

Erasmus+ project
Intensive English Course and a CLIL course for Teachers
at ULearn English School
Dublin 14-20 October 2018.

I'm Maria Michela Spiriti and I'm a teacher of Science in Machiavelli Lyceum, Florence.

In October 2018 I took part in Erasmus+. Thanks to this European project, I spent a week in Dublin where I attended an intensive English course in the morning and a CLIL methodology course in the afternoon.

I stayed in a house in a Dublin suburb with a typical Dubliner family and other students. Unfortunately, at dinner, we didn't eat together so I didn't have many interactions with my host family, but I spent one evening talking with a young Indian student who lived in that house and who had just moved in Dublin to attend University. She told me a lot about Indian schools. The house was too far away from the city center and from the school and, also due to the traffic, it generally took me about one hour by bus to get to school, so I had to wake up quite early. Fortunately, I had a very nice and funny teacher so, despite all, I really enjoyed going to school in the morning and this accommodation made me feel a "young" student again.

The school was in the centre of the city in a typical Georgian building of the 19th century.



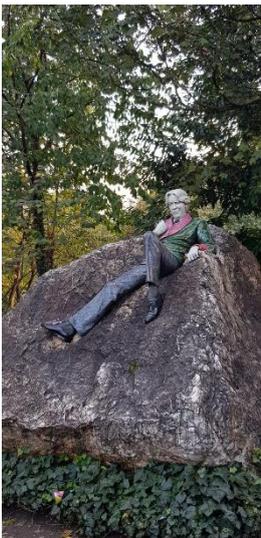
Typical Georgian buildings in the Dublin centre.

The English course helped me to improve my language skills and, even if it lasted only a week, at the end of it my English was, certainly, more fluent. What I really liked was that, during the course, I spoke with a lot of people from all over the world; some of them had moved in Dublin for work, others were only there to improve their English and only three of

them were European teachers taking part in the Erasmus+ project like me. My nice and funny teacher made my learning easier, but it was hard to come back home and do my homeworks.

In the afternoon I attended a CLIL methodology course with a very nice and competent teacher, Roisin. During the afternoon course I met other teachers coming from all over Europe. That was a very interesting experience. We manage to compare our school system and methodologies. Roisin taught us a lot of new methods to involve our students during our lessons and she even taught us some Gaelic words. At the end of the course we received a certificate.

During the week the school organized a very interesting guided walking tour of Dublin city center. We visited the park where Oscar Wilde used to go to walk just in front of his house, where now you can find his statue. Our guide told us a lot of anecdotes of Dublin and a really enjoyed the tour.



Oscar Wilde statue and his house, under restyling.

During the afternoon as soon as I had some time, I visited the most important Dublin Museums. I really liked the Natural History museum. It's a small museum that encompasses outstanding examples of wildlife from Ireland and the far corners of the globe, some to be seen today and others long extinct including a complete Dodo skeleton and a very rare Tasmanian wolf prepared as a mounted taxidermy specimen.



Tasmanian wolf (*Thylacinus cynocephalus*) and the Dodo (*Raphus cucullatus*) skeleton.

The most astonishing room of the museum is in the ground floor, where there are displayed Irish animals, and here you can admire the notably skeletons of giant Irish deer. The Irish elk (*Megaloceros giganteus*) or Irish giant deer, is an extinct species and is one of the largest deer that ever lived. The Irish elk lived in Ireland in the Pleistocene epoch between 11,750 BP and 10,950 BP.



The Irish elk (*Megaloceros giganteus*) or Irish giant deer.

At the end of the week the school planned a day trip to the Giant's Causeway and I went there with many other European teachers that were attending another Erasmus+ course on the use of new technologies in teaching. As a teacher of Science I also teach Geology and I really enjoyed visiting this site that I had only seen in my books as perfect examples of basaltic columns generated from volcanic activity.



Giant's Causeway

I'm very happy that I have been involved in this experience. I think that it has been very useful to improve my teacher's skills and it allowed me to compare my teaching methodologies and my school system with the one of my European colleagues. What about my English skills? I still have to work hard!