

Interview Paul Rosenmüller

**Andrew:** *You've been here for two weeks, but what was the decision process that brought you here?*

**Paul:** I started to realise in the summer that I wanted to improve my English, my fluency and gain more confidence in English, so I decided in the summer that I would like to follow a course. With my job it is quite difficult as there's always the pressure of the work itself, so the first thing was to find time. February in the Netherlands has a lot of holidays so relatively speaking it's a quiet period. Secondly I needed to decide where? I decided that in terms of effectiveness it would be better to do it in a native speaking country instead of just doing it the Netherlands.



**Andrew:** *Why?*

**Paul:** Someone told me that following a course and stay in a host family in England is the most effective way to make the improvement. If you stay at home you are always disturbed with emails etcetera, but I wanted to give priority to the language.

**Andrew:** *How did you find LSI Portsmouth?*

**Paul:** When I started searching for courses on the internet, there was a huge variety of possibilities, so someone suggested I should go via StudyTravel! I had never heard of them, so my secretary called StudyTravel who gave me several options, one of them in London one of them at LSI, they were very positive about LSI in terms of quality and teachers and also with a good match with a host family.

**Andrew:** *How did you do this? Was it an interview on the phone?*

**Paul:** It was all by phone, all in Dutch, about my requirements not my level. I was thinking about London. London is the place to be, visit museums etc, but then I started to realise it's about my language. If you really want to be successful, if you really want to give priority to the language, the city itself is not the most important thing, so I decided on LSI because of the combination of the reputation of the institute and the option of having a good match with the host family.

**Andrew:** *So what type of things did they ask you about, your objectives, what type of course, what type of host family?*

**Paul:** Yeah it was very professional, so Erika from StudyTravel asked me several questions. Because I am more or less well known in the Netherlands it is not difficult to explain who I am. It was important to explain what I wanted to achieve and what my goals were, and it was important the match with the host family. She gave me good advice and suggested a host family that were a retired couple who were interested in all kinds of social, global and international things.

**Andrew:** *Did Erika get it right for you?*

**Paul:** Without any doubt, she got it right. Now I am nearly at the end of the course, I have to say I'm tired, I've worked hard, but I've made some progress as well in terms of vocabulary, and confidence. You start thinking in English, which is important. With the course we started at 8:00 in the morning. It is intensive, then it's conversation with the homestay, then homework. The days are long and intensive but the focus is the language and that is the most important thing.

**Andrew:** *You took a super intensive course, 25 hours plus an extra 5 hours and executive lunches, you have a homestay family, you speak English when you do the social programme. Was the course too intensive, would you have preferred 5 hours a day?*

**Paul:** I am used to working quite hard. I was very satisfied with the first week, then there was the start of the second week, the second week was more intensive than I expected.

**Andrew:** *Outside work you are a keen sportsman and keep fit? But not so much sport this week, was the balance right?*

**Paul:** Compared to the Netherlands yes a little less, but I did four runs, running along the seashore and that's nice, into the wind and with the wind on my back because my host family lives five minutes from the sea.

**Andrew:** *What kind of city is Portsmouth? Is it what you expected?*

**Paul:** I visited the old town in the first week in the evening and the shopping mall, close to the ships; I walked around a little and got the impression of the place close to the harbour and the sea. Honestly speaking I can't give a very detailed description about Portsmouth, but this is a city that is easy to survive here, there are nice restaurants, nice shops, the location of this institute is close to the centre. In the end I am glad I decided to come here instead of London.

**Andrew:** *We tried to personalise the programme to suit your specific needs, do you feel we got it right?*

**Paul:** Definitely, I think LSI did a perfect job, the programme was personalised. The programme touched on different issues related to education and subjects I brought up. There was a huge variety of subjects we discussed, there was the focus on presentations, debates, negotiations, sharing meetings these things are important in my work, not that often in a foreign language, but a good way to make further improvement and so it was definitely personalised, different teachers with a different perspective.

**Andrew:** *Would you have preferred to be in a small group like some of the other students here?*

**Paul:** No, no I took the decision to do 1:1, it is very intensive, but without doubt it was the right decision, I think it is intensive, but it was good.

**Andrew:** *On your first morning when you were interviewed by Lea for your objectives. We don't just train English language but confidence and skills and fluency etc. What were your key objectives when you started and how do you feel about them now.*

**Paul:** My two key objectives were to first gain confidence, because I always had the feeling that my English wasn't good enough, confidence is essential to make sure you make further improvements. Secondly was the fluency, and thirdly to broaden my vocabulary.

**Andrew:** *And how do you feel now?*

**Paul:** The most important is the confidence, I had the idea that I could speak at a certain level. You call it advanced; I sometimes have my doubts about that. (*Andrew and Sue: "trust us it is!"*) One of the teachers showed me something, which was good for self confidence; I gave a presentation, he counted the pauses and the errors, he said "during 6 minutes you made 'slips / mistakes "so in terms of pauses and fluency it was 99% correct ;-)

**Andrew:** *Do you feel more confident now, and listening and speaking in English is more natural.*

**Paul:** There is still a long way to go. I can say your teachers taught me a lot, I learned a lot, I did my best, they invested in me, I invested in myself . But in the end in terms of confidence and fluency I definitely made progress.

**Andrew:** *What is your best memory of Portsmouth?*

**Paul:** Depends on your level but my experience is if you really think you have a problem with confidence, go there they can help you. It's really a major advantage to go to a country where they speak the language. It is the lessons at the institute, the conversation at home, the conversation with the students, watching the news in English. I would definitely recommend doing it the way I did, I can also recommend your institute because I am very satisfied.

**Andrew:** *What would you suggest to a future student from Holland about their options, where they go, what type of course?*

**Paul:** I would say to someone like myself, go to a good school recommended by organisations like StudyTravel, with a good reputation. Forget about whether it is a nice city, go for the language, give priority to the language. I'll never forget LSI, or the host family in the city.

**Andrew:** Paul, it's been such a pleasure having you study here, thank you so much for speaking to us here and allowing us to print this – we now hope to get pots and pots of students on the back of this, so we are incredibly grateful to you.