

The marine biological week as an approach to science

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The “Wiedner Gymnasium” is an academic high school with two branches: one focusses on languages and the other one on science. In the language branch the students learn at least three languages; one of which is Latin, whereas the students of the scientific branch can learn geometrical drawing and have to attend a scientific laboratory throughout the last four upper classes.

As incentive highlights the language classes have a one week’s school trip to France, Italy or Spain at the beginning of their 7th form in order to attend a language school and to practice their language skills. As a counterbalance, there was introduced the “marine biological week” several years ago, in which the students of the scientific branch take part whilst their colleagues have their language trips.

The marine biological week takes place in Rovinj, Croatia. A team of biologists and divers leads through a programme, by which the students get an overview of different habitats, their conditions and the different ways of adaptation organisms find. Thus, they also become acquainted with several species of animals and plants which are characteristic for this area. They become familiar with some methods of scientific work and also get to know some of the problems marine ecosystems are confronted with. They also learn a little bit of the Mediterranean history and culture.

Back in school all the findings are reviewed and brought into an ecological context. The insights can be used for many other topics, too, such as e.g. evolution. This week has proved to be a good start as well for the topic of ecology as for learning to think scientifically in general. So, you can call it a pivot for the scientific branch of our school.