

# Final Report: Questionnaire

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## 1. Information and Support

The information given to before the practicum by the PH Zug was extremely beneficial with allowing me to know what the expectations of the Uni is, information for classes, the country and who my hosts, buddies and other people I would be working/being in contact with. Upon arrival, the PH Zug gave me a binder full of information about the university, surrounding attractions, timetables for classes, further information about the Elementa where the practicum took place and most importantly, chocolate.

The people that I worked with at the PH Zug have all been helpful and pleasant to deal with, even students that I had met that day, were more than happy to show us something, translate German to English and even help us find our class that we lost. Every teacher was welcoming when entering their classes, they even attempted to use English when they could so I could understand.

My classroom teachers Monica and Ida were amazingly helpful when it came to writing up lessons, talking about my lessons and general information about the education system and the goings on in the school. Monica helped me prepare for Swiss History which was hard in itself, this support helped me when I was feeling totally swamped. Overall, my teaching experience was positive, I wish I could stay longer.

The buddies were extremely friendly and helpful when planning activities for us, helping with getting transport tickets and general knowledge about Zug and Switzerland. I feel I have made life-long friends with my buddies and friends that I have met through them, I would happily show them around Australia if given the chance.

## 2. Living in Switzerland

Accommodation was situated in front of a bus stop which was helpful when I first arrived, and was very quiet with limited amounts of traffic. The room had a view of the lake and was within walking distance of hills and a forest that could be a hiking option. It took between 10-15 minutes to get into Zug, about 10 minutes plus a 5 minute walk to the PH Zug and around an hour to Elementa for the practicum. Even though, it was about 50 minutes to get

to Neuheim for placement, there was only one bus change over and wasn't overly busy therefore stress-free. I would usually read a book or look over lesson plans, or maybe take in the scenery on the drive.

The apartment was quite spacious with my host family being away most weekdays as she was busy working in Zurich, which it left it very quiet and not having any issues accessing the bathroom in the morning. Strangely for me, there wasn't a microwave, toaster or TV but I managed to cook around it and watched things on my laptop instead of TV (weirdly, I did not miss TV).

The costs of living in Switzerland is expensive, not going to lie, but there are ways to make your stay cheaper. I managed to find a sim card through the telecom LycaMobile at the airport which was 25 CHF and gave me 3 GB of 4G plus unlimited 3G data once that had finished, I didn't use all my data as you can access all public Wi-Fi with your Swiss number. I bought a Zugerpass which gave me access to all transport within Zug for a mere 58 CHF a month, to purchase this, you are required to have a passport photo so bring extras.

Food when eating at restaurants was a little more expensive than Australia but you can find cheapish kebabs or bread for snacks which were delicious. At the supermarkets, it's again, a little more expensive. If you're on a strict budget, you can do without things like chips, chocolate and soft drink and can easily make pasta for under 5 CHF a day, buying fruit for snacks and bread for sandwiches I definitely recommend if you're heading out for the day to save some cash.

### 3. Overall programme

My teaching practicum was overall very successful, after a rocky start. Adjusting to culture and differing expectations from Australia made it a somewhat difficult transition to from country to country. However, once settled in, I was found my feet and began to gain confidence in my teaching abilities. I was required to teach 5 lessons of Swiss History ranging from 1291-Present, daunting at first, I thoroughly enjoyed the topic and learnt plenty about Switzerland and its history, culture, geography and the surrounds. Even attending an excursion, seeing some sites that I had previously studied and taught. For the other classes, I either team taught with Hannah or observed and helped out wherever I could as most of the other classes were in German. The other lessons we taught were English and Sport which were classes 3/4 and 5/6, the 3/4 classes were non-native, which means it was quite a

challenge to figure out student levels and ideal activities that weren't too easy or hard but overall proved successful and engaging to students. For sport, Hannah and I also team-taught AFL or Aussie rules football, a sport native to Australia, one of which the students had never played before. It engaged the students and it was quite funny as they all attempted to kick, handball and bounce the awkward shape ball.

The Tagesschule Elementa was a beautiful, little, quiet school of 58 students with a lovely faculty, all the classrooms were a nice size with no more than 16 students in one class at a time. There was even a school dog!!! Curriculum wise, the private school kept a similar format to public schools but offered English much earlier (grade 1 opposed to grade 3), incorporated more cooperative learning and individual projects that run throughout the semester, which is where they find a passion and make a presentation with the information they learnt from their research.

The programme offered at the PH Zug featured a variety of lectures from almost everything that the university offered. Some of these lessons were in German but I was able to translate using an app or with the help of other students who could decipher the meaning of the teachers message. The English classes were very beneficial as they covered parts that I had previously covered in Australia but with more depth than my own classes. During these classes I could offer my own input and discussion when asked about what Australian systems are like, etc. A German language class was offered to us free of charge by a student, this was very helpful with grammar but I would have liked to have had more classes or stayed longer to learn more German as this is something that I enjoyed.

Obvious difficulties included time zone changes and cultural/language barriers which were easy enough to navigate the more I began to be confident speaking small amounts of German and adjusted to the time difference, even if my friends and family didn't! (Waking up to 4am phone calls isn't ideal). I didn't find anything particularly challenging during my entire experience that I couldn't overcome such as Swiss History.

#### 4. Personal Evaluation of the stay

This program has greatly improved my overall teaching abilities and confidence, especially teaching a subject like Swiss History that tested my learning abilities and time constraints as I had to learn certain parts days before I taught. The English classes I had attended at the PH

Zug were also beneficial as I could learn more of the process of learning English and the content which was breezed over in Australia.

I strongly recommend students try to learn more German before coming over to Switzerland, the app Duolingo helped but didn't really explain grammar rules to me so it got very hard, very quickly. Researching phone plans, power adapters are also a must and have a good idea of Swiss customs (all shake hands when meeting and saying goodbye). Looking up cost of living; including groceries, public transport, restaurant prices will help you budget before flying over to Switzerland.

#### Personal Evaluation

Positive – the overall teaching experience, making friends and connections in Switzerland where I can compare the two systems and cultures, experiencing the beautiful country Switzerland

Negative – not learning enough German before the programme and during.