

EUROPÄISCHE, NAUMBURG, GERMANY

Alexander Savage, St Edmund Hall, 1st Year BA Philosophy, Politics and Economics ☒

WORK PROJECTS

My fellow intern and I were running an English Camp for groups of eight German young people at a time, between 10 and 16 years old. The work revolved around planning and carrying out suitable activities that would be accessible and enjoyable to all of the young people, which also encouraged them to try to speak English. Our host provided us with a lot of advice about what kind of activities had been successful in previous years, as well as making some of his own suggestions for activities that might be appropriate for individual groups. They also took the lead of behaviour management.

DAILY LIFE

Life at the internship was very relaxed. We got up each morning to have breakfast with the young people and lay out the day's activities. We ate all of our meals with them and supervised them throughout the day, finishing at around 10:30 in the evening. There was little external socialising as we were located in a remote village but this allowed us to develop a really close relationship with our hosts and with each other, as we generally enjoyed an hour long chat at the end of each day before going to bed. The main highlight of each day was the spectacular setting, and for me at least, the incredible night sky.

LASTING IMPRESSIONS

I thoroughly enjoyed my internship and it has confirmed my intentions to pursue learning German, and reinforced the notion of working or studying in the country in the future. It allowed me to develop a lot of skills in the area of managing young people, and in particular making and changing plans rapidly as a result of changing circumstances. This prepared me well for the paid work I carried out once I got home. It also allowed me to find out a fair bit about the former East Germany, in particular how life differs there as opposed to in the rest of the country. Naturally some of the cultural schisms left over by the previous political differences, were of great interest to me as a political scientist.



Isobel Whyte, St Catherine's College, 1st Year BA Modern Languages (German) ☒

WORK PROJECTS

My internship took place at the Kulturino English Camps in the Thuringian Forest, and along with one other student from Oxford I was responsible for running the activities during the camps. The aim of the camps was to teach English to German children (aged between 9-16) in a natural environment, through games, projects and other summer camp activities instead of the traditional classroom teaching style. The camps were run overall by a very nice couple, Alex and Katrin, and their family, who took care of a lot of the cooking and household duties, but we helped with all aspects of caring for the children, and were responsible for their welfare, so we were effectively on duty all the time. There were three camps in the month of our internship, and we planned different activities for each week and adapted to the characteristics of each group. The main organiser, Alex, helped us with ideas and gave us advice about what had worked in previous years. He really made us feel at home, it was an incredible environment to work in! Projects we ran included raft building and making a radio show, as well as organising sport, games, walks and other trips around the area, such as giving the children tours around an old mine and gold panning in the river. We mostly ran the activities independently from the host family, in order to give the children a more immersive English-speaking experience, but the behind-the-scenes work we did as a team with the family was essential. We had daily discussions with Alex and Katrin about how the camps were going, and worked together to make some very serious decisions concerning welfare. The outcome of these discussions showed that our input was highly valued, for which I am very grateful. I learned a lot about running an organisation, particularly one in which children are involved and in which you must always be aware of others. In terms of future plans,



Alex was very willing to help me with planning for future internships in the umbrella organisation, and he provided me with a lot of information and contacts that will help me during my year abroad, and hopefully my future career.

DAILY LIFE

I settled in to life in Unterweißbach very quickly, as Alex and Katrin and their children were so kind and accommodating that my internship partner and I quickly felt like part of the family! We had a few days before the first group of children arrived to prepare the house and settle in, and we had some time to explore the forest around the camp. Every group of children had a different dynamic, which was challenging but also very rewarding as we got to know them as individuals as well as adapting to ensure that they were learning English as well as enjoying themselves. They ranged a lot in age, so we would sometimes organise different activities for different age groups within the camp, although we normally managed to find a middle ground so that they could all get on well. A typical day started at 8am with supervising the children while they laid the table for breakfast and fetched rolls from the local bakery. The children had multiple responsibilities throughout the day, such as laying the table and washing up, which gave us a bit of free time. We would then start the morning's activities with yoga, before playing some sport or working on one of our projects. We led all activities in English, and the children became more confident with their speaking very quickly, and we found that a bit of competition really encouraged them to speak more English (e.g. speaking German was often a penalty in a game, and in one camp, we invented a Chicken Run, where they had to run around like a chicken if they spoke German, which went down very well!). After lunch, we would have another round of activities at the camp or go off-site, for example to go on a walk, to the local pool, or to the forest to build shelters. In the evenings we planned a variety of activities, including bonfires, night-swimming, films and games, and we ended every camp with an English talent show. We planned projects to go over the whole week, but mostly we were very flexible and planned as we went along in accordance with what the children wanted to do and which situations encouraged them to speak the most English. Our day ended at around 11pm, although we were still responsible for the children during the night and sometimes had to check on them. When the children went to bed we would have an informal discussion as a team to review the day and plan the next activities. We had a few days off between camps, in which we were able to travel around and experience life in the area, including a trip to Erfurt which was a lot

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LASTING IMPRESSIONS

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I really loved my internship and I am hugely grateful to Alex and Katrin for choosing me to be a part of their organisation and summer camps. It was a very individual experience and although it was not like a traditional office-based internship, I learned a huge amount about language teaching, caring for children, working as a team in a small organisation and thinking on my feet in an environment that was often very fast-paced and required strong decision making skills. I was also able to develop my leadership and organisational skills, which will be very useful for any future career. As a German student I have visited Germany a lot, but I normally stay in cities - I'm currently in Düsseldorf, which is a huge contrast with life in a Thuringian village. Living in a camp that is so close to nature was a wonderful experience and I formed lasting friendships with my team and host family, so would love to return one day. I am very interested in recent German history, so living in a village that was a popular tourist destination in the GDR was very interesting. The way of life and customs opened my eyes to the lasting differences between East and West Germany. The work I did was incredibly active and rewarding, as there was a huge improvement in the confidence and language skills of the children during their time at the camps, and the feedback we got from them was very positive, so I am proud of what we achieved. I also found that I became a lot more confident with my German, and as a result I am spending a lot more time studying and working in Germany this summer than planned. The internship has also made me consider teaching or working with children for my year abroad and possibly as part of my career, and it has made me very enthusiastic about working in Germany in the future. My internship experience was overwhelmingly positive and I hope to work with Europäische Projektwerkstatt Kultur again at some point in the future!

