

# PH Zug Final Report

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## Information and Report

### **Of the PH Zug/International Office**

The experiences from PH Zug and of Patrick and Stefanie at the international office have been great. We were always well informed of the program and what was happening, updated when information had to be changed, and were well informed of the expectations of the program. Everything from the placement school, lessons at the university, extra activities and accommodation was organised so well I am very grateful for the work that they put in to make this experience possible.

### **Of your classroom teacher**

Monica Roth has been inspirational during our placement at Elementa. Meeting her on the first day and hearing about how she built the school on her own from the ground up was such an inspirational story, and to be able to give us the opportunity to see the way the school works while developing our teaching practice has been an invaluable experience. She as well as the other teachers within the school who observed us teaching were always very helpful in giving us feedback of our lessons, and providing suggestions and improvements to keep students engaged and focused on the task at hand. They have been very open to what we teach, giving us the opportunity to choose what is important for our lessons which has been amazing to be given such confidence by the staff for our own ideas and thoughts. While I have been at Elementa for this short amount of time, I have really been treated like a respected member of the staff by all of the teachers and school staff. It has truly been one of the best schools I have seen, with a great level of respect and commitment from students and staff. It is clear that everyone really values each other at Elementa.

### **Of your buddy**

The buddy program that was organised has been an amazing and very welcoming part of the experience. Our buddies Sophie and Leonie have always made sure that we have things sorted and have something to do if we need. They offered to pick me up as soon as I arrived, hosted a beautiful traditional Raclette dinner at Sophie's home, and took us out to see some of the nightlife in Zug and Baar. Every weekend they have always offered up their time for us, to show us around or give us something to do, which has been such an inviting aspect of the program. For me, it has been great to have the buddy program because you get to see the true culture of the area and what local people chose to do with their time here.

## Living in Switzerland

### **Accommodation**

The accommodation provided to me has been absolutely stunning. It has been a dream to live in such a beautiful place in the world, wake up every morning and look out onto such an incredible little town in Switzerland. I have been living with a student from the PH Zug and two other housemates for my provided accommodation. It has been such a great experience living with the locals, seeing the way they live their daily lives and feeling like a part of this home. My hosts have provided me with everything I have needed, from picking me up from the airport when I arrived, to cooking and sharing meals with me each night. They also always have suggestions of things for me to do in my spare time and have made me feel very welcome.

The location of my accommodation has been perfect. It is slightly up the mountain and provides an amazing view overlooking the town with only a short walk. On a clear day I am able to see the lake from my bedroom window. The area in itself is absolutely stunning. Being able to watch the colours of the trees change from my room each morning has been absolutely spectacular. It is such a nice way to start the day ahead in such a beautiful place. Only being a short walk from the PH Zug and public transport, getting around in Zug and beyond has been very simple. Nothing is too far and there are

always different busses and routes you can take to where you need to be. I have thoroughly enjoyed exploring the areas around me, from walking through the track at the river, walking up to the cemetery and overlooking the lake and city, and walking down to the old town which is nearby, there was always something for me to do when I had time off. Being such a beautiful and historic town, it has been such a great experience being able to explore it, while also calling it home.

### **Costs**

The costs of this program have been surprisingly lower than I had anticipated. We were informed from our university that the costs would be high for this trip, but the most expensive thing (of course) has been my flight. The costs of accommodation have been very reasonable for the amount time we are staying here. The issues that come with costs in Switzerland, is of course the high cost of living here. I have found that eating out at restaurants and café's has been quite an expensive thing to do. The supermarkets on the other hand, are more reasonably priced. Being a student and wanting to travel further after this program, I have opted for making my own food at home and taking it where I need to go to save on costs. I do believe however that this is a better way to appreciate the food culture of the town. By being able to see what locals buy at the supermarkets, what produce is local, and new and interesting foods that I have not seen or tried before has been a great experience for me.

The public transport can also be very expensive for single trips. However, the ability to buy a youth Zugerpass, which provides public transport on all trains and busses within Zug for only 54CHF, it has been no trouble getting to where we need to be for a small cost. It is definitely worth getting one of these passes for the month we have been here, as it creates a much easier way to utilise the public transport without paying too much.

### **Overall Programme**

#### **Teaching practice program**

Having the opportunity to see the way that teaching occurs at Tagesschule Elementa has been outstanding. I feel very privileged to be able to have spent so much time in this amazing school with all of the hardworking staff and beautiful children who take so much pride in it. For me, it was interesting being placed in a private school, as I had not been in one before and was curious about how it worked. Tagesschule Elementa blew me away from the first day I was there. The way that each student is treated is so beautiful to see. Everybody different needs are met, the school provided extra services and activities for their students and focus individually on the learners and what they need. Being able to see the way that the classrooms are run and the students learn has been amazing to see, but also having the opportunity to teach them and have support from other teachers has been a great experience. Although we spent most of our time in grades 5 and 6, the school was able to fit us in to see and teach different classes depending on their English schedule.

We have also had the opportunity to teach English classes in grades 3 and 4, as well as observe and help out the grade 1 and 2's in their German lessons. As the lessons are mostly run in German, it was great to be able to move around the different classes where English was the focus, and to be able to teach in these also has been such a great learning experience for the future. While we spent the majority of our time at Elementa teaching English, we were also given the chance to teach lessons in geometry, M+U (which were focused lessons on Australian humanities), and different styles of English lessons.

Through the experience at the school, I have been so happy to engage students in their work, learn from my mentor teachers, and experience the school environment. I have already gained so much from my teaching from my experiences at this school, and look forward to learning even more in my last week here. It is going to be such a sad thing to have to leave this beautiful place after forming such positive relationships with the students and staff there.

Being on this program with Rhiannon has also been an amazing experience. Having to work together in such close quarters has really given me the opportunity to enhance my experience working in teams and understanding other people's ways of working. I believe that it is always a challenge to

adapt to other people's ways of thinking, and to see things in the same way. For us to work together in our teaching, we have had to be patient and explain our own thought with each other to understand the way we both work. It was great to be able to develop our teamwork skills for our teaching practice.

### **Program at the PH Zug**

The classes at the PH Zug have been great. It was good to be able to see how teacher education occurs in another part of the world. Especially seeing as the university is specifically for early and primary education, it was great to see such rich educational content, that even in my short amount of time learning there, I will be able to take in through my own teacher education training. It was great to be able to see the English and English Methodology classes in action. Although they did have a focus on teaching English language to those who don't yet understand it, it will be a great assistance to my teaching for young students, and students who have come from another country and do not understand English to be able to teach it in similar ways.

Providing German language lessons was such a lovely touch to the program. The fact that these lessons were taught by a student at the PH Zug was also such a nice touch. Our teacher, Cedric, was always so helpful in answering our questions, quizzing us on German words, and asking us what we wanted to learn. Towards the end of the program, I really felt like I was able to utilise a lot more German language because of these lessons. I am so grateful to Cedric for giving us his time to help us with our German.

Another great bonus was the city tour of Zug that was organised for us by Thery. It was such a great experience to be able to walk around the town, hear about the history of the town and events of the past, and get some insight into what people think is important in this town. It was fantastic to be able to go inside St Oswald's church, and to try the famous Zuger Kirschtorte. It is something that I would have not experienced otherwise.

### **Difficulties or challenges**

As with any program in an international setting, there will always be challenges being away from home and familiarity. For myself, I found that this program has forced me to embrace my independence. Doing things on your own is always a challenge, especially when you are in a new place and don't speak the language fluently. There are times that I spent alone that I would have loved to be able to call home and talk to family and friends, but there are also times you have to take a step back and put things into perspective. An opportunity like this one rarely comes around in people's lives. Although missing family, friends and familiarity is a big part of the experience, even the thought of being on this amazing program was enough to put this into perspective. People will always be there for you in life, but there are times that you have to take things in your own hands and experience something different to the norm.

One aspect of the program that was a bit of a challenge was the organisation of the school visits at ISZL. Rhiannon and I were completely unsure of what we were supposed to be going and what we were supposed to be doing, and it seemed that the school was also unaware of what we were doing there. I did thoroughly enjoy watching Laura's class as it enabled me to get an insight into what the international school's classroom is like. Her mentor teacher was lovely and took time out of her day to give us a tour of the entire school, which was absolutely fantastic. It was a great experience to be able to see how different the international school is to Elementa, but just the fact that we were unsure of what to do was a bit of a challenge.

### **Personal Evaluation of the stay**

#### **Benefit for your future studies and profession**

This program has given me invaluable benefits for my studies, as well as my teaching in the future. The ability to teach in a foreign country while still studying and developing my personal teaching style has been such an amazing opportunity.

I have been able to gain new skills in my teaching through this program. Being at a German-speaking school has made me more aware of how language in teaching is important. If students don't understand your instructions, they won't be able to do anything. It is important as a teacher to recognise when this is occurring, and to find different ways of checking for student understanding in a task, not just 'do you understand'. This will be an important skill to take through my career, even with English speaking children or children who will come from non-English speaking backgrounds.

This program running for 4 weeks has given me a greater confidence around students, staff, and in my teaching. It is more consecutive time than I have had as a student teacher in the same class, so it is so beneficial to me to see the positive relationships growing throughout my time. Not only that, but having this consecutive time teaching has been such a great help in my teaching confidence also. The more I am in a classroom environments and in teaching situations, the more comfortable I become in my role as a teacher. This program has enabled me to gain that confidence and utilise skills over the course of my time here.

This program has given me a worldly perspective on teaching that I will be able to take throughout my career. It is not very often you have the opportunity to teach internationally, especially when you are still studying. This program has given me insight into the world around me, how classrooms are run in different situations, and what is valued in a different culture. I believe that all of these things are able to be adapted for my own teaching practice and classroom, to create a worldly environment where differences are celebrated.

While I have gain so much through the educational side of this program, I have also gained new life skills and experiences that I will treasure for the rest of my life. I have gained independence, organisation, communication skills, teamwork skills, tolerance and adaptability by participating in this program. I have treasured the time I have spent here in Switzerland, and I wish I could start the experience all over again.

#### **Recommendations for future students**

I have one simple recommendation for future students considering this program, and it is to just do it. It has been such a wonderful experience that has given me so many benefits towards my studies, my future career as a teacher, and my life in general. It is such an amazing experience to have the opportunity to participate in such a wonderful program, and it is not everyday that a program that is so well put together, so beneficial and so easy to participate in comes around. I would recommend doing this program or anything similar to it to anybody and everybody. I am so grateful that I had the opportunity to participate this year. It has been an unforgettable experience to study and teach in Switzerland.