrims Training Centre, Mandy Briggs from Pilgrims spoke to us in a very friendly way and explained to us that it was strictly forbidden to speak any Dutch except in an emergency. After that we met our teacher: Mrs. Stefania Ballotto. During our course we decided that she was a very warm and intelligent teacher. We all went on to adore her!

She took us by the hand and taught us first of all: the principles of "The Amazing Teachers" and that was a good experience. She introduced us to a very nice song about friendships, actually she presented two songs to start your day with in the



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classroom. During this first day we learned about mind mapping and we received a lot of compliments about the way we spoke English! At lunchtime we met each other in the pub called Thomas Becket and we all ate something very English for lunch. During the afternoon we all felt a little bit tired because of all the new ideas, the clock being set back to wintertime and the time difference between our country and Great Britain. Instead we bravely sang our songs, did our breathing and relaxation exercises and all went well. We had a little play about the story of the three little pigs.

Later this afternoon we met a head teacher from a primary school who told us about the English school system and the way of testing their children. Results, that's what counts. They also have difficulties with behaviour with both children and parents. Parenting is a big problem and they started the project: Every child counts. In English schools most of the children have their lunches at school and the quality of the food has been improved.

After class when it became dark we had a guided tour by Mr. Martin, a former history teacher who has lived all his life in Canterbury. He showed us around the oldest buildings in the city centre. Some of us were so tired that we could only say: "It's really very impressive and beautiful but we can't take anything more in than a pint at the pub..."

Day three: Tuesday the 27th

Most of us spent a nice evening with our host families and some of us met up with each other at the pub. Class started with one of the super friends songs and then we were introduced to Multiple Intelligences in EFL. That will be good for our pupils at home because English is their second language. We learned how we can enrich our own teaching by systematically activating other intelligences in our lessons. Our teacher Mrs. Steffie explained to us, in a very practical way, how to use NLP. We sang, we danced we did relaxation exercises and above all, we spoke English. After lunch we met another teacher and she mimed us a story which took place in a library. After that we met a teacher who practices French as EFL. He showed us the possibilities of using ICT within the classroom and he showed us how small daily exercises with children can improve their knowledge with their second language.

After that we had a discussion about our plans for the next day and we all went to our families or to the pub.

Day four: Wednesday the 28th

Our teacher was ill with a cold and nervous about our plans to go shopping but she quickly motivated us, in a very impressive way, into feeling good about her teaching skills. She was marvelous.

She told us about a trip we could take. A trip by rowing boat.

During lunchtime some of us visited the very impressive Canterbury Cathedral. It is one of the biggest cathedrals in Great Britain. We saw the spot where Thomas Becket was killed... and we saw a lot of large shrines.

In the afternoon we learned about NLP and the different ways children can learn.

So after class we all went into the city centre to make a trip by boat with a very nice and handsome boatman called Ben. He showed us the river Stour and the buildings at each side of the river.

After that we shopped in the bookstores of Canterbury and bought a lot of books for our school at home. After shopping we all went to the pub and had a few laughs. We had to tell our host families that this was our last dinner with them because tomorrow we would all have a High Tea at Tiny Tims Tearoom.

Day five: Thursday the 29th High tea and saying good bye to our host families. Today we had a lot of exercises about NLP and the left and right parts of the brain. We were encouraged to do a lot of creative exercises with our pupils. The theory was not always easy but Mrs Steffie taught us it in a very amusing way: we sang, danced, listened, saw and felt... As teachers we give instructions but if we don't pay enough attention it can be in a negative way. We were also astonished about the strength of imagination, although almost all of us start the morning with motivating activities that helps our pupils learn more effectively: opening the minds, ears, eyes and heart. We had a very short lunch break and after that we had a nice performance of a book: a spider...aaaahh! We had a great show by Mrs. Steffie! We were impressed by her acting talent. Then we went to the tearoom for our high tea. It was heavy and it felt like a brick in your tummy... But after that we spent our money on books! We bought so many lovely picture books and we felt as though we were Sinterklaas! Unluckily for us the shops closed earlier than we expected so we all went to the pub for a pint and we admired our books and the things that we had all learned today.

Day six: Friday the 30th

We all brought our suitcases into the Pilgrim building. We were all afraid of being overweight, our suitcases were filled up with English picture books and storytelling books for the pupils. We also had typically English souvenirs such as postcards, pencils and mugs that we had bought for our classrooms ,they made our suitcases very heavy indeed.

Our last morning with Mrs. Steffie she could not stop teaching and advising and singing with us. She was still coughing and sneezing but on she went singing Good Morning To Our Friends. We huffed, and puffed and we had lots of laughs too. We made a big spider web with silver thread. Mrs Steffy took a pair of scissors and gave us all a little part of the web. We had a nice exercise of writing down a positive line about each one of us. We filled in a form with feedback and Steffie asked us to tell her anything that might be helpful to improve her teaching for Pilgrims: we couldn't give her anything except: Keep this teacher. At ten past two, she finally let us out for lunch and to spend our last few coins and pounds...

At three o'clock we said good bye to her with a big hug and we got our certificate from the course. We were driven to Gatwick Airport near London. Our taxi bus driver let us out near the wrong gate so we had to take the bus. Our flight was delayed and so we arrived very late in Zevenbergen. We were all at home after midnight but it was worth it! We enjoyed our stay and respected the way we were trained by our Mrs Steffie!