

Cross-cultural journal

to help in analyzing your reactions in a new culture

Part A:

I always wanted to come and see the Scandinavian countries because I find them fascinating and heard a lot of good stuff about them. My father himself was in Norway and told me how nice it was there. When I got the chance to come here for the Erasmus I took the chance and luckily got a place. I asked first some friends who were already here on an Erasmus so I had a little idea what I could expect. But then, when you come here, even if you know more or less some stuff about Finland and the Finns themselves, it's still kind of funny and interesting to see how the life and people are here. The first days it was hard to know where to go to find the stuff you needed and how to go there, so I asked people on the street about some informations. The funny thing was, when I asked some Finns, they always got a little shocked when I asked them first (probably they are not used to be approached), but then they really tried to help me out and that was really cool.

Most of the Finns I got to know I met either in the sauna or partying. When you go to the sauna they try to start a conversation with a good warm beer and for me that's awesome. I really like to go often to the sauna and talk and relax. In Austria at my home university I never was in the sauna, and in Italy there are just some few saunas and just in the northern part, and they are quite expensive and boring compared to Finland.

As I already said, the Finns are quite open at the parties and when they are drunk, but if you meet them on the street the next day it's not easy to get a hello from them, and that's quite strange for me because in Italy you often greet foreigners too.

As I've seen so far, the people here needs a lot of space and time just for them and I like that attitude because I need sometimes time for myself too. My flatmate is a Finn too, and he is really nice and if I approach him we can talk, but he hardly ever started the conversation himself.

Another thing that I've noticed is that the Finns really try to be punctual, like in Austria, but by far not in Italy.

One of the things that I like the most here is the honesty and respect for rules. I already lost a few things here and the next day I got them back again. You can let your stuff somewhere unguarded and nothing happens. In most of the parts of Italy if you look away from your stuff for a little time it's probably gone, even if it's locked. That's how I already lost two bikes. And that's still hard to believe for me, but I like to get used to it.

Part B:

Observation:

The lectures here are quite the same as at home. The professor explains the slides and sometimes asks us questions or if we understood everything. Even the behaviour of the students is quite the same. The only difference is that here the professor isn't put that higher as you as in Austria or Italy, and they really try to help you.

In Austria the professor just explains his lecture. He will hardly ever reply your mails or is most of the time absent. If you have some questions later about it or about some exercises you just can go to his assistant, but sometimes they need a lot of time to answer too or you just can go to their office once a week. Here as I've seen so far, the prof always answers the mails and in a short time too.

In Italy you had to stand up when the teacher came in and everybody had to greet him. In Austria we applaud (knock on desk) after every lecture or exercise and sometimes the professor screams on you if you have to go to the toilet during the lesson. So you have to show your respect a lot more than here.

Then of course there are some exceptions, some profs are kind and others very strict.

Opinion:

I think that both kinds of behaviour are ok. It's good to respect and to esteem the professor's position, but the professor also has to help and understand the students, and make them feel comfortable in the lecture. I would say that something between the two behaviors of the university in Finland and my home university in Graz would be perfect. So the professors should help and approach the students as well as they can and show them that they are not on a much higher level than you, and the students should respect the professors and recognise their position and work, like with a simple knock on the desk.