

My name is Pedro de Andrés and I am a teacher of English at MM Concepcionistas School in Segovia (Spain).

I have visited Alta (Norway) as a visiting teacher recently, from February 11th-25th as part of the Erasmus + Exchange programme that four schools from different countries (France, Poland, Norway and Spain) are doing together, working on Immigration and Refugees.

As a teacher of English, I strongly believe in this kind of programmes as they reinforce the European identity and at the same time they contribute to create a better world. First of all, we must consider that we live in a globalized world, which means that borders are disappearing and societies are becoming more and more cosmopolitan. We speak of the European economy in a natural way, and trust in common laws that protect the European citizens. Needless to say, education cannot be apart from this evolution.

We are used to seeing how groups of students travel to different countries in Europe and America, not just to learn a new language, but a different culture. In fact, many students in Europe have visited other countries as part of their education and shared their own culture with other families. That is why I consider that, in the same way, teachers must do something similar as part of their tuition, one which never ends along their career.

Personally, travelling to Alta was a personal and profesional challenge. I arrived here on February 11th and started classes at Alta Videregaende skole on Feb 12th. I attended several English lessons with different teachers and tried to learn new teaching techniques, a new methodology that could be useful when I come back to my school in Spain. To be honest, teachers were all very kind, patient and helpful, providing me information about what they were doing at that moment and the time planning for the activities,...They even let me help in an active way and I could interact with the students in several lessons. In the same way, I used to tell them how we usually do things in Spain and that way we could establish a comparison.

I think the experience has been enriching for both parts.

I could realise that teachers have basically the same problems in both countries, like students' demotivation or problems associated with new technologies. However, I could see that students in Alta have more technology in the classrooms than what we have in Segovia, although things are changing little by little. Also, there is a general feeling of peace and quietness in the classes and common spaces which helps students to be relaxed, and that way it results in more concentration during the lessons. I have a feeling that teachers are very flexible and adaptable, and that helps to reduce stress.

My visit would be incomplete if I hadn't socialized with the community here. In my free time I could admire the culture of Northern Norway. I have walked on ice and snow for many kilometers, visited places on my own and eaten local food. But to be honest, teachers were always looking forward to giving you a helping hand when needed. Guiding me to do some activities which are a must when coming to Alta, like admiring the Northern Lights or visiting an Ice Hotel. But the best thing has been sharing moments together at their place with their families.