Germany’s excursion/ Rieselfelder

How are squeaky yellow rubber boots, catching masks and a picnic in a tree house connected?

On Wednesday, June 12, 2019, an excursion of the Erasmus+ AG and the biocourse Technology II took place. As part of our project theme "What`s your heritage - we are Yourope" we also deal with the topics environment and nature. Therefore we visited the Rieselfelder of the Biological Station Bielefeld - Gütersloh as an extracurricular place of learning and took part in the workshop "Ecosystem stream and pond - animals and plants and their adaptations to the habitat water".

27 students and 2 teachers (Mrs. Bainski and Mrs. Stebbing) took the bus to Niederheide in Senne at 8:30 am. We arrived at the biological station on time at 8:55 and were welcomed by Mrs. Noack-Füller, who was to accompany us that day.

First, everyone had to put on their rubber boots and rain jackets. Dressed as a very colorful learning group in all the colors of the rainbow, we set off for the water. Ponds and streams serve as nurseries for many animals before they leave the water as frogs, dragonflies or mayflies.

In pairs, we caught small aquatic animals with landing nets and observed them with the help of a magnifying glass. Each pair also had a small plastic aquarium into which the caught animals were carefully placed. We worked with fine brushes so that no little animal was hurt. Several students even caught some fish that Ms. Bainski immediately identified as three-spined sticklebacks. All the students were eager and absolutely focused.

Eventually, we had caught quite a collection of aquatic animals: Mayfly larvae, ball shells, roller angels, plate snails, water striders, caddisfly larvae, tadpoles, aquatic isopods, stonefly larvae, snails, dragonfly larvae, sticklebacks, and psyllids. Mrs. Noack-Füller patiently answered all questions and there were some surprising findings: The male psyllid actually hooks up with the female for 8 days until she matures and the dragonfly larva has a catching mask, which is the extended lower jaw and with that it is able to catch its prey in a split second and pull it right into its mouth.

Finally, we determined water quality and discussed pollution and water quality. Water as a source of life and the drinking and sewage cycle were also discussed, as the habitat of many animals has been altered by humans.

Then there was time for a picnic and a short tour through the Rieselfelder, during which Mrs. Bainski was able to identify all the birds and explained fascinating ornithological relationships to us. Biology lessons with a difference!

In any case, we will also remember soggy sneakers, too short rubber boots and the inevitable consequences, sweets in the tree house, pouring rain and shells of dragonfly larvae that we were allowed to take back for biology class.