

My teaching experience in Nei-Li Primary School

Daniëlle Viljoen



Arriving at school each morning is an absolute treat. When I walk towards the school, I see some of my students, and hearing little voices echo “Teacher Danielle!” all the way from the gate to the office, just brightens my morning - especially when a student chooses to accompany me by taking my hand and walking me to the staircase. When I get to my desk, I am greeted by cards and drawings, gifts from students who took the time to make little pieces of art for their teacher. This is my everyday life here in Nei-Li Primary School.

When I first arrived, I was so excited to start my first teaching experience in a foreign country. I was keen on meeting the students, my co-workers and being a part of the bilingual program. And, it is fair to say that it started with a storm. As a new foreign teacher, I was overwhelmed with everything that was required from me, and what needed to be done – from lesson planning, to the preparations for each class. But I wasn’t alone. I was offered assistance, advice, and constructive criticism whenever it was needed. The amount of support I was given is astonishing, not only from the local teachers, but from the foreign teachers as well.

I taught three different subjects in my time here in this school – Art, Life Course and PE to first and second graders. Teaching PE as a bilingual subject was very complicated. I had to learn how to have a

stronger presence, different techniques to plan a lesson, and how to make good use of the time, which will not just benefit the students, but it will also give less time for idle hands. Switching from PE to art was a challenge. Art as a subject should be more lighthearted, and creativity doesn't work well with a stern voice. Whereas in Life Course it is a combination of the two. This is where all the creativity should flow, not only to make the topic interesting for the students, but meaningful and fun as well. I could tell this was not only something I had to adjust to, but the students had to adjust to the change in teaching techniques too. Each subject has its own set of rules and routines, and it was a complicated process to teach this to the students.

Nearing the end of my second year here in Nei-Li Primary School, I can say with certainty that the time and effort that I put into my work here as a teacher was worth it. Not only did I grow and improve as a teacher, but I can see the progress and improvement in my students. I grew confident in my work, doing research for new teaching methods and ideas, trying different things whenever the chance arises, just to ensure that the lesson and topics are as interesting as possible. This is what drives me here as a teacher in Nei-Li Primary School.