



New Year reflection – Neujahrsreflexion

Benjamin Euen



Comenius assistant teacher – Comenius Assistenzlehrer

Slovenia – Slowenien

2009/2010

Danila Kumar Elementary School



About me – Über mich

I was born in Berlin in 1985. My Family lives in Minden. I study Pedagogy for children with special needs at the Technical University Dortmund. My studies are specialized in education for children with physical disabilities and special needs in learning. My subjects are mathematics and science & social studies. As a scout I take part in two of the largest youth organisations in the world (WOSM & WAGGGS). Furthermore, I play drums & percussion and I like to take part in improvisation theatre. I like sports and playing Shuttlecock. In Ljubljana, I am here as a Comenius assistant teacher.



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New Year reflection - Neujahrsreflexion

I am taking part in the Comenius program, which is part of the Lifelong Learning Program from the European Union. Comenius supports intercultural exchange and language learning for pupils and educational staff. For me it is a great opportunity to experience time in another country. I am teaching at the international department of the OŠ DANILE KUMAR. I assist mainly in German and mathematic lessons. I support individual students, give lessons for whole classes or work together with small groups. I also lead a Math Club, a German Workshop and I support students working in the Research Club. My assistantship started on 24.08.2009 and will end on 30.06.2010. To develop my teaching skills, to improve an already good cooperation and a useful time as assistant teacher, I have decided to write a New Year reflection.

School – Schule



School description – Schulbeschreibung

“Danila Kumar Elementary School is a medium size elementary school located in a quiet suburb of Ljubljana, only ten minutes away from the city centre and just half a kilometre from the major ring highway that circles Ljubljana.

Danila Kumar is a state owned school that has been offering an international programme since 1993. Originally responding to a request from the Slovenian Ministry of Education, Danila Kumar provides an international elementary and secondary school programme for children of foreign nationals living in Slovenia. The Ministry of Education subsidises (the) school, covering more than half of the operational costs. This explains why the tuition fees at Danila Kumar are substantially lower than at other international schools.

Since the opening of the international department in 1993, teachers and administrators have worked diligently and with enthusiasm to build a quality educational programme that stimulates learning, generates good learning habits and promotes positive attitudes. [...] Last school year, (Danila Kumar) welcomed children representing 40 different countries.

[...] (It is) a small school: each class has from 12-18 students, which provides an excellent teacher-pupil ratio. The teaching staff at Danila Kumar prides itself on maintaining a close rapport with each of the students; in fact, all visitors can feel the atmosphere of friendly camaraderie.” (Danila Kumar Elementary School (2009). *Introduction*. Available: <http://en.os-danilekumar.si/introduction/> [29.12.2009].)

You can find more information concerning the teaching philosophy on the webpage of the school: <http://en.os-danilekumar.si/teaching-philosophy/>



Cooperation - Zusammenarbeit

I feel welcome in the school. After my arrival in Slovenia, the headmistress of my department picked me up and gave me a tour through the city and invited me for lunch. The teachers who I met were open minded and interested to cooperate.

I have been working together with 7 different teachers. At the beginning I was making sure to contact each teacher about our cooperation. The cooperation is different depending to the situation in the class. I have worked with single students, small groups or whole classes. I have planned lessons alone or together with the teachers.

My mentor is the home-room-teacher in grade five and PYP-coordinator. I assist her once per week in mathematics. Whenever I was leading the lesson, we had a reflection on the same day. There is also time to discuss other things, if necessary.

I take part in conferences such as workshops and events. In the conferences, the staff are working on relevant topics to develop the learning and teaching processes, for example, inquiry based teaching and differentiation.

When I wanted to have days off for special reasons, it was not a problem. In return I gave substitute lessons if necessary. For example, I was absent for one week in November to go as delegate to the Convention of the Protestant Church of Westphalia.

The school supports me with a bus pass and I can use the computers in the staff room to work or communicate with people in Germany, even in the afternoons and evenings.





Reflection - Reflexion

Part of the conferences or workshops, is that the teachers are asked to write their personal reflection of the month. This is a helpful tool in addition to the reflection about lessons and my assistantship with my mentor.

Before the holidays I asked every teacher who I cooperate with, for a small feedback for my reflection. They could give me a feedback in their own way, but I also prepared some questions. I asked questions concerning the cooperation “Our cooperation could be improved, if...” and “In 2010, Benjamin will be a useful asset, because...” as well as a question on personal feedback “If Benjamin’s assistantship would end today, I would suggest for him to...”.

I often meet some other Comenius assistants in Ljubljana. We have a lot of fun together - for example at our international dinner evenings. Other than that mentioned, we also talk a lot about our work in school, which is very helpful for all of us. In addition to the reflection in school, this is another helpful part of supervising my assistantship.





Time table – Stundenplan

Benjamin Euen		1.9.2009 – 18.12.2010 (14 weeks)				
	ponedeljek	torek	sreda	četrtak	petek	
8.10-8.55	Math 5			Math 7		
9.00-9.45	Math 3			Math 8		
10.15-11.00	Math 2	German 8		Math 4		
11.05-11.50		Math 8		German 5		
11.55-12.40				German 7		
12.45-13.30		German 6				
13.50-14.35	Research Club	Extra German		Math Club		
14.40-15.25	Research Club					
Additional:						
German Workshop						
English/German Dijaski Dom						

My timetable gave me the possibility to join different learning groups. On the other hand, it was a challenge to be in almost every learning group only once per week. I had to catch up and to organize a lot to guarantee continuity together with the teachers. The planning from small projects or units longer than one lesson was even more challenging. For this reasons I will change my timetable for the New Year:

Benjamin Euen		4.1.2010 – 26.3.2010 (12 weeks)				
	ponedeljek	torek	sreda	četrtak	petek	
8.10-8.55	Math 5	German Conversation	Learning Slovene			
9.00-9.45	Math 3	Math 3	Math 5	Math 8		
10.15-11.00		German 8		German 6		
11.05-11.50		Math 8				
11.55-12.40						
12.45-13.30		German 6	English for teacher	German 8		
13.50-14.35	Research Club	Extra German		Math Club		
14.40-15.25	Research Club					
Additional:						
German Workshop						
English/German Dijaski Dom						
Participation in international workshops (1/month) and MYP-meetings (2/month)						

Benjamin Euen		7.4.2010 – 24.6.2010 (11 weeks)				
	ponedeljek	torek	sreda	četrtak	petek	
8.10-8.55	Math 4	German Conversation	Learning Slovene	Math 7		
9.00-9.45	(Math 3)	Math 2	Math 7	(Math 3)		
10.15-11.00	Math 2			Math 4		
11.05-11.50		Deutsch 7		Deutsch 5		
11.55-12.40		Deutsch 5		Deutsch 7		
12.45-13.30			English for teacher			
13.50-14.35	Research Club	Extra German		Math Club		
14.40-15.25	Research Club					
Additional:						
German Workshop						
English/German Dijaski Dom						
Participation in international workshops (1/month) and MYP-meetings (2/month)						



I participate in the international workshops, which take part once per month and in the MYP-meetings, which are two times per month.

I have some additional and extracurricular lessons. In the school, I lead the Mathematic Club and I help weaker students in the Extra German lessons. Furthermore, I assist the teacher, who is responsible for the Research Club. We support students in writing up their own research work. In the German Workshop, I work together with German students mainly on German writing skills. In my boarding house, I give an extra lesson to a student from Bosnia. She needs help to learn German grammar and English.

German conversation is an additional offer for parents, which I have been leading since January.

My wish was to lead or support some creative workshops in the afternoon, like percussion or theatre, but according to my other additional and extracurricular lessons, that was not possible. But I supported a one-day-workshop to build sound boards and I was leading an international creative song-project in the Dijaski Dom and when I have time, I join a band.

My second timetable is not totally finalised, because some extra lessons end or there could be other needs.

My school & my boarding house





Students & Lessons – Schüler & Unterricht

As it is an international school, there are many different nationalities represented in the group of students. A lot of students are able to speak several languages. Most students lived in another country before, they can speak their mother language and English is the teaching language. When they come to Slovenia, they learn Slovene and from grade 5 onwards they learn French or German.

At the beginning of my assistantship, I bought some mathematic books, which are based on didactic concepts I adapted during my study. For German lessons I successfully asked a big publishing house for free language books.

The students accept my offers and all in all they cooperate well with me as assistant teacher. Certainly the students liked testing the limits - especially when I had lessons with them alone. I responded by drawing clear lines, keeping school rules, sharing information about learning processes and making agreements with teachers. Furthermore, I tried to follow my lesson plans in a motivated way instead of wasting time with long discussions.

A result of the reflection with my mentor is that I have to work on my instructions to make them more clear and shorter. I should give more time limits. Concerning the instructions, it has been a challenge to make the tasks target appropriate groups, as well as to make sure that the clarity does not get lost in my english expressions.

As described, I was in almost all learning groups only once per week, that makes it also more difficult to learn all the students' names. The changed timetable gives me the chance to plan for longer and to cooperate more consistently.

Concerning my teaching style and cooperation I received a lot of positive feedback from the teachers. They like my *“fresh ideas”* and *“my approach to maths explanations”*. Teachers characterise me as a *“responsible and motivated assistant”* and observed that *“students like and respect me”*. Furthermore they encourage me to *“keep it up with the good work”* (*“You have a great potential to develop into a very successful teacher”*).



Units and projects – Unterrichtseinheiten und Projekte

Some of my units...



I started with introduction lessons.

In these lessons I combined information about me,

Germany and Europe with mathematic tasks:

„I was born in Berlin. The Fall of the Berlin Wall was 20 years ago. At this time I was 4. How old are am I today?“

During the introduction lessons I did a lot of tasks in

German, but also in mathematics lessons and I also did

body percussion with the students.

I prepared a unit on ferrets for the German lesson:

Fragen zur Haltung von Frettchen



Mit welchen Tieren können Frettchen gut zuzammen gehalten werden?

Warum sollten Frettchen mindestens zu zweit gehalten werden?

Warum können Frettchen nicht mit Nagern und Vögeln zusammen gehalten werden?



Stimmt es, dass Frettchen viel Bewegung brauchen?

Können Frettchen beißen?

Stimmt es, dass Jungtiere fast den ganzen Tag schlafen?



Wie sollte die Wohnung eingerichtet sein?

Was sollte im Gehege, oder Käfig vorhanden sein?

Warum muss der Käfig sehr fest und dicht sein?



Stimmt es, dass Frettchen stinken?

Sind Frettchen stubenrein?

Riechen die männlichen, oder die weiblichen Tiere strenger?

I worked with music (step into German material):

Step into German
Musik im Unterricht



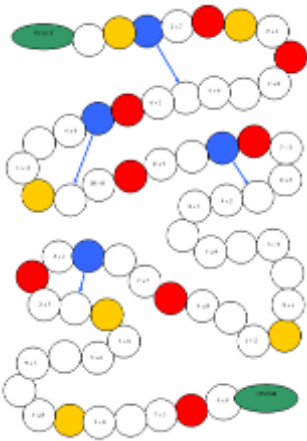
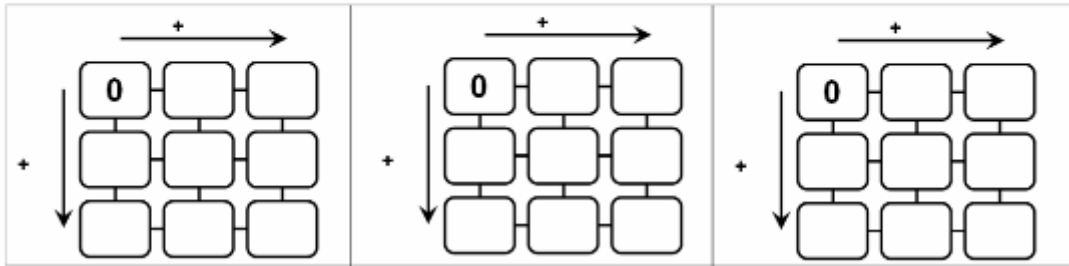



Wir sind Helden

Nur ein Wort

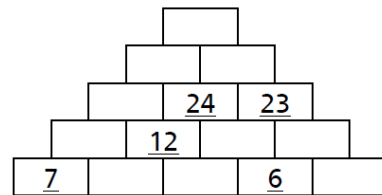
I made a mathematics interview with a special needs student. The task was:

Find as many grids as possible with the **target number 20!**
How many can you find?



Beside station work on the topic of division, I also prepared different games on different topics.

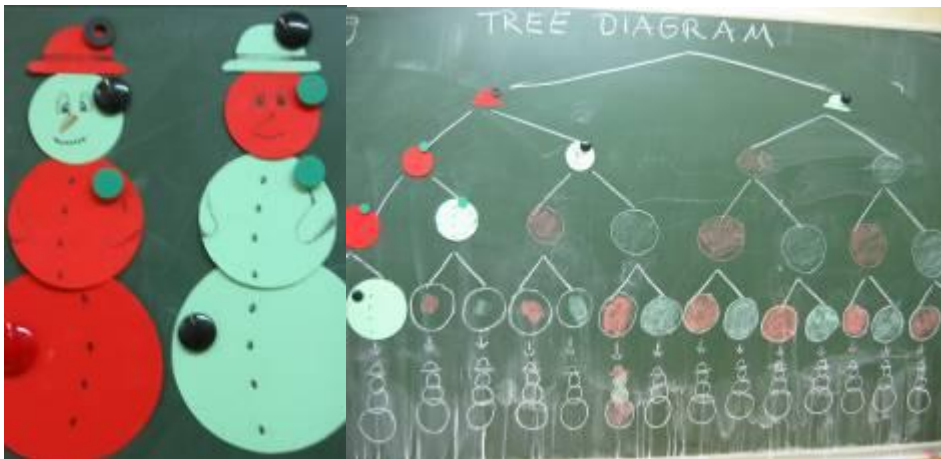
I worked with number walls.



I helped weaker students, who had not yet adopted proper number concepts for their grade level.

I created material to work on probability:

How many different snowmen?



Some other projects I was involved in...

I helped to organize and to prepare students for the European Day of Languages



I coordinated the participation and performances from our students at the European Language Label Ceremony

DANILA KUMAR PERFORMS AT EU EUROPEAN LANGUAGE LABEL CEREMONY

On Wednesday, 2 December, students of Danila Kumar took part in the program of the prize giving ceremony for the best language projects under the EU EUROPEAN LANGUAGE LABEL initiative, which took place at Grad Fužine castle in Ljubljana. Students from grades 1, 2, 4 and 6 performed singing and poem recitals in some of their mother tongues.



I am glad, that I could support the sound board workshop – I learned a lot!



Together with another teacher, I prepared an orientation and a student book for the MYP Science day. Students found their way by using different methods of orientation (pictures, map, GPS). On the way they had to identify trees, to draw them and to collect leaves.



I took part in the SOCIAL DAY, visiting the PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, SPORTS DAY, CULTURE DAY etc...





Learning group specific – Lerngruppenspezifische Reflexion

The reflection for every learning group is important for me, but as I have a lot of different learning groups, I will not present them here...

With some teachers I will continue to cooperate in a way that we rotate in leading the lessons, with others I might plan more lessons together. For some learning groups I will prepare special parts of the lessons, in others I will focus even more on working together with special needs students in order to support them and to create a quiet working atmosphere in the class. In other learning groups, again the teacher and me will rotate between leading the lesson and focusing on special help for weaker students. I will work more on giving clear and short instructions and I will try to learn all the names.

Furthermore, the request of some teachers is to support the further development of differentiated learning processes. Besides some points to improve, I have received very positive feedback from the teachers and all of them like our cooperation.



Living - Leben

Accommodation – Unterkunft

For the first week I stayed in a hostel in the city centre. That was nice, because I had the best opportunities to discover Ljubljana. It is not that easy to find accommodation in Ljubljana. The headmistress of my department in the school helped me and found accommodation in a boarding house for high school students.

My first room



Internationals at Dijaski Dom



My room



When I was a high school student, I lived at home and since starting my studies, I have been living in a shared flat in Dortmund. So I never had the experience of living in a boarding house. First I had a room for my own. After that I was sharing the room with an Argentinean and a Hungarian man. Now I have a room of my own again. On one hand I do not like sharing a room. I am a person who likes his freedom. It is good to have the possibility to work or sleep whenever you want or just to close the door after you and keep the world outside. On the other hand I would describe myself as a social person and I had luck with my roommates. If you ask young people in Slovenia about sharing a room you will get very different answers.

Language – Sprache

The teaching language at the school is English. I am happy that I took two English courses at the university and there will be an English course for teachers at my school next year.

I use the normal Slovenian forms to be polite. Because of my travelling during the autumn holidays and my week of duty in Germany I could not take a language course. In the New Year I will take part in the language course for parents at the school and I will search for an additional language course in the evening.

Trips and Places – Ausflüge und Orte

Some pictures from Ljubljana...



Some locations in Slovenia...



People, Culture, Activities, - Leute, Kultur, Aktivitäten

You said that you are glad to be here. Why? What do you like in Slovenia and what don't you like?

I was happy when I was told that I would be here, because I already met some people from Ljubljana at a Scout event. It is my first time in Slovenia, but I really enjoy being here. It is great to have mountains, caves, the sea-side and that many places in Europe are close. I love Ljubljana with its pretty and romantic city centre, Tivoli and the castle view. I also met a lot of friendly, open-minded people. What don't I like? Well - bureaucracy – even though it seems to be the same as in other European countries. For example I had to go several times to the foreigner's office to get my temporary residence extended. (Part of my interview for the Dijaski Dom)

As I teach at an international school, I cannot say much about the Slovenian school system. What I know is that in Slovenia, children go to the elementary school for 9 years . That is, in my opinion, much better than to separate children after grade 4 as is usual in many of the Federal States of Germany.

Beside the situation of accommodation, I cannot see so many differences between young people in Germany and in Slovenia. I think there are differences between young people in Slovenia, as well as between young people in Germany. In Slovenian schools the students wear slippers even in higher grades and if you visit somebody at home, they will ask you if you want some. In Slovenia the people say „Lahko noč“ (good night), if they see you for the last time in the evening. I would say „Gute Nacht“ to somebody in Germany only immediately before going to bed.

I do a lot of things together with the internationals in the boarding house and the other Comenius assistants. I meet Slovenian people and friends from the scouts. I use my free Fridays for partying or travelling. For the winter time I have to search for some indoor sport activity.

More about food and culture next time...



Comunication and Advertisment – Kommunikation und Werbung

Of course I explain to the people who I meet about Comenius. I also gave an interview for the newspaper of my boarding house and I am writing a blog. It would be great to have a newspaper article in the next year.

Fazit and „To do“ – Fazit und „To do“

I applied with a very open mind. I could have become a Comenius assistant in every town of Europe and in different types of school. I thought that the town and school are in the end more important than the European country. To gain practical experiences abroad is a great chance for me. Now I am in Slovenia and I like it. I am teaching at an international school, I have to teach in English, I have different learning groups and arrangements and a few students with special needs. The cooperation with the school and the teachers is good, the assistantship keeps me busy and I like to teach. I live in a boarding house, I travel as much as possible to discover the country and the countries around, I have international and Slovenian friends and I feel **SLOVE**nia!



Of course, every time there is something more to develop and to do 😊

The secret part of the document includes my personal TO-DO-List with results of the reflection ;-)