

**Kari Alley**  
**Final Report**  
**PH Zug**

My experience in Switzerland has been unforgettable. My work in the classroom at the international school has inspired me to think differently about the type of environment I want to create in my classroom. The family I stayed with in Zug was kind and generous to me. I feel lucky to have had such an opportunity to participate in the study abroad program and will have fond memories of this experience.

**Information and Support**

**1. PH Zug/ International Office @ PH Zug**

The information given about schedules, contacts and cooperating schools was informative and given in advance, which was greatly appreciated.

- The only miscommunication issue we had was in regards to the students from Australia visiting us at the international school and our visit to Elementa.

**2. People and site**

Students and staff were kind and very helpful when answering any questions or making any accommodations.

**3. Classroom teacher**

I enjoyed working with the International School of Zug & Luzern. My classroom teacher let me teach often in the classroom, allowing me to have plenty of practical experiences with students and curriculum planning. She treated me like a colleague, and gave me specific critiques and feedback about my teaching methods and how to improve them.

**4. Your buddy**

Our buddy was helpful when it came to giving local advice, getting information about how transportation works within the area. She told us about helpful resources in Zug. However, I was unsure of the expectations I should have in regards to “buddy days” on our schedule. Because she was extremely busy with college work, we didn’t really hang out together after the first two weeks after my arrival. For future students and buddies, I would make clear expectations to both parties so that there isn’t any confusion as to the role of a buddy.

**Living in Switzerland**

**1. Accommodation**

My home stay has been excellent. It was nice to have the privacy of the apartment. My host family has been informative about Switzerland, places to visit, and has helped me see many parts of Zug unknown to other people. I have learned a lot about Swiss culture, the language differences, and the school system.

**2. Costs**

The costs of living in terms of homestay, food and transportation are as expected.

## **Overall Programme**

### **1. Teaching practice programme (school/subjects)**

I am unsure if this class is offered, but I would have liked to learn a little bit more about the Swiss school system, history and culture.

### **2. Programme @ PH Zug (Lectures)**

In a couple of our classes, I thought the approach to teaching a lesson to the college students and having the students critique the professor's methods and effectiveness as a teacher to be a valuable experience. PH Zug is creating an environment in which teachers will be more responsive to their students because they reflect on the effectiveness of their planning and their instruction.

## **Difficulties or Challenges**

- We had three 45-minute German lessons in the entire month we were here. I wish we had more formal German lessons.
- Some classes were in High German, which gave me the perspective of what it is like to be a non-native speaker in an unfamiliar environment. However, it might have been helpful to be given a handout in English or a general idea about which concept was to be taught for the lesson in each class. A copy of the PowerPoint slides would be helpful so non-native speakers can follow or have a chance to review what has been taught.

## **Personal Evaluation of the Stay**

### **1. Benefit of your future studies and profession**

Learning to live in a different country is not an easy task, however, I have learned how to be more independent in an unfamiliar place. I have learned how to communicate to the best of my ability even though I clearly lack German and Swiss German language skills.

I feel more sensitive to the needs of a non-native English speaker in the classroom. Most students in my classroom at the international school speak English as an alternative language, only speaking English in school. During my instruction, I have learned to be direct with students in communication, use different methods of conveying an idea, and to check for understanding more often than I have in previous classroom experiences.

I observed students having the capacity to know and speak multiple languages in a learning environment. I am now convinced of the benefits of students learning and speaking more than one language. I want to develop my language skills in a language different from my own.

The ISZL uses inquiry units that are 6 weeks long, and allow for students as young as Kindergarten to ask more in-depth questions about the world around them,

allowing for more content integration and broader learning. I want to use this type of unit process and questioning in my own classroom.

The ISZL also refuses to use token economy for a management technique. Because of this, students take responsibility and are more intrinsically motivated in the classroom. I hope to use the techniques I have observed in my 2nd grade classroom in the U.S. in my future classroom.

## **2. Recommendations of future students**

For future students, I would take the time to learn more broadly about the Swiss Education system as well as the international school system.

As a person who likes to travel, I would look up local events in the area to see what is happening so that a person can experience traditions and activities unique to Switzerland.

Get to know someone who is Swiss so that you can know and appreciate the country through their thoughts and experiences.

## **3. Personal Evaluation (3 positives/negatives)**

### **Positives:**

- I learned how to navigate through longer destinations using a transportation system I have never used before.
- I tried to experience different things in Switzerland, such as getting to know people and the local culture and make the effort to travel to different parts of Switzerland.
- I grew as a teacher, and I can envision the characteristics I want to have in my own future classroom.

### **Negatives:**

- I should have tried to learn and speak more German beyond classes.
- I should have asked to visit a Swiss school. I am interested to learn about Swiss teaching methods, their lessons, and how they integrate English.
- I could have tried to find more things to do during the week after school to have more experiences in Switzerland.