

27/November/2015

Final Report

Information and Support

PH Zug and the International Office of PH Zug were very helpful in regards to offering support and providing information throughout my stay here in Switzerland. I felt completely comfortable emailing Patrick with any questions or concerns throughout my stay knowing that he would respond in a timely manner. Other students I came in contact with at PH Zug were also very friendly and welcoming. Although there wasn't much time to chat with the students during class time I feel that they still made time to ask questions and get to know me. This made me feel like a welcome part of the classroom community.

Classroom teachers at PH Zug also did an excellent job in regards to helping me feel like a contributing part of their classroom, like I belonged there. I recognize the difficulties associated with adding four foreign students to your classroom in the middle of a semester and therefore greatly appreciate the work they put into making us a part of their classroom community. Even in classes where instruction was given in German, both teachers and students did what they could to help us understand the material. Multiple different teachers also took the time to show us materials used in schools in Switzerland, explaining the different concepts and how they are taught.

Living in Switzerland

Jeannette has been an outstanding host. I could not have asked for a better person to stay with here in Switzerland. I have openly adopted her as my mother here and feel lucky to have gotten this chance to stay in her home and get to know her better. She has welcomed me into her home with open arms and I feel very comfortable there. Regarding the higher costs of Switzerland I would definitely say the payment going to our hosts is very reasonable. The only thing I am still unclear about is if meals are covered in the amount of money given to our families or not. I am not sure if this is something that is situational. Either way I would suggest deciding with the hosts before hand what meals are to be covered, if any, with the money they receive and letting the exchange students know upon arrival so they can plan accordingly. That being said, I have found both the living accommodations and the cost very reasonable.

Overall Programme

Personally I feel that this programme was well thought out and executed. Both staff and students at PH Zug were very accommodating, friendly, and helpful. I enjoyed the classes there, especially the chance to experience a variety of different subjects. The lectures taught in English I found very interesting and insightful. Seeing as I don't speak or understand German the

subjects taught in German were hard to stay interested in but I did enjoy the opportunity to experience them. The chance to be on campus and attend classes there provided some great insight. However, I feel that overall my time was best spent in the International School of Zug and Luzern with the students there. For this reason I would limit the days spent at the university to just the first few Fridays in Switzerland rather than all of them. During the time spent at PH Zug, whether it is shortened in the future or not, seeing a variety of different subjects students take is insightful.

Personal Evaluation of the Stay

My experience here in Switzerland has definitely impacted my future studies and profession. Students that come through my future classroom that are learning English as a second language will now be easier to relate to. I also feel I will now better be able to scaffold the learning of English language learners in order to help them better succeed. This experience has also opened my eyes to the possibility of international teaching. I am now seriously considering teaching internationally sometime in my future profession. Without this opportunity to student teach in Switzerland I doubt international teaching would have ever been so appealing.

Luckily there were few points of my stay in Switzerland that I would consider negative. However, three points I would suggest could use some improvement would include the following. First, I would have to restate my above opinion regarding days spent at PH Zug. As I understood from our program at UVU our main purpose in Switzerland was to student teach. Attending classes at PH Zug was a great addition to the student teaching experience provided here. I would simply suggest limiting the days spent at the university so more days could be spent in an actual teaching environment. Limiting days at the university, in my opinion should

not lessen the variety of classes attended there. Having the opportunity to attend a variety of different classes widened my view and helped me better understand the teaching requirements here.

Second, I simply feel that buddy expectations should be laid out for both the exchange students and the buddy provided. I don't feel like I ever completely understood what our buddy was supposed to do or how often we were supposed to see each other. Just to clear up future confusion I suggest telling both buddies and exchange students what the buddy's purpose is or is not so they best know how to utilize each other. Third, overall improvement of communication about calendar events would make more complicated days flow smoother; specifically when students are to be observing each other at their different schools. It would have been nice to have a designed schedule before hand so cooperating teachers and schools could avoid being confused and time could be better spent at the schools.

Three of the major positive points of this experience include PH Zug, my placement in the International School of Zug and Luzern, and my wonderful host Jeannette. PH Zug was very accommodating, helpful, and organized. The International School of Zug and Luzern was also an amazing school to work with and has provided me with many positive experiences and learning opportunities which I hope I will never forget. My eyes have been opened to new ways of teaching and really how much responsibility students can handle if I but trust them. Marie Harris was an amazing teacher to work with. She helped me feel very capable in my abilities to be a teacher. There is much I have learned from her and ways I have grown that I most likely would have missed had I not taken the opportunity to study abroad. Finally, as stated earlier, Jeannette has been an amazing host and has really allowed me to fall in love with Switzerland. I have felt

so comfortable living with her and this means the world to me. Each of these positive aspects of my stay here has helped me grow as a person and future teacher in profound and immeasurable ways.

To all future exchange students that desire a good experience I suggest opening yourself up to the life and opportunities granted you in Switzerland. Get to know the people with whom you come in contact with, especially those you get to live and work with. Enjoy the sites, find things to do that you love (for me this was going out into the beautiful nature). Overall love the things that you do. As with anything, some aspects of your stay in Switzerland will be easier than others it is simply your attitude that will make your experience here positive or negative. So choose to make your experience here in the beautiful land of Switzerland a positive one and I guarantee it will turn out that way.