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Oct. 21st--Dec. 6th 2019

Final Report

I would say my overall experience has been nothing short of amazing! It has most certainly been better than I had anticipated! Ph Zug did a really great job at finding housing for us, and I couldn't have picked a better host family to live with! When we first arrived in Switzerland, we were welcomed and greeted at the University, went over the requirements and scheduling of our stay, given a tour of the school, and we met our assigned buddies. I felt very comfortable and welcomed from the very beginning. Our Swiss buddies were also very kind and friendly. They made a big effort to spend time with us and show us around the area of Zug. Our cooperating teacher was just as great! He made us feel like we were just as part of the international school system as all of the other teachers. I genuinely couldn't have asked for a more welcoming group of people to work with!

I will say that the international school we were placed in was quite different from the schools back in the United States. Our school had a unique situation in which they didn't have very many students, so they ended up having to combine grades. For example, the classroom we were placed in consisted of 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students, but there were only 10 total. It was very tricky trying to plan lessons that met the needs of each student in each grade. Before this, I had only been in classrooms that had anywhere between 19-25 students, and every student was in the same grade, so this was definitely a new experience for me. The cost of living was also surprise to me. I knew before I left that Switzerland was going to have a higher cost of living, but I didn't realize just how high! I will say that it was a huge help to live with a host family. We did pay a good amount in rent, but we figured out a system to where we would contribute to dinners when we wanted to eat with the family, and they offered to cook for us. It was so nice having dinners with them and feeling like we were a part of their family. I definitely plan on keeping in touch with them and coming back to visit!

I've realized throughout this experience that there has been so much that I have learned that it's hard to write it down. From

a teacher, student, and visitor's perspective, I've learned about: what it's like to have to teach multiple grades at a time, differentiation when it comes to different cultures and languages, curriculum within an international school, and what it is like to be from a foreign land.

If there was anything I could change about this experience, it would have been to attend university classes at the beginning of this trip. I feel like it would have been helpful to have taken the pre-service teacher classes before entering the schools here so we could have an idea of the expectations of the teachers here and learn more about the curriculum before we tried planning our lessons. Other than that, I wouldn't have changed anything else. This truly was an unforgettable experience! I'm forever grateful that I had the opportunity to come here and live in Switzerland and develop relationships with the people here. It's going to be really hard to leave, but how lucky am I to have another place that I love. Thank you!