

# My Erasmus Experience

"My Erasmus experience has been the single most important educational experience of my life to date."  
Daniel Emmerson

Graduated in 2006 from University of Plymouth in Media Arts with a supplementary certificate in Entrepreneurship and Management

Did an Erasmus Study period for 3 Months in Katowice, Poland



I spent three months in 2005 studying Cinematography in Katowice, an industrial city in Southern Poland as part of the Erasmus programme. I am a huge fan of European cinema and felt that this was a good opportunity to explore different audience perception.

The course I enrolled on was entirely in Polish, which made lectures almost impossible as I spoke no Polish before deciding to go to Katowice, although I did take an intensive language course arranged by the University. I corresponded frequently with my tutors in the UK and put together several project proposals that involved experimental sound art, video and literature. The projects allowed me to conduct practical research in field recording and abstract film making that I had not been able to explore previously. The people that I met in Katowice were keen to help out in my projects and enabled my colleague and I to branch out into areas of documentary film that would not have been possible in the UK. I began learning Polish in 2006 and can now speak the language fluently.

I believe I achieved a first class degree as a result of my Erasmus experience, as I was able to include case studies



from Poland in my dissertation and use contacts that I had made on Erasmus in a third year exhibition.

My Erasmus experience has been the single most important educational experience of my life to date. It has inspired me to explore new avenues of business, culture and learning that I continue to explore on a daily basis. It also acted as a springboard that enabled me to dive deep into the Polish language, society and culture with which I had become so engaged. Erasmus was the driving force that enabled me to become self employed and the sole reason for my moving back to Poland after graduating the University of Plymouth in 2006.

My intention was to implement the skills and techniques I acquired at university and work on a documentary project with one of the contacts I had met during my study abroad. I had already made several films in Poland both during and after my Erasmus experience and I decided that the TEFL industry was definitely something that could be explored in a film project which would provide me with a real insight into the lives of foreigners working in Poland.

The documentary took four months to film and not only did it allow me to explore every major city in Poland, but I was also sponsored to work on the project in Thailand and Slovakia. Talking TEFL, which was released on DVD in March 2008, was well received by audiences around the world, so much so that EnglishClub.com, an English language resource website, asked me to write a documentary series about language learners around the globe. The Learning English Video Project began in September 2008 and saw the realisation of my documentary series under the wing of a commercial sponsor. Filming spanned over three separate continents and across five countries and required all the communicative skills and interview techniques I had assimilated in Katowice during my Erasmus adventure and while living in Krakow.

I was also approached by a Krakow based publishing company who were interested in printing editions of my Internet Blog. I had been posting short articles on my website based on my experiences in Poland, but due to these documents already being in the public domain, I was reluctant to publish. However, the journal I had started just before my Erasmus experience was a rather large document by this point and I felt this would make a good foundation for a novel. I presented my ideas, in Polish, to a board of directors at the publishing house and I was given my first publishing deal and six months to produce a manuscript. See this book on <http://www.empik.com/ktoredyksiazka,prod5200181,p>

In November 2008 I travelled back to the UK where I began work on one of the most interesting and personal film projects I have ever worked on. Erasmus

The Erasmus experience had had such a profound and positive impact on my post-graduate life that I wanted to assist in the promotion of the programme. It is my opinion that Erasmus proved an essential aspect of my degree, even though it was not mandatory, and being able to use some of the techniques I obtained as a consequence of my experience in order to promote the programme seemed like a logical step. The film is a landmark in my career in that I am able to share my enthusiasm for Erasmus through the perspectives of other participants from all over the world. The series emphasises the importance of collaboration and understanding amongst European citizens and their relationship with the rest of the world.

I will soon travel to China, India and Columbia as an extension of The Learning English Video Project before beginning a Masters Degree course in International Relations at the University of Wroclaw, Poland. The decision to study on the continent is almost certainly attributed to my involvement in the Erasmus programme, both as a student and as a film maker, and it is something I firmly believe will increase my enthusiasm for living in a tolerant, multicultural and cosmopolitan world.



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein