



Fontys

Academy for
Creative Industries

Exchange Report



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Introduction

My exchange experience started in the beginning of this year 2017. I finished my exams at KEA in the beginning of January and I left Copenhagen two days before introduction week in Tilburg. The school I attended is called Fontys Academy for Creative Industries. It is part of Fontys University complex based in Eindhoven. For dutchies, Tilburg is a pretty big city but I didn't think of it as big. I liked it though, it was nice to live there for 6 months and get familiar with the places it had to offer. It's known as student village here so there is a lot going on in nights and weekends. Actually I realized that I see more people in the city in the night than during a day time. Many students and even more internationals makes the city really interesting. The city itself I recommend to everyone who loves good but not too crowded social life, nice parks where you can relax or study and access to water which is necessity in the summer. Last weeks in Tilburg were crazy with the weather. It was as high as 35 degrees but sometimes randomly it started to rain for 2 min and then sun came out again. The climate here is unexplainable. Someone could familiarize it with danish weather at some point. I chose to go abroad to the Netherlands because I have heard all good stories about the country, culture and people. Many of my friends were there for vacation, work or school and most of them enjoyed their stay no matter what was the purpose of it. My only chance to go abroad was 2nd semester because 1st semester I had to attend to KEA and 3rd semester I am doing internship and bachelor project. Actually lately I got an internship in digital company based in Amsterdam which means my adventure with the Netherlands is not over yet. And I will be living in the capital city. Wish me luck, but now back to the business. Next pages will describe my whole exchange experience which I count as the most valuable time I could ever have. I have met many people and I am sure that I will keep in touch with them because I cant imagine life without them.



Academic Experience

At KEA I attend bachelor top up Digital Concept Development and in Tilburg I chose to study ten different courses each counting for 3 ECTS. The thing with the choice was that I was able to choose either a program with a minor which has set up courses or choose advanced courses that could be arranged individually. I chose those because I wanted to study something that I wouldn't be able to study at KEA. Each advanced course lecturer expects some basic knowledge of the subject from each student. It's not a mandatory thing but it's recommended so it's easier at later stage when it's a project or exam. The semester is divided into two parts called periods. Each advanced course consists of 6 classes and I was able to have only one course a day, so for each period I had 5 classes that were around 3h long. During first period I chose to have strategic communication management where I had to write a paper on real life problem and strategic advice for the chosen company. During classes, the lecturer explained different parts of the paper and what is expected from students. Next course I chose was applied research that led to exam. The course was in general how to hold proper research and how to use it in the projects. The exam checked the ability of analysing different sources and finding different elements included in the source. Another course I took was future research and trend watching. The course was about possible future trends that will be able to change the world we know now. The final of the course was a project based on steep analysis of chosen area of interest and individual part connected to the analysis. Diffusion of innovation was my fourth choice where the subject was explained in depth. Also here the final paper was expected from each student on diffusion of newly released or not yet released product or service. Last course I took was online psychology and neuromarketing. It was about consumer behaviour in general but based on online market. The project was to hold A/B test and analyse the results. It was a group project. During that course we learned to use SPSS software which was a bit of a struggle if you never had experience in using it. All those courses I took were in first period of my exchange. In the second period I took business model innovation that was based on writing a group report where we had to come up with new business idea within creative industries and make a realistic business plan for it. Next course was concepting that was based on creating new concept for already existing company. Third course was called ethics and it gave me the basic knowledge of ethics that was later on checked during multiple choice exam. The next one was consumer behaviour that was similar to online psychology but this time it was based on all markets not only online. Also A/B test had to be done and group report had to be written. Last course I took was even management. It gave me the basics in the even industry and explanation how event management can be used in different ways. The grade was a result of an exam where you had to think logically. It was not about theories and what is what but the application of the theories in different situations and explaining how and why it's the best possible way.

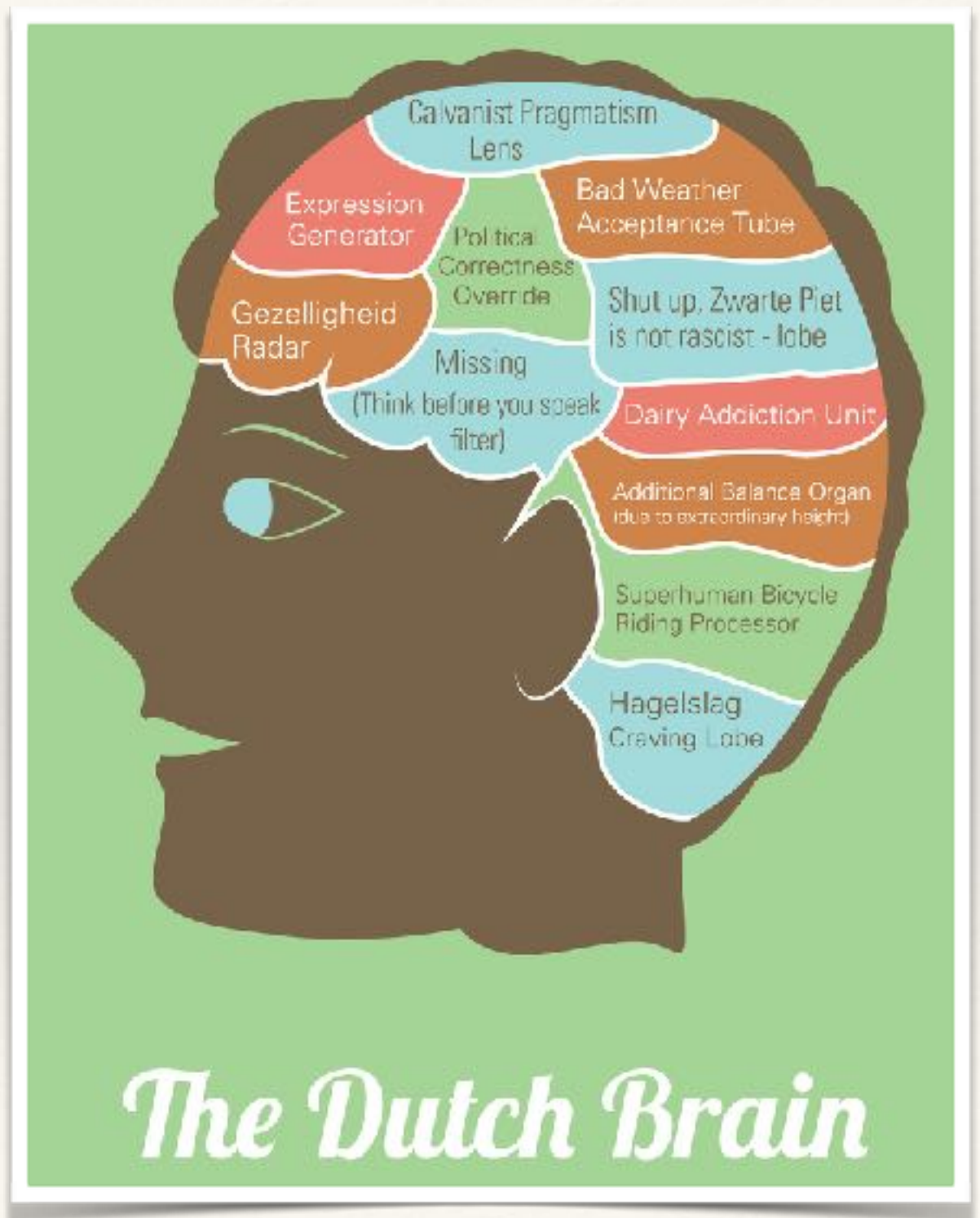
Academic Experience

Fontys was very helpful to exchange students. They sent me study guides with all the possible programs and courses I could choose. My coordinator was also replying very fast when I mailed her. The best classes I took and enjoyed the most were online psychology, strategic communication, business model innovation and event management. Those were my areas of interests so I looked forward to know more about the subjects. The useful one was applied research because it gave me deeper knowledge how to handle research for my future bachelor project. Concepting was also good to have because it is my area of study and this course helped me to understand what's behind the conceptual thinking. However there were course that were cancelled too many times (event, business model innovation) or the teacher didn't seem to have competences to have classes in English (concepting). I would advice all the classes that I described before which I enjoyed the most.



Cultural Experience

When it comes to culture... I love it! Every part of it. People are straight forward, open minded and friendly. Many internationals make the cities even more interesting. Dutch cheese, Amsterdam canals, tulips at Keukenhof- everything was lifetime experience. During my exchange I did not only learn about dutch culture but also about other countries that other exchange students came from. I think I learned more Spanish words than dutch but it was because I found so many Spanish speaking friends here. The school organised two trips, one to Brugge in Belgium. The village looks like taken from a fairytale. We had chance to see how Belgian beer is brewed and eat Belgian waffles and fries. All of those were delicious. Second trip was to Efteling which is amusement park, the oldest in the Netherlands and Benelux. It also look like a fairytale and each attraction has its own story to show so while waiting in a queue you can see and listen to the story which makes the waiting time go faster than expected. Both trips were amazing and worth a visit. I recommend both places to see. Of course, if you go to the Netherlands for exchange, it is a must to visit Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Den Hague, Utrecht and Maastricht. Amsterdam as a capital city it has a lot to offer. I totally recommend to go to strict city centre where you see all the canals, uneven houses that are the icons of Amsterdam. Lately avocado restaurant (The Avocado Show) opened so if you are a avocado lover it is a must to visit it. Rotterdam has amazing architecture and everything is so different there. It does not seem like that typical dutch city. Den Hague has amazing beach that has to be seen. Its huge, long and wide with awesome sand and surroundings. Utrecht and Maastricht are smaller cities but they also have that atmosphere you will remember. It's cosy there and nice. Perfect place to go for a lunch or little shopping. I didn't go up north the country but I hear it is also nice to see. Before moving here, download WhatsApp because its the main communicator here and when I didn't have t for first few days people looked at me strange. English level is very high here, even higher than in Denmark so it won't be a problem to communicate with people but good advice is to learn at least some words that you can use in daily life like thank you, you're welcome, I am sorry etc. Then people look at you differently, they know you don't know the language but they appreciate the effort you take to use some of the language. Similar to Denmark, the Netherlands has high number of bikes. You need to get one as soon as possible. Everyone travels by bike in the cities and they won't wait for you if you prefer to take a bus or taxi. ESN organisation was my first place to attend where I met many new people that later I spent time with. Going out to the city also is a good idea to meet new people, because come on you don't want to know only your exchange group right?



Practical Experience

Application process was simple and smooth. I did not have any issues with the platform in general. If I had any inquiries I mailed my coordinator or teacher that were very helpful and fast replying during the process. The host university was also very helpful when it came to settling down. The school works in collaboration with student housing but the places available are limited for exchange students so not everyone could get it. I got it and I can say that the house was good, nothing luxurious but the price was too high comparing to the quality. However, the student housing provided a bike which was a must here, phone SIM card, travel card, ESN membership, pick up from the airport, furnitures and cleaning service every two weeks. And the rental period is fixed for 6 months. I landed in Eindhoven airport from Copenhagen and I got picked up by one of the workers from that student housing company. This was very convenient because I had huge suitcase and otherwise I would have to take a bus and train to get to Tilburg. They do not drive you back to the airport by the end of the stay when obviously you have more luggage than when coming back so I consider that as a minus. If someone tries to find accommodation on their own, Facebook is the best place to start your search. Many people have their rooms available for 6 months because everyone here goes on exchange at some point. And most importantly it would be cheaper than renting a room in student housing that school collaborates with. If I had second chance I would take that risk and look for a room on my own. I travelled a lot during my exchange around the Netherlands and I have to admit that public transport is very expensive and not always reliable because there are many delays especially when it comes to trains. I spent a lot of money on eating in the city and going out. I did not expect that but it was just easier and faster to go to a restaurant and order food than stand in the kitchen and cook yourself. At the same time in the restaurant you were able to meet friends and it was the main reason I ate a lot outside my house.



Conclusion

In general I am very happy I came to the Netherlands. It was the best time and I met people that now I can't imagine to live without. The whole exchange was lifetime experience. Maybe it was not that far away and it was still Europe but it was totally worth it. I found out that that's the place that I want to live later. I love everything about the country, people and culture. Soon I wanna learn the language as well. If you have the chance to go abroad, DO IT! It's the best thing you will ever get. No matter where, you will enjoy it to the fullest because it is all about the people and curiosity of new place! On the next pages I add some pictures from my exchange with amazing people I met there. Enjoy.















