

UNH Program Teams Swiss Students with Local Students

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DURHAM, N.H. -- Twenty-five teachers-in-training from Switzerland are serving short-term internships at several elementary schools in New Hampshire and one in Massachusetts as part of a program based at the University of New Hampshire.

The Swiss students are majors in elementary education at Teacher's College of the Canton of Zurich, which contracted with UNH's English as a Second Language (ESL) Institute for this program. During their 12 weeks here, they will improve their fluency in English and work as student teachers in primary-grade classrooms.

The program, a collaborative effort between the ESL Institute and the UNH Department of Education, is in its second year. Mary Clark, professor of English and director of the ESL Institute, says the students receive five weeks of intensive instruction in English and complete a series of workshops in children's literature.

During their initial weeks at UNH, the Swiss students worked closely with Associate Professor Grant Cioffi, chair of the UNH Department of Education and coordinator of the internships, and a team of graduate students. Now they have settled in with host families in Barrington, Deerfield, Bartlett, Plymouth, and Edgartown, Mass., and will work for six weeks in local schools, under Cioffi's supervision.

These students expect to teach English in elementary schools in Switzerland, says Clark. German is the primary language of the Zurich area. "After completing their teacher-training program in Switzerland, these students will be employed as 'immersion' teachers in Swiss primary schools, meaning that they will introduce Swiss students to English by teaching them in English, and using appropriate contextual supports so that the students understand what is being said. This is a new program, which is being introduced on a trial basis in the Zurich area," adds Clark.

The director of Teacher's College of the Canton of Zurich, Heinrich Wirth, will speak at UNH Friday, Oct. 6, as part of the Center for International Education's

International Seminar Series. His talk, "Languages and Language Education in a Multicultural and Multilingual Society: Switzerland and the Challenge of Globalization," will be held in the Memorial Union Building, room 330, beginning at 4 p.m., and is open to the public. For more information on the International Seminar Series, call 862-2398.

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