

## SED6029 Final Report

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Although I have come back to Hong Kong for over a month already, it still feels like a dream that I have actually lived in a foreign country for three and a half months – it is surely not long enough, but it is not short either – just right for a taste of studying abroad and stepping out of my comfort zone.

It wasn't easy to make up my mind deciding to join the Erasmus programme. It was really attractive to me because I felt like this was the last chance to go on an exchange programme before graduation, and even; it was heavily subsidized by the university! But at the same time, the cost I have to pay was delaying my graduation, which I could not attend the graduation ceremony with my classmates and friends whom I have fought together with during all the hard times in these two years; and also risking my future career path as I have done all my practicum blocks and my clinical skills may gradually turn rusty; plus earning not as much as a full time speech therapist during the gap time in between completion of all courses in EdUHK in July and coming back to Hong Kong after this exchange programme in late December. However, life is short and I realized I shall grab this opportunity to start a new chapter.



I am so glad that I did not miss it because it was really worth it! We studied in Antwerp in Belgium but I have never imagined that I could meet friends from all over the world: Portugal, Spain, Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, and of course Belgium! They were so nice and we got along well though we have a totally different culture. But probably also because of the

differences in our culture, we had a lot to talk about and we were never bored of that. One of the most memorable things we did was the international cuisine party, which we cooked for each other



and made the signature dishes in our countries. It was so lekker (lekker is the Dutch word for delicious)! Not only is the taste good, but also their hospitality warmed my heart.



Another funny episode happened in the first few days we met. We were asked to attend a welcoming day held by Gate 15, a local organization helping with student affairs. As Antwerp was still so new to us, they planned to show us around the city and meanwhile they could shoot some video clips and photos of us for their websites for promotion. So, all of a sudden, we all turned into models, actors and actresses. When we arrived at the Museum van de Stroom, which is a tourist attraction, the staff in Gate 15 wanted some of us to act a bit and Leon and I were picked, hahaha!

Then we tried to pretend like we came for sightseeing and I had to act like I misread the map up-side-down! We practiced but still we needed to “NG” (i.e. redo) for a few times hahaha! At last, the picture and video turned out to be posted on Facebook and their website and maybe we have now become foreign “KOLs” in Belgium!







On the academic side, we were given chances to visit local clinical sites where the speech language pathologists worked every day. Hospital, special school, and private setting are somewhere that cannot be excluded. Yet, the way they deal with special education or those with language and communication difficulties is a bit different from in Hong Kong. Like in special school “Ritmica”, students with special education needs are allowed to explore their own interests such as planting,



taking care of animals or even mechanics. They can have their individualized learning programme, meaning that they may have different subjects and groups even though they are in the same class. Teachers can also

teach in small classes that it is easier for them to follow the progress of each student. I really appreciate how they respect the diversity within students that they are all shining specially in their own way. Another clinical site where I found interesting is the TV broadcasting company, called “VRT”. It is so new to me as SLPs don’t usually work there in Hong Kong. What they do is mainly providing guidance for professional voice users like news presenters and voice over artists, so that they can maximize their voice in an unharmed way. I guess we may try to explore this new area in Hong Kong and I believe it will be a fun job because it is like being an actress and a SLP at the same time!





Time always runs fast when you are having fun. I am really thankful that I have experienced something unique in a foreign country on another side of the world map before joining the social university and working busily like most of the Hong Kong people. And indeed, it has definitely enriched my master journey and turned out to be one of the most remarkable things I have done in my 20s. Tot ziens, België (i.e. “See you, Belgium” in Dutch)!

