

PH Zug Final Report

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Throughout the process of preparation for the Switzerland practicum we had a great amount of support from Patrick at the International Office. We were sent plenty of information to assist us with preparation along with what to do when arriving. They offered support and assistance with all aspects of our stay. It was great to know we always had people there if ever we needed assistance. Through unfortunate events of not having a correct charger for my computer I managed to break it within the first week. The International office were kind enough to help me find a temporary laptop for my stay.

Every person that we come into contact with from the PH Zug was always warm and welcoming which was very comforting being in a different environment. It didn't take long at all before we felt like we were at our own campus. The students were all friendly and willing to get to know us and invite us into the tasks throughout the lessons. It was great to see the different activities that are completed in class. There is a lot of practical work of different tasks and activities that you can take back to your school or classroom, which I really enjoyed. The classroom teachers were aware that we were coming into the classes and would always take the time to come and check that we understood the tasks and explain why and how they can be used. It was really interesting in Switzerland if we ask if people speak English they will most likely reply not well or very little but they are more than capable to have a conversation with you. When we are asked if we speak German we say very little and we literally mean about ten words and a few greetings. We did have a tutor to teach us some German which was great, you seem to pick up a bit just through conversation.

We had buddies which we met on the first day who throughout our stay were the most amazing help. We got along really well with our buddies and spent a lot of time outside of the college together. At the college we would always catch up with them for lunch and talk about the different classes that we were attending and discuss the differences to what we have in Australia. Our buddies went to a lot of effort to take us out and show us different parts of Switzerland. We did plenty of different activities like soccer, ice hockey, games nights, festivals, dinners, dancing and then some more touristy things such as sightseeing. It was so nice to have them there even just to talk with or chill out. Our buddies took us up to a

mountain to see the snow because we had never seen it before, it was such an amazing day experiencing the snow and drinking hot chocolate in a restaurant and playing card games. It really was the best day. I only have great things to say about our buddies, they definitely had a great impact on our stay.

I was expecting living in Switzerland to be very expensive. I had spoken to my host before leaving and discussed different aspects like if food is included in the rent. My host was lovely enough to say that food was covered. This might not be the case for all host families. While this was the case for me I was still making sure I bought different things at the supermarket to restock and do my fair share along with household chores. I was living with only one lady, she was so warm and welcoming and made me feel very at home. I felt very comfortable staying with her and she was willing and happy to help. The rent I paid for the four weeks was 500CHF along with pitching in with some groceries. Switzerland is more expensive than Australia but I wouldn't say I really got a shock with the price of anything. It wasn't much over the price you would pay in Australia. If you are in the Zug area I would highly suggest a zugerpass which cost us 58 CHF for the month of our stay. It is a lot cheaper than paying for every trip. If you venture out of Zug you will have to pay a different fare but I found it was still cheaper than paying for a full pass of Switzerland. It was also great that at the school the students have their meals prepared there and we were welcomed to eat there with the students and teachers which meant we didn't have to buy lunch. I'm not sure if this is the case at all schools though.

Our teaching practicum was at a private primary school called Elementa. It was a great school with an international approach. Majority of the students spoke English because they start learning it in grade 1. Some at different levels than others because some had either one or both parents who speak English. It wasn't hard to communicate with the students in a conversation but when teaching it was important to always get a student to repeat it in German in case they missed anything. Originally we were going to be teaching Swiss history but I didn't do as much research as I should have because they have so much history. This put us off to a rocky start with our placement teachers. It was sorted out through honesty and communication of what we were comfortable doing. It is very important to communicate with the teachers if you are unsure of something, I cannot stress this enough. I still taught some areas of history where I felt confident and my teacher was happy with this. I also taught English over the grades 3,4,5&6 along with some sport lessons where we

taught Australian football. Through the lessons we had opportunities where we could teach the students about Australia which we and the students both really enjoyed. The students love learning about Australian animals.

I have gained some amazing experience through this placement and it has only made me feel stronger about becoming a teacher. It was challenging at times but the good outweighed the bad by a long shot. It was great to gain experience into teaching a second language and I would love to continue learning the German language.

Recommendations for future students

Prepare. Make sure you discuss with your school what you will be teaching and be organised and ready to create lessons. Make sure you are confident in the content you will be teaching and if not make sure you communicate this so you can get assistance if needed before the practicum.

Make contact with the other Australians going on the trip. We had a group chat on Facebook and it was great to be able to share ideas and catch up and do activities on the weekends.

I wouldn't worry about getting a sim card before your trip the best deal that we found was at the airport at Zurich with lyca. There was a stand at a store at the exit of the airport.

Phone deals can be pretty expensive but lyca have some great deals.

Wear layers, while outside may be very cold inside the building it is very warm. If you plan on going to the snow on a mountain make sure if you have any water proof clothes to bring them.

Swiss power points are different to the rest of Europe. They look similar but a Swiss one is smaller. So if you are buying an adapter make sure it is correct.

3 positives

Having an amazing host who made me feel very welcome in her home.

Having great buddies who were happy to give us the time to get to know us and take us to explore the different aspects of Switzerland. Everyone at the PH Zug were so helpful.

Experiencing life in another part of the world. This was my first time out of Australia and I have really enjoyed learning about Switzerland.

3 negatives

I would have liked to have started the German lessons at the start of the trip, but I understand that it can be hard to organise times etc.

Not being prepared to teach the Swiss history but this is no one's fault but my own.

Although we always met someone in our classes I would have liked to be in more classes with our buddies.

If any future students are planning on doing the Switzerland practicum I am more than happy for them to send me an email of any Questions they may have.

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