***Ultimate Utrecht - a foreign internship for KPPP students!***

Petra Tabáková is a third-year student at the Faculty of Education studying pre-school education while working in a pre-school in Holešovice. Below is her report of an Erasmus internship she experienced in her second year of studies at the department of Pre-primary and Primary Education.

For one week in May I had the amazing opportunity to join a group of my university colleagues who were travelling to Utrecht in the Netherlands for an internship abroad. The experience was truly mind-blowing and even though it was my first internship, the entire process was surprisingly simple. All it took was buying a plane ticket, arranging accommodation with my colleagues for four days, and we were ready to go. What excited me the most about this opportunity was that I had been thinking about drawing inspiration from foreign education systems, especially as I am studying pre-school education. Although I have been working in a pre-school for several years, I felt I needed a broader "out of the box" perspective.

The Dutch students at [Marnix Academie](https://www.marnixacademie.nl/international) in Utrecht were studying to be primary school teachers and they welcomed us with open arms and incredible enthusiasm. Everything was perfectly organised, and the atmosphere was unbelievably friendly. The Dutch education system is fascinating and there are many differences from the Czech system for example, there are interactive whiteboards in every classroom. The teachers and student teachers are passionate and dedicated to their work, and one of the most striking differences was that the youngest children in school do not take naps during the day or change their shoes when entering the school. The classes are smaller, and in most schools, meals are not provided because children bring their lunches from home. Differentiation in education is at an excellent level in the Netherlands, which was incredibly inspiring.

What truly stood out was the innovative teaching methods and the emphasis on practical learning for example, during our visit we observed a lesson where children were actively engaged in a project-based learning activity. The children were divided into small groups and given a real-world problem to solve and the level of engagement and enthusiasm from the students was palpable. This approach not only encourages critical thinking but also fosters teamwork and creativity and I observed technology in each classroom as students had access to tablets, laptops, and digital tools not just for teaching, but also for assessments and feedback. Digital literacy is something I believe is crucial for the future and an area where the Czech education system could take some inspiration. Another aspect that impressed me was the relationship between teachers and students as there was a noticeable level of mutual respect and understanding. Teachers acted more as guides and facilitators rather than traditional authority figures which created a more relaxed and open learning environment where students felt comfortable expressing their ideas and asking questions. Outside the classroom, the support system for students was robust. We had the chance to interact with school counsellors and special education coordinators who work closely with teachers to ensure that every student's needs are met. This inclusive approach ensures that no child is left behind, and everyone receives the support they need to succeed.

Our stay in the Netherlands was not only educational but also culturally enriching. We had time to explore the local area, visit museums, experience local customs and people were always ready to help us navigate our way around. Every moment was unforgettable and full of new insights and the internship provided me with a new perspective on education and will certainly influence my approach to teaching. I highly recommend every student take advantage of international internships and broaden their horizons because it is a fantastic way to get inspired and gain invaluable experiences. I am excited to implement some new and innovative strategies in my classroom and share my experiences with my colleagues back home. My time at Marnix Academie was not just an internship but a transformative experience that has left a lasting impact on my educational journey and enriched both my personal and professional life.

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