

World in Classroom

School visit summary by student

Whenever I have a chance to travel or to live somewhere new, I try to engage in the activities that would make me more than just a tourist, something that would make me as close as possible to an average citizen of that town. Ljubljana is without a doubt beautiful city and a nice place to live in, but being „just a student“ didn't seem enough for me. I wanted to see how life worked beyond the student's classes, going out or to a movie or a theatre. Project „World in Classroom“ was exactly what I was looking for: possibility to „infiltrate“ to a teacher's world and see how things function in daily life.

I was lucky enough to be connected to Mrs Andreja Dobnikar, a teacher who teaches Slovenian in elementary school “Brezovica pri Ljubljani“ (address: Šolska ulica 15, 1351 Brezovica pri Ljubljani) which is located just a half an hour away by bus from the city center of Ljubljana. After a brief meeting in the beginning of the semester, I had an idea of what I wanted to talk about to the children attending that school.

On October 21st, 2013 at 8:20am, I was welcomed to the classroom where a group of 9th graders were waiting for me to begin with the first class that day. In general, most of the children from Slovenia already have a certain basic knowledge about Croatia and they have traveled there before on vacation, especially to the seaside. That is why I had an extra challenge and have prepared a 40 minutes power point presentation, where I would talk to them about the less known facts and the stories about particular parts of my country while still making sure to point out the most prominent places to visit. That is why I have started with Zagreb and „must see“ places, introducing them with the legends, less known stories and the facts about Zagreb. I have suggested fun places to visit with their parents such as Technical Museum with planetarium and the Zagreb Zoo. Further on, I have moved to the seaside, like: Dubrovnik, Split, Šibenik, Zadar, islands of Brač, Hvar, Korčula, national park Plitvice pointing out the „unknown about the known“. To keep it beyond the geography and history, next part was dedicated to the famous Croatian inventors, especially Tesla „the man who invented 21st century“. I was thrilled to see how interested they were in him and other inventors such as Slavoljub Penkala whose mechanical pens are we using on a daily basis. I concluded the presentation with some Croatian products and souvenirs, telling them a story about a tie, as Croatia is the homeland of a tie and finally wrapping up with the Croatian food, Croatian specialties which they need to try the next time they come for a visit.

Next group I was talking to were 6th graders and I must admit they were really sweet. I was really happy to hear that they had lots of questions for me, which I have gladly answered. 45 minutes were not enough for all that we were talking about.

Last group of the day were 8th graders. That was the biggest group of about 25 pupils. All in all, I have presented my country and its uniqueness to about 50 pupils.

Having a chance to talk to the children and to practice Slovenian language was a great experience for me. Not only have I seen what are they learning in school, but I had a chance to hang out with the teachers and get to see the teacher's lounge as well. Mrs Dobnikar introduced me to her colleagues, showed me around the school (which is a nice and modern school) and told me about their activities such as film group. Students have the freedom to write, star in the movies and get involved in the process of making movies which I think is a great opportunity for them. Also, they have travelled to Umag, Croatia as they cooperate with an elementary school from Umag, so the children and the teachers have a chance to get together and study together, have workshops etc. I was even invited to participate in the 3 day trip to Umag in the end of October, which I sadly had to decline due to my previous engagements.

All in all, judging from this experience, Ljubljana has a modern elementary school where students have numerous extra curriculum activities, a chance to learn in an incentive environment and grow into inquisitive young ladies and gentlemen. So thumbs up for Slovenia!

Ljubljana, October, 26th 2013

A photograph of a handwritten signature in blue ink on a light-colored background. The signature reads "Iva Lakoš".

Iva Lakoš