

## Attachment 1 (Task 2. A student in Norway)

Read the following extract, transcribed from an interview to an Italian student who is making her Erasmus experience in Norway (Beaven, 2012). Then, with your group, answer the questions.

I've done my exam, and I'll have to wait three weeks to get the results. I've realized that it's too easy for me to stay here. Everything works well, but I find myself thinking "I have to study so much harder at home!". The exam was too easy. It was a written exam, so the mark will depend on how well they can understand my English. But in terms of content, it was ridiculous, really basic...

No point staying here for the university, because these people don't have a clue what anthropology is. Here I'm studying things that for me are folklore anyway, so I'm going home in December, after a four-month holiday... I don't rule out that I might come back, but not to study.

Anyway, we'd been told that Norway was like... "poor things, with their language dying out". But actually, they're really proud... so you'll never get a job if you don't know their language... I started looking for work but can't get anything because I don't speak Norwegian. Yes, they speak English, but they speak it like foreigners, and many don't speak it at all. So after the first month of enthusiasm you've got to get things into perspective, and that's what's happening these days. And I'm not learning what I want, what I'd be studying in Italy. Despite the huge disorganization in my university, if I want to work hard and learn something, I can. Here they expect so little that you just don't feel like doing more...

I had a fling with a guy, and I have to say they're not rocket scientists.... And they don't study much, 'cause if you can afford to have two different jobs and at the same time train with the cycling team... In my opinion, this way of doing things is good enough for them. I couldn't do all that back home. As they don't have a yardstick, they think what they do is really hard [...]

We also tried going to the theatre, but it's in Norwegian. Films are just about ok, if they're in English, or with English subtitles. But the theatre, no way! From an anthropological point of view, in my opinion, this is a country that is happy to be outside the European Union, it's delighted to have nothing to do with Europe, and it organizes activities to make life better for the Norwegians, it doesn't give a damn about the foreigners, tourists, nothing. For a few months in the summer, it gets

back to life, and then they accept you as an assistant cook even if you don't know any Norwegian. But when they no longer need you... as a country it's very attached to its traditions. My "Norwegian Society and Culture" course basically consists in those dreary outdoor activities, which are no longer fun for us foreigners, because we're not used to running around in the rain like idiots. But they want to keep their traditions alive, teach you how to make a fire, come rains or snows. And so my feeling is this: it's perhaps the least anthropologically developed country in the world, and it's happy to be so. It's very rich, it's fine on its own, it doesn't need foreign countries... so they have some activities, but they don't involve us because they're only in Norwegian. And it makes you angry because they speak perfect English. It's not like in Italy, where we still don't know English, so everything's in Italian. Here, they speak English perfectly, but they don't want to speak it. It's different, it's the attitude that's different...

Knowing Norwegian would definitely have helped but not that much, because the problem is that they're not open to strangers, whatever language you speak. Some students speak Norwegian perfectly, but they don't have more Norwegian friends than me. As an Erasmus student, you're brought here with 150 other Erasmus students, because you don't have many other choices.

Other than that... I think their university, even for the Norwegians, is simpler than ours, because I've met people who've got various jobs, in Italy I don't think that's possible. I think their level of culture is much lower than ours, but it's all related to the fact that they don't need to go abroad to look for work. So you're not motivated, because you know that as a teacher there you can earn as much as a rich guy in Italy, I see it this way: "we don't need to leave our country, so we don't have to make other people understand our culture"... For Erasmus students for sure they don't do much, there's a limited number of courses you can do. If you go to Spain, you can take the same classes as the Spanish, so you can choose anything.

Norway is beautiful; if you're forty years old and speak Norwegian I recommend you come to live here because it's wonderful. But you can't send me to study anthropology in Norway.

### Questions

- How does the student perceive her own identity?
- What assumptions does the student make about people from Norway?
- On which basis does the student make these assumptions?
- How does she ascribe identities to Norwegian people? Why do you think she does this?
- Do you think she feels disappointed by her Erasmus experience? Why? What do you think she expected?
- Have you been in a similar situation where you judged people or have been judged on the basis of prejudices (positive or negative)? And have you experienced essentialising others or having been essentialised? What happened? How did you feel?