

About My Six-Month Stay Abroad as a Foreign Language Assistant in Ireland

The Presentation De La Salle College

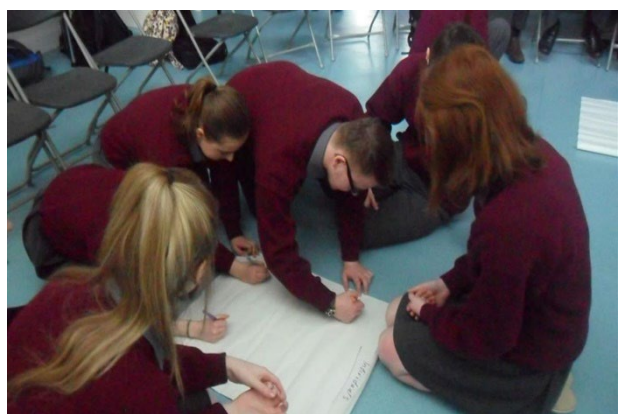
I was assigned to Presentation De La Salle College in Bagenalstown in County Carlow, which lies in the southeastern part of Ireland, approximately one hour from Dublin. The secondary school has about 700 students and 60 teachers. There were exactly twelve German classes from year one to year six, and I was appointed to every class once a week, working together with two German teachers. The teachers followed different approaches to teaching.



Quelle: 1SchoolDays.ie



Quelle: 3Website der Schule



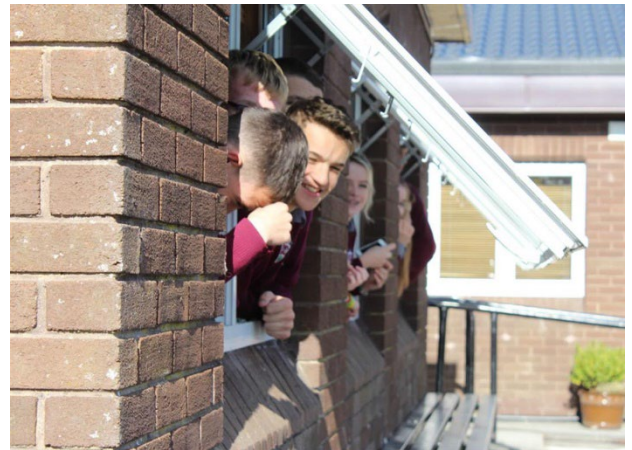
Quelle: 2Website der Schule

Lessons in Ireland

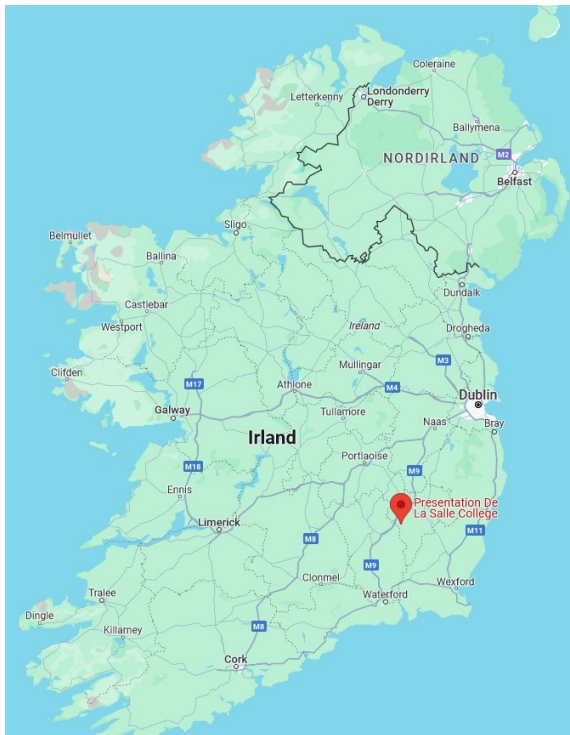
The teacher with whom I worked together for eight classes a week (and who was also my mentor) put great emphasis on the didactic principle of activity orientation and process- and product-orientation. For example, she let the students create profile posters of their favorite sports person (1st years), videos where they introduced themselves and their homes (1st years), menus and role plays about eating and ordering in a German restaurant (2nd years), or recipe videos with German voice-overs (TY's). She also cooperated with two German schools in Kassel and Cuxhaven, organizing a pen pal correspondence for the 3rd years and TY's, granting regular time-slots where students could write letters to real German speakers. With the younger groups, she often used playful approaches such as Pictionary, charades, memory, Kahoot or self-made board games. She also lay a focus on working with authentic materials. For instance, she let the students explore and work with actual German websites, such as deutschebahn.de when talking about German trains and how to purchase a ticket, or wg-gesucht.de when talking about living and studying in Germany.

My tasks

I would often help and assist individual students in groups in autonomous learning/working phases, or take over certain parts of the class, especially when they had a focus on pronunciation and vocabulary. I also would often talk about German traditions, customs or daily routines and situations, which I always found particularly interesting because it made me reflect on aspects that I have been taking for granted my whole life.



Quelle: 4Website der Schule



Quelle: 5Google Maps

Another activity of mine was to help the 6th years prepare for their oral leaving certificates in individual sessions. I would review their answers with them and work with them on their pronunciation. In doing so, I increasingly reflected on the phonetical characteristics and differences between the German and English language. I observed how difficult it is for many learners of a foreign language to acquire and imitate sounds that are usually connected to a different combination of letters or that do not exist at all in their mother tongue