

Erasmus+ Traineeship - Experiential Report

In this report I describe my experiences during my Erasmus+ Traineeship in the time April through October at the sports faculty of the Université de Franche-Comté in Besancon (UFC), France. This report is divided into three sections: *Before Mobility*, *During Mobility (Social Life)* and *During Mobility (Work Life)*.

Before Mobility - In October 2021, roughly half a year before the planned Traineeship began I went to Besancon for a weekend to meet my supervisor in person for the first time. Additionally, this was a great chance to contact the local parkour community in order to build some social contacts for the time of the Traineeship. After this weekend I began searching for an apartment with the preference of a shared flat for additional social contacts. In France a website called "Leboncoin" is used equivalent to what we in Germany know as "eBay Kleinanzeigen". After several weeks without any answers I contacted "Crous", the student network of the UFC. Unfortunately, I also got no answer there (eventually they answered a few days before my mobility began). After several more trials on Leboncoin I found some hosts who displayed their personal phone numbers in their profile. Contacting those led to the first answers since starting my apartment search. Finally, I found a shared flat in the middle of all locations I had to visit in my daily life, the University, the sports laboratory and the city centre.

During Mobility (Social Life) - Even though the apartment was described as a shared flat by the landlord I was alone during April, the first month after arrival. This time was also the hardest for me personally. Without the friends I made in October I would have had almost no social life. Starting get to know all the laboratories hard- and software without much contact with the PhD students and without visiting any seminars proved to be very lonely if I did not start making contacts of my own accord. In addition, I tried to learn French as fast as possible. However, the language barrier proved to be quite difficult to overcome as most francophones turned out to not be inclined to talk in English, even if they were able to. Soon, I had no problems during everyday life. Ordering food, asking for a product in the supermarket or for the way got easy. But a free flowing conversation is still hard for me to this day. Unfortunately, I also got into an accident in summer, which left me unable to participate in my sport of choice, parkour, for some time. Due to the lack of social contacts, partly because most of my work still was on my own and partly because of the inability to train, I searched for social happenings to attend to. Thus, during the summer time I went to a park and joined an open chess club once a week for several hours. Overall I made some great friends in this time. Some of those I hope to welcome to my home in Germany soon!

During Mobility (Work Life) - Right after I came to Besancon I started to make myself familiar with the totally new software "LabChart", which would be used to record all data and thus also dictate big parts of the final study process. Additionally, I made myself familiar with the

hardware including the DELSYS EMG sensors and the TMS coil. Unfortunately, I was not able to make the original study design, with the TMS coil, work as the hardware I built to use this measurement tool during movement did not turn out to be effective. As a result I thought of a different experiment. This shift of the original idea to what I studied in the end was highly supervised by [REDACTED] without making me feel like he took over. I started researching the topic again from scratch and put together a whole new study. During this time I also participated and helped in different studies of the PhD student located in the laboratory. Along the way of creating the study outline for the new study I also built the whole setup consisting of two wooden boxes which had the available sensors built in to measure the time between jumping off the taller one to making ground contact on the smaller one (figure 1). Fortunately, my supervisor made it possible for me to distribute my working hours very flexibly as long as progress was made and the overall hours were met. This was very helpful for me as I ran into a lot of software problems with LabChart but also with the DELSYS sensors which could not even be fixed by the manufacturers. Thus, some days I spent more than eight hours at the lab working on and finding a way around one problem, other days were entirely spent at home on data processing and again others were finished very early as suddenly everything fell into place. After finally finishing the study outline and the setup at the end of August I started acquiring participants. This task turned out more difficult than expected. I was used to students who are very interested in participating in studies in the field of sports. However, in France it seemed almost impossible to convince students, even sports students of participating at all. One limiting factor of course was the duration of 3.5 hours on average. Nevertheless, I think that the language barrier was not helpful either. I spent several mornings in front of the cafeteria of the UFC to hand out study flyers with no success eventually. Due, to the time lost regenerating after my accident and the difficulty of acquiring enough participants my supervisor and I decided it would be wise for me to stay another month. Finally, in October I acquired more participants, which also was due to the immense help of [REDACTED] and his PhD students.

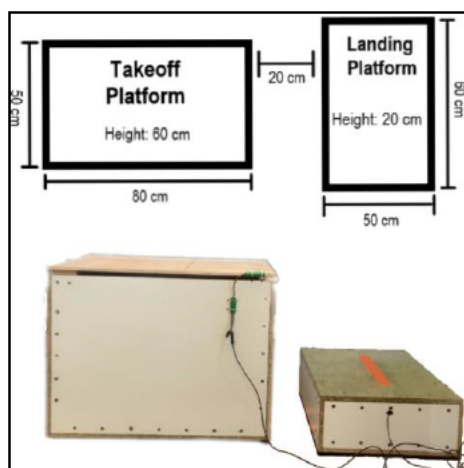


Figure 1. Study Setup for measuring flight time of participants from take-off to landing.