

Why did I want to study abroad?



When I was studying entrepreneurship and design (E-design), many of my fellow students wanted to try and study abroad. I thought it could be fun but I wasn't mentally ready, because I had just started a relationship and moved into an apartment with that boyfriend. However, when my classmates came home from their exchange and told us about their amazing experiments and what they had learned, I regretted not going.

After I finished my education at E-design, I applied for a spot on Design and Business and got accepted. By getting accepted there, I had a new opportunity to go on exchange. I decided to join the meetings and I learned that many students have good experiences, they learn a lot and develop new friendships with other students from all over Europe. As a bonus, I thought it would look good on my resume, that I've been studying abroad a semester and it could possibly increase my chances for an international job in the future. I furthermore thought that it could be a personal experience, where I would learn to leave my comfort zone and challenge myself.

My exchange experience

Before the exchange, getting the practicalities done

I wanted to study graphic design and I originally wanted to apply for an exchange in Italy, Milano. However, my coordinator said that the spots had already been taken, but a new university which also had a graphic design focus was just added to their list: Ramon Llull University - ESDi in Spain. I got accepted as an exchange students at ESDi from 31.01.2020-10.07.2020.

The process of applying for an exchange spot was quite easy. My home university coordinator guided me through the process with the exchange program applications and answers all my questions and so did ESDi.

The exchange grants 30 ECTS points in total, however I had a course back at KEA, which gave me 5 ECTS points and therefore I only needed 25 points.

ESDi send us an academic course folder with the courses available for the courses in both Spanish and English. I filled out their form with English courses, which had a creative focus such as graphic design, concept, project and product development, drawing and a more theoretical focus course which was a business course.

During my exchange

Once at ESDi, every exchange student had to change their courses because those we have picked were within the same timeframe. I changed my courses but they were still with the same focus of creativity and business and I had 7 courses in total:

1: Business 1: Organization and Processes:

The business course was divided into two elements:

- * A Business Model Canvas, where we had to apply the canvas for a company to analyze it and its competitors.

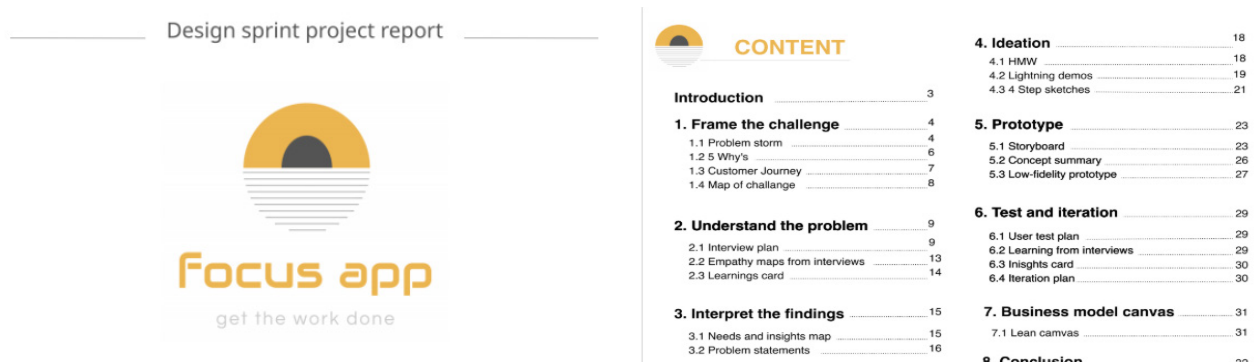
- * A Design Sprint, for a product we had to come up with.

We were working in teams through out these courses, expect for one assignments to proof we could use the BMC ourselves.

Examples of our Business Model Canvas report



Examples of our Design Sprint report



2: Profession Ethics

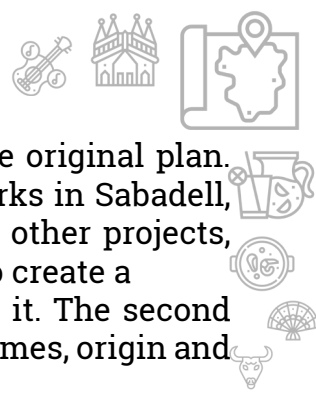
Was a course about how we as designers have to be aware of how we can affect the world and how we can design sustainable to help protect our world. Based on sustainable advocates, researchers and designers, we were to take products and change them to more sustainable solutions. Keeping both the design and effectivity in mind. This course was to reflect on the design and the world.

3: Comprehensive Project

Was to develop a product based on trends. What we had to do was pick one of five trends for 2020, pick a company and develop a product for or around it.

During the development, we were introduced to many different creative and user experiences assignments, to develop the product in depth.

Based on the Trend "Burn out" and "Spotify" my team and I developed an app to help the individual user reduce stress and increase their mental health. <https://bit.ly/3hb9iFB>



4: Projects 1

Sadly due to the pandemic this course had to change, so it didn't follow the original plan. There were three parts of this course, the first was to do a project for the parks in Sabadell, however due to the pandemic, this idea couldn't be used. We then had two other projects, which was based on graphic design and audiovisuals. The first project was to create a concept based on 18 words and create something creative graphically with it. The second second project was to create an identity for a TC channel, come up with the names, origin and audiovisuals.

First project: This was my idea for the first concept based on the 18 words

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xk-KGJVZM-4>

Second project: My project partner and I decided to create a nice cozy and homy channel, which would focus on not losing hope and enjoying the time with your family during the pandemic.



Index

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The guidelines
- 1.2 Channel mission
- 1.3 Story

2. tone of voice

3. Off air guidelines

- 3.1.1 Visual style
- 3.1.2 The logo: brandmark
- 3.1.3 Logo size
- 3.1.4 Logo position
- 3.1.5 Isolation area
- 3.1.6 Misuse
- 3.1.7 Tagline
- 3.1.8 DOG
- 3.1.9 Typography
- 3.1.10 Colors
- 3.1.11 Imagery



5: Book and presentation

This course was about creating an online portfolio for your projects (past or new projects, it was on you), register these projects on creative websites such as Behance or Dribbble and create a PDF with your CV along with the projects.

Links to my new online portfolio and behance.

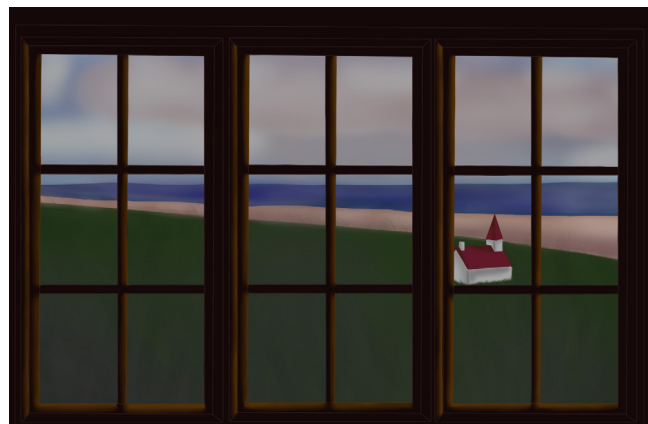
<https://katrineglemb.wixsite.com/portfoliokgl>

<https://www.behance.net/katrinelemb>

6: Representative Drawing

Was a drawing course, where we had to study different artists and use their techniques for our own drawing projects. For this course we had to buy materials to use for drawings, however due to the pandemic I didn't get to use them but I used the materials and art supplies I already had at my house.

Examples of drawing inspired by the artists Andrew Wyeth and Edward Hopper, with their ways of representing "thought" windows, doors, curtains and glass.



7: From Theory to Workshop

A course based on understanding different artists, see how materials and your creativity can work and combining them into a creative product. This course was a little tricky, because you had to think deeper than just what the materials were but how you could combine it for the most effective effect and the display it properly.

Examples of two different projects

Link to second project: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_5P9Q1U89M

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oMMo-txCvQc>



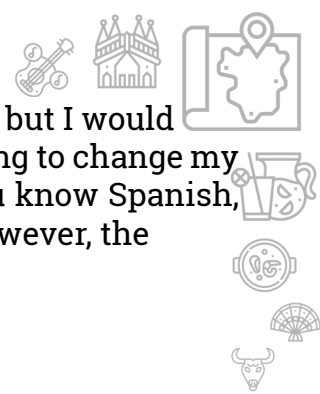
Academic Experience

Like stated earlier, when we arrived at the ESDi we all had to change our courses to match the timeframe. The way we had to pick our courses wasn't properly explained and it gave you a very limited selection of courses because you had to check both time and which day of the week the course was set at. And if you didn't understand Spanish, you had even more limitations, because you had to pick a small handful of courses in English. I only needed 25 ECTS points, so I could match it up with the timeframe. But due to the small selection, there wasn't many courses which matched my current education at KEA and those which did were in Spanish.

I wished that the administration at ESDi had been as effective during the exchange as before the exchange.

The courses I found most beneficial for me was course 1-5 (read above), because they were the ones which were the closest to my education at KEA, which concept, product development and graphic design/audiovisuals. I felt I had a lot of creative freedom for these courses and the teachers did their best to guide us in our development. The last two didn't fit much and I feel like they were topics I could have done as a hobby and sadly these were the only courses which fit the other courses I had picked and was in English.

If I was to sum up my overall academic experience on ESDi, I would say that I feel like there wasn't much the university has taught me and we were mainly doing a lot of self study. I also don't feel like the academic level can be compared to KEA. The courses which were at the same level was the Business 1, Comprehensive Project and Profession Ethics. That being said, I've learned to work in teams with people from different cultures, work morals and with a language barrier. For me, this has been a nice experience and a great challenge for myself.



I don't know which courses will be available for the next exchange students, but I would recommend the 5 first courses I had. The last 2 courses did help me with trying to change my creative thinking, but like I said, I feel like they were on a hobby level. If you know Spanish, you could always try the Spanish courses, I didn't try any of them myself, however, the exchange students who knew Spanish were pleased with them.

Traveling in Spain

Spain got monthly travelcards which can be used for every public transport which can be brought at every station in the ticket machines and with living in Barcelona and studying in Sabadell this seemed like a good opportunity. Sabadell is in zone two and the month card with two zones is 53 Euro and their 3 months card is 100Euro, so you would save around 50 Euro if you got the 3 months card.

Cultural and personal experience

This was the very first time I was traveling alone and I've to admit, I was very anxious when I entered the airport and said goodbye to my family. But I knew I wasn't going to be alone, because I had arranged with one of the other exchange students from KEA that we were going to be roommates in Spain. We had decided to get an AirBnb the first few days and we then planned find accommodation when we were down there. ESDi's administration had provided us with websites we could use to find accommodation, such as Idealista and Spotahome but we sadly experienced a scam when we used Spotahome, but I luckily got all the money refunded. We found an apartment in via AB Apartments Barcelona, given they only rent apartments for half a year we managed to make an agreement with them and we got a three room apartments in Barcelonetta.

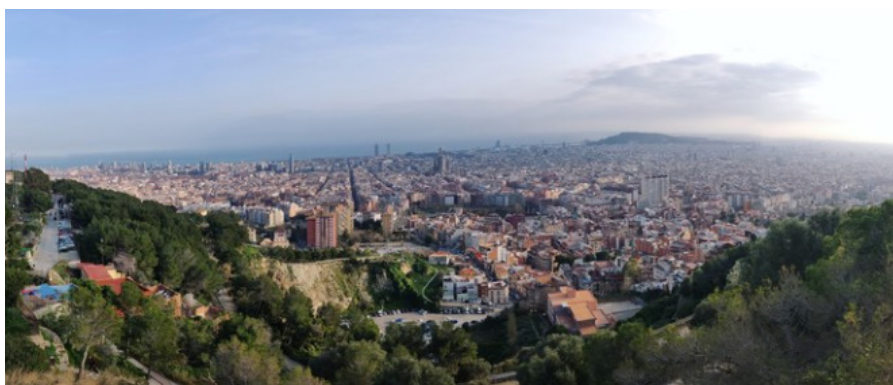
Looking at this budget wise, it was a little expensive due to the fact that in we had to pay an agency fee to get in contact with the landlord but we learned from the other exchange students that they had to pay a fee as well for their apartments. I ended up paying the Agency fee + 3 months deposit, which was my entire Erasmus Grand. But I'm a Danish citizen so I get SU, so I calculated I had enough money for rent, food and goofing off in Barcelona. I also had a bit of savings, so if anything happened I would be able to pay for it. I would say that was quite hard to find a place to stay, luckily we were two people so we could share the rent and we didn't had to reply on others. In the end, it actually evened up nicely moneywise, being a student I know how to make the most out of a little.

The coordinators at ESDi made use to give us a tour of Barcelona and introduce us to the other local students.

I think that the biggest challenge I experienced was the language barrier. Many of the people in Barcelona doesn't feel comfortable with the language English, which provided a few misunderstandings when we were ordering food at restaurants or when we trying to get additional information from the university's administration. It also sadly affected a lot of the social interactions we had with the Spanish students and even some of the exchange students. We were told that by some of the students, that some of the students didn't feel comfortable speaking in English. It resulted in the the English speaking exchange students got a stronger bond and we ended up doing many things together.

Coming down to Spain, my roommate and I only knew each other, however, we forced usself to speak with the other exchange students and we became a tiny group of six girls from Finland, Germany, France, Croatia, Netherlands and Denmark.

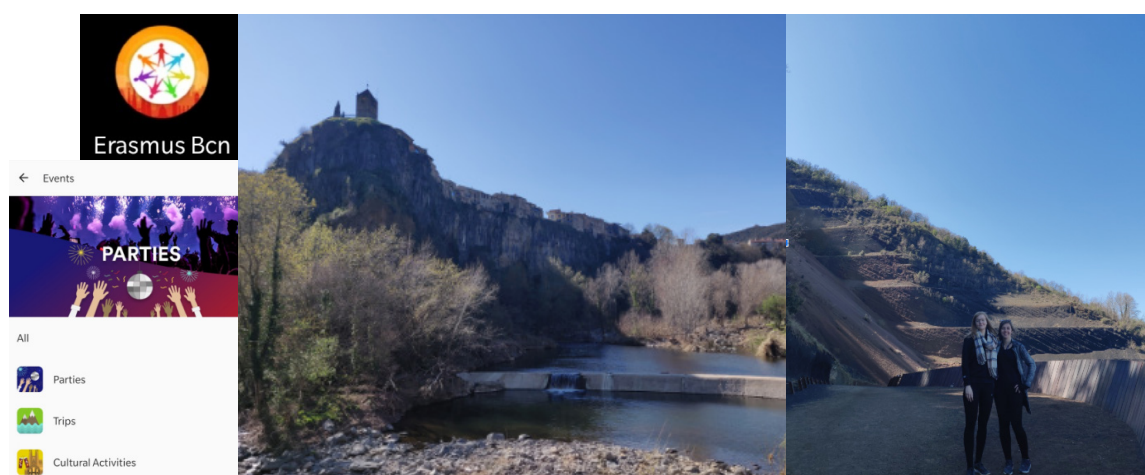
The girl from Germany had been in Spain working two years earlier, so she knew some local activities which we could do together - like playing volleyball with many different people at the beach in Barceloneta. She also showed us many nice places to hang out in town and a viewpoint to see the entire city.

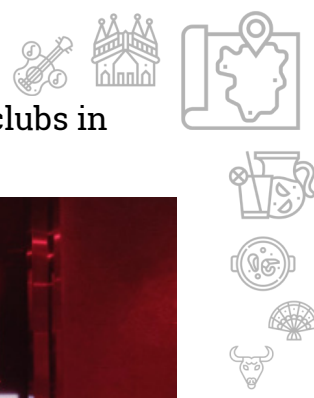


We also went out to some of the local Spanish restaurants and bars, where we had some amazing food, for very cheap prices and even cheaper drinks. Spain just know how to make every meal delicious!



The other exchange students also knew of an app called Erasmus BCN, which provided us with many events, parties and other social activities which we could join. Only some of the events and parties were free, but given we were Erasmus exchange students, we got many things with a big discount. Sometimes you had to keep an eye out for any discounts, because are time limited. I joined two of the trips via the Erasmus BCN app, it was worth the cultural experience.





When we used the app we were able to get into some of the most expensive clubs in Barcelona with many other exchange students - for free.



During the time I was at exchange, Spain had many holidays and we got the amazing experience to see the Carnival in Stiges with their parade.



My brother was the only one who made it down to Spain for a visit before Spain closed down. We played tourists and went on a lot of sightseen. We found a tour inside and out of Sagrada Familia and we got tickets to see Park Güell. And every evening we went to have tapas at some of the local restaurants in the gothic area.



As a conclusion, I can say that I've experienced a lot of personal development leaving to study abroad for a semester, even if it was only for a six weeks due to the pandemic. Not all of my academical expectations were met, but what I lacked in study, I got in cultural experience. I had to travel alone, find a place to stay, study and buy my own food in a country far from home. Personally I am a quiet girl, but I feel like this experiences has made me even more independent, by pushing me to leave my comfort zone, by reaching out to the other students before I left for Spain and joining many of the social activities and parties with the other exchange students and locals.

If you want to study abroad in Spain but don't want to be alone, you can try to ask your coordinator if there are any other students going to the same university as you and you can try to arrange a meeting with them. Or you could try to find a roommate via Spotahome, some of the other exchanges used that site to get accommodation - I believe I was just unlucky to find a scammer but it can happen on almost every website now a days.

And don't be afraid of cockroaches... Because they are everywhere.