

OsEAN Exchange 2011
Metropolia, Helsinki – CEESO, Paris
Osteopathy

Jutta Aalto
010584-038K
m0701270

OsEAN (Osteopathic European Academic Network)

Period of Exchange

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I decided to make a mini exchange in my last year (4th) of osteopathy studies to reflect on how osteopathy is taught and learned in other countries. My school Metropolia (Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences) offered an OsEAN Exchange to France, and that suited me well because I had learned French in secondary school and at Metropolia.

My destination was CEESO (Centre Européen d'Enseignement Supérieur de l'Osteopathie) Paris. I chose this school because of its good reputation and location.

The process of exchange was fairly easy, my teacher Sandra Rinne encouraged me to contact our exchange coordinator Lea Moua to a consultation and she advised me how to fill in the Student Application Form and contact the French exchange program coordinator Martin Bremond. All the coordinators were helpful and encouraging to make this experience happen.

Just two days before the trip I was very nervous about how things would work out with my mediocre French skills but the tension melted after I got to the school and got a very warm welcome from Mr. Martin Bremond and all the teachers and students. I was happy to discover that I could understand more French than I expected and compensate my speech with English that was well understood despite of little hesitation from a few students. French people cope with English better than they think!

The school has 72 teachers and about 350 students, which is quite a big difference compared to Metropolia's around 10 teachers and about 40 students (in the degree programme of Osteopathy). In general the classes in CEESO had 50-80 students as in Metropolia the number of students in class is approximately 20. CEESO is a purely osteopathic school as in Metropolia we have other healthcare programs like physiotherapy in the same building. In total that makes our facilities and the total amount of students in the building larger than CEESO.

The facilities in CEESO were in two floors, the upper floor being the student clinic and the lower solely for classes. The library was situated in the upper floor and it was bit smaller than at Metropolia. The computer room had six computers which were said to be very slow and therefore not used. The treatment tables were manual in all classes except the clinic, where there were a few electric and pressure ones.

During my visit I participated in structural technique and synthesis classes, an English research class, the clinic practise and visceral osteopathy class. As a comparison the structural technique classes worked quite similarly: the teacher was explaining and showing a technique in the front and then going around the class helping the students to practise. The actual techniques were similar as well except for the original manipulations of Mr. Causse D`Agraives. It was fascinating to see an osteopathic approach enhanced, developed and finetuned by own practise creating a very personal style of structural treatment.

Also the amount of minimum lever manipulations used seemed higher than is taught to our course in Finland. I believe that is different for the younger class in our school, they get taught both Hartman and Kuchera approaches right from the beginning.

The structural synthesis class was a combination of osteopathic diagnosis, examination and technique. It corresponded with our practically applied osteopathy course but looking at the syllabuses of both schools, CEESO has a lot more of synthesis classes. In the other hand we have more mandatory clinical practise and - observation where the difference in the amount of synthesis teaching can be compensated.

The clinic worked differently in the way that there were no set clinic timetables. The CEESO students were only working with their own patients. In Finland we do a whole lot more observation as the hours of clinical practise are set and mandatory for all the students.

Generally the syllabuses were very similar but as the school is longer in CEESO (Metropolia 4 years vs. CEESO 5 years) they have extended the amount of almost all subjects from cranial and visceral courses to research and especially the synthesis classes. The practical training differed in the way that at CEESO they have multiple courses in different parts of hospitals and no external osteopathic practise, we have only orthopedic practise in the hospital and two trainings with a private osteopathy practitioner. The schedules are set for both syllabuses but we have 15 credits of elective studies, which are partially used with workshops from foreign lecturers. CEESO has a postgraduate program for CEESO students. Metropolia offers only occasional lectures with specialized teachers that postgraduates can participate.

In whole the exchange process influenced my perception of studying osteopathy. Observing the cultural differences while staying with the same concept was mind opening and exciting. The understanding of the syllabus structures increased while doing a comparison between the schools. Meeting and communicating with students increased the understanding of studying osteopathy in a private school as well as work opportunities and osteopath`s situation in French community. Difference between the number of practitioners and schools of Osteopathy is huge but then again so is the difference in amount of population. Paris has 10 million habitants, Finland has in total 5 million habitants from which half a million lives in Helsinki. I`m thankful for this exchange opportunity and recommend it to anyone who is interested in getting a bigger picture of studying a profession and life in general.