

Project Management Report

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1. Introduction

Studying in Europe has a big influence on me, and this semester is also the most memorable semester in my college life. We are lucky to be invited by Prof. Schmied to study in Chemnitz, a small but interesting city in Germany. Before coming here, we had prepared for a whole summer. At first, we prepared for the interview with Prof. Schmied and then we wrote our first personal resume in English. After the decision made by Prof., we booked our flight and prepared all the documents needed for the Visa and APS. This process was new to us, but we did learn a lot from this. Thanks to this process, now we are easy with all the challenges in living and traveling in Europe.

Studying in Germany is really different from it in China. In China, our school and teachers arranged all the courses for us, we don't have to collect the information about the courses and ask classmates or others about choosing courses. Also In China, everyone was belong to different units of classes, we meet with each other and take the course together, we often participates in group activities, but in Germany, it's different, students have different courses and we only meet in class time, so at first, I was quite uneasy about this. With time going, now I am used to this.

2. Preparation for Chemnitz

For most of us, this is the first time studying abroad, it is absolutely different from traveling abroad. We might meet some problems when we go abroad, but it is also a precious life experience for us.

Before the information session given by Prof. Schmied, we all have no ideas of TUC, this is a first year program for SIS, to be honest we had never heard the city Chemnitz before. After the first introduction, we knew that Chemnitz is a small city in Germany, and it locates on the east. Also Prof. Schmied emphasizes the cost of living in Chemnitz is fairly low comparing to other cities in Germany, when we came here, we found it is true. This is an advantage for Chinese students studying abroad, our families don't have to afford too much burden. So we can study in an ease way in Germany, I think this is better for doing research.

After the information session, we also did a research of TUC by ourselves. To our surprise, TUC has a good reputation among students. Also, Prof. Schmied gave us a detailed study plan in China, this plan is really helpful for us to make our own study plan in this semester, I really appreciated this plan.

The first step of studying abroad is Visa, as the group leader of the Chinese students, I was responsible for all kinds of things in the preparation process. I was unfamiliar with Visa, I had never applied for the visa before, so the application for the German Visa was the first challenge for me. The first process is applying for the APS, a special certification in DAAD, after I searched online and asked help for my friends and classmates, I have a rough idea of this, but that is not enough, because in this process I found sometimes the advice or suggestions online are not the same as those from my friends or teachers, so I decided find the answer by myself. I tried to phone the office worker in the embassy, but I can not get in touch with them, they never reply me. Then I managed to write them email, finally I got their reply. This method is only useful for the later process, for example, the bank account and the healthy insurance, once I have some questions about the document, I will find the answer by myself, it was complicated but interesting, and I am sure that I will be an reliable advisor for applying for the Germany Visa.

After preparing for the visa, we decided to book the ticket, Chemnitz is not a big city, so there is no direct flight for us to book, and Berlin is the capital city, it is not far from Chemnitz, also the direct flight between Hongkong and Berlin is cheaper, and we can take the train or Bus to Chemnitz. After discussion, we decided to take the train to Chemnitz, and this was my first time booking tickets on DB, but it was convenient, thanks to the design of DB.

3. First impression about Germany

When our flight landed, it was 19 pm in Berlin, we were surprised that most of the shops are closed that time, because in China, shops will never close so early, luckily the bus was still in operation, we bought the bus tickets with the help of a beautiful young lady, and then we changed 2 subways to arrive at our hotel, it was too late for us to check in at that time so we can only use the self-check in service, actually it is not so convenient, it took us nearly one hour to get in the room.

Next day we asked the hotel to call a taxi for us, and we took the taxi to the Berlin Hbf. German are very nice and friendly, thanks for their help on the way to Chemnitz.

We took the ICE to Leipzig first and then we took RB to Chemnitz, the ICE is the high-speed train in Germany, and it is very comfortable for us. When we arrived in Chemnitz, our buddy and her friends had been already waiting for us at the station, and thanks for their help to take us to our dormitory. The moment we got off the train, we found that it is a really tiny city, most of the people on the street are old-aged people, perhaps, the young are working in big cities. But it is quiet and the fresh air is what we appreciate in China, pedestrians walk at ease, not like Chinese, we are always busy for everything.

After we settled down in Chemnitz, we had a lot to do. The first thing is buying what we need in our dorm, it took me nearly 2 weeks to buy them all, the reason why it took me such a long time is that we arrived in Chemnitz on Saturday, and on Sunday all the shops will close, also I had to buy something from different shops, they locates in different area. After the first weekend, we started our German course, and in this week, we set about all kinds of documents in Germany, the first is the lease contract, thanks for the check list

made by the Buddy program. They wrote clearly on the list where we should go and what we should do first, also they noted the office hours of different offices, this is really useful, even now I often check the list when I need the help.

4. Study in Chemnitz

This is my first time studying abroad, before coming here, I had heard that studying in Germany is not an easy work, many students have to prolong their academic years to graduate successfully. However, it is different in my country, in China it is not so difficult to graduate successfully but if you want to get A, you have to work so hard.

Prof. Schmied had made a detailed learning plan for us, he had chosen some meaningful courses for us, for example, The Introduction to English Linguistics and The Applied Linguistics, These 2 courses are also the part of my bachelor degree in SYSU. In my second college year, we had chosen the Introduction to Lexicology, it is a branch of Linguistics, also in these semester, we also have some chapters of this branch. So now I can make a clear difference in English learning between China and Germany.

Last year in SYSU, our Lexicology teacher ordered us spend more time in reciting the definitions of lexicology terms and their usage in languages, in the final exam, all the questions are multiple choice, we need to chose the correct answer according to the definition and their usages. However, this year in Chemnitz, we don't have to recite the detailed definition of those terms, but Prof. Schmied and assistant teachers gave us some questions to answer, this process exert an influence on our understanding of those terms, also in the final test last month, Prof. Schmied gave us some pictures and ordered us to describe those pictures with the knowledge we learned this semester, if we only recite the definition, it might be difficult for us to answer the question. Those abstract pictures need deep understanding of what we had learned.

I also chose another 2 English courses, the first one is Accessing with President Obama, to be honest, this one is a bit difficult for me. This course requires weekly reading, in China our school also arranges weekly reading for us, and every week our teacher arrange a weekly test according to the reading

material. This is a good way for us to strengthen our understanding of the material, however, in Chemnitz, our teacher will not give us the weekly test, but she will hold weekly discussion, and all of us have the chance to show our understanding of the reading material, this arrangement required us to have a deep understanding of the weekly reading material, if not, we can not share our ideas or answer the questions. And in Chemnitz, the teacher also requires a term paper for us, it is unfamiliar for SYSU students, we only write papers in our writing class, for reading courses we only have to attend an reading test in the final exam. Also, the term paper requires 12-pages, I had never written such a long passages in English, and this term paper also has some strict requirements in citation and the references, to meet these requirements, we have searched the rules of writing academic papers, after several times of revising, I wrote a research proposal of the paper, but the time, it did pass and the teacher told me that in my research proposal, I did not clearly define my ideas, and this problem makes my paper unreflecting, and I made 2 appointments with my teacher and revised the paper for 3 times. Now it passed, after this semester I have a clear understanding of paper writing, it will be beneficial for my graduate thesis in next year.

Another course is the Study of Alfred Hitchcock, a famous Britain director, he was famous for his horror film, every week in class we discuss one of his movies and one group will do a presentation of this movie, and every class our teacher will give us some definitions of movie terms, this part lets us know more details about the movie making. An Italian friend and I formed into a presentation group, we are ordered to do the presentation of the film Birds, it was my first time to do the presentation of a film, after discussions, we decided to focus on the symbolism of this film. We don't have a final test for this film, but we also need to finish one term paper according to what we have learned in this course. As for me, this paper is a bit difficult, because I am unfamiliar with the knowledge of movie making and analyzing movies. To finish the report, I borrowed some academic books about movie making in the library, and after I read some chapters, I came up with some ideas of the paper. Later, I searched on the Internet about the movie-making, also found some ideas of my paper.

I also chose one German course in Chemnitz, my level is A2.2, the start level for foreign learners, learning German in a German-speaking country is a different experience for me. In China, German is my second foreign language as my deputy major, our German teacher in SYSU give us 2 lessons a week, and every week we have to recite some new works. But in Chemnitz, our teacher will not give us some new words to recite on purpose, she will make some opportunities for us to speak in German in public, and in this way we will use the word we have learned before. After one semester of German learning, I can obviously feel the improvement of my German speaking, I think after another semester of German learning in Chemnitz, I can handle the daily communication in German, it will be beneficial for my future learning. If I want to continue my future study in German, improving my German to Level C1 is necessary for me to receive some satisfied offer from German colleges. Last December, I met a guy from France, he got C2 language certification in Chemnitz, he told me the secret of German learning is opening our mouth, we must bravely open the mouth, then we improve our German. I quite agree his idea, and now I use every opportunity in my life to practice my German, and I did feel the improvement. This summer I will be back to China and I will still use this method to practice, I will try my best to reach the C2 level in the near future.

5. Project management Course

Prof. Schmied arranged the Project Management for us and we had already knew this in China, but we don't know more details about it. The first meeting of course looks like a General Assembly, we came from different countries and we are also in different ages, but now we are ordered to stay in one classroom and finish different projects together.

In the first meeting, Prof. Schmied introduced the concept of the Project Management and explained how it works in his class. What attracts me is the usage of blog, Blog in China was used as a platform to write our own stories or our thoughts, but here in this course, Prof. Schmied asked us to use the blog as a platform to document the process of our projects, and every week we have

to update the information on this platform, if anyone has some ideas and problems, they can upload them to this platform and other students can answer it when they say the updates. This method is quite effective for us to cooperate, as I said we only meet with each other once a week, and it is difficult for us to finish all the assignment in only 2 hours, so we need this platform to connect us. With this platform, we can share our ideas even in our apartments. I like this method and I will also introduce it to my classmates in China.

After several weeks of brainstorming, we had formed an outline of the projects for this semester, we decided some destinations for our group trips and 2 big parties for this semester. Then we formed into different groups, each group was responsible for one project, and I was responsible for the Chinese Evening.

In this course, none of us are from Germany, but some of us can speak German quite well as a native speaker, most of our Chinese students are Bachelor students but those non-Chinese students are not, some of them are Master or Phd. And even some of them are teachers, it is quite unfamiliar for us, because it is quite difficult for us to arrange a meeting outside the class time. However, I can learned a lot from them, sometimes they will share us some useful information about exams or our majors. They did give us a lot of help in Chemnitz.

6. Special Events in Chemnitz

The first group trip for us is the Bergparade, a local festival in Chemnitz, it's like a parade for the whole city workers, different group of workers formed into different groups. We met on 28th Nov by the big clock near the central bus station, it was so cold that day, but most of us still attended the parade on time. To our surprise, it was a city parade, more than 1000 citizens attended, people from different industries walked in different groups, they even have their own flags and costumes to show their industries. It's new to Chinese students, we have never seen such an interesting festival in China.

The second group is on 6th Dec. in Königstein, we planned to visit the Christmas market here. Königstein Fortress (German: *Festung Königstein*), the "Saxon Bastille", is a hilltop fortress near Dresden, in Saxon Switzerland,

Germany, above the town of Königstein on the left bank of the River Elbe. It is one of the largest hilltop fortifications in Europe and sits atop the table hill of the same name. Königstein was never taken, not even during World War II. However, on April 17, 1942. This area used to be the national prison in Germany, but due to their well preservation, and its wonderful landscape, now it is a famous tourism spot in Dresden, every year Königstein welcomes 700,000 tourists.

The third trip is on 11th Dec, we planned to visit the Christmas market in Leipzig, the capital city in Sachens, Leipzig is bigger than Chemnitz, so is the Christmas market, Christmas market is a culture symbol of Germany, every year Christmas markets showed up everyone. To be honest, Christmas for western countries equals to the Spring festival in China, so it's a great opportunity for us to experience this holiday in Germany. In the Christmas market, there are a lot of delicious food and drinks for us to choose, the most famous drink in the market is the Red wine, I have heard this drink from a lot of people, I tried one cup that day, it's not bad. Also the most famous food is the Bratwurst, it's the symbol of German food, it tastes good. By the way there are also a lot of handcrafts in the market.

7. Christmas night

Christmas night is the first party project for us, most of the non-Chinese students were responsible for this party, we were divided into 3 groups, food group, singing group and I was a member of the decoration group.

In the process of brainstorming this party, we wanted to make it as a private party, but we didn't know that in Chemnitz if you want to make a private party, you have to pay for the CDK, this mistake left some budget problem for us, and we have to share some cost by ourselves.

The Christmas night was started with the Christmas dinner, the food group prepared a lot for us, they even prepared some red wine, after the dinner, we start the most exciting part, Secret Santa, 2 weeks before the party, we drew for a partner, everyone should prepare a gift for his secret partner, and each of us will receive a serious gift that night but we will not know who gave it to us. It will be a big surprise for us. I prepared a Chinese fan for my partner,

unluckily my partner didn't show up that night. What I received is a bottle of wine from Italy, it tastes good. Our classmate Jessi was the host of the Secret Santa, when she picked up the gift and read the name, we had to perform something interesting to get the gift. After the secret Santa, our singing group prepared some Christmas songs for us, they were well-prepared, they even accompanied with piano and guitar, they did a great job and their songs made us feel like home. The last part of the Christmas night is the Story time, Prof. Schmied shared one old story with us, as for me, I have not been experiencing the Story time for a long time.

The Christmas night is the traditional activity in Germany, but for us, it's new, in China, Christmas is a festival for shopping mania and lovers, they use this western festival to enjoy themselves, but Christmas night is rare for us, most of Chinese only consider the X-mas is a day for shopping.

8. Wonderful Chinese evening

Another party for us is the Chinese Evening, and I was responsible for this party. The date of the party had changed many times and finally we decided our party on 2.2, one day before our exams, 5 days before our Chinese Spring festival.

Our Chinese students wanted to show our Chinese Spring Festival to foreigners, so we make the party in a real Chinese way. First, we also divided ourselves into 3 groups, food group, decoration group and the entertainment group (responsible for the games and performances in the party). Then we decided to chose the traditional food Chinese dumplings as our main dishes. By the way, one week before the party, our food group invited all the classmates in this course to enjoy Chinese dishes, we made a lot of Chinese dumplings and we also prepared a hot-pot for them, all the classmates appreciated that dinner, and our food group also practiced making dumplings for the party.

To avoid the budget problem, this time we made the Chinese evening as a public party, it is open for everyone in Chemnitz. First we wanted to get the money form the English club, but they can only offer 50 Euro, that's not enough for a public party, then we applied money from the Studentrat, finally

they decided to give us 160 Euro at most, but we need to make a detailed budget first.

This time our decoration group also made a poster to advertise this party, because we need the money from the StudentenRat, we had to add their logo on the poster. We put up the poster in Mensa and our dormitory building entrances, we also uploaded this on our Facebook webpage and invited a lot of our friends on Facebook. Here is the poster!



Our decoration group made a lot of traditional handcrafts, they did a good job and they made the room like a Chinese living room. I really love their decorations. The entertainment group also did a great job, they prepared some interesting songs and videos for us, the video showed our Chinese food culture and Kungfu culture, the foreigners really appreciated these. In the final part, the entertainment group prepared some interesting games for all the students in the party, and most of us join these games, the entertainment group also used these games to show the Chinese culture.

9. Travel within Europe

Studying in Germany is also a great chance for me to travel within Europe, I am a big fan of Bayern München, In October, I booked a football ticket online, München against Köln in Allianz Arena. Watching a football match in Allianz Arena is always a dream for me. And that day I realized my dream.



The trip to München is my first trip in Germany, and after that I also travel to some places in Europe. In my Christmas vacation, I started my 20-day Christmas trip in Berlin, then I took the train to München, Stuttgart, Frankfurt and Köln, after travelling around Germany, I took the plane to Sweden and this is the first stop of Northern Europe. From Stockholm, Sweden, we took the ship to Turku, Finland, then we took the train to Rovaniemi, the Santa Claus village in Finland, it was so cold there, we tried skiing and husky-riding in Rovaniemi.



Then we headed for Oslo, Norway, we spent one whole week there, Norway is a fantastic place for holiday, I recommend everyone to travel in Norway. Our last stop is the fairy tale world, Copenhagen, Denmark. I came back in Chemnitz on 8.1, 1 month before final exams.

10. Future Plan

I will stay in Chemnitz for one semester longer, and next semester I want chose the Integrated English to improve my English, because I will have an important English exam in 2017, and I also want to experience English study in a foreign country, so I might choose Germany for my graduate study.

Then I want to take an IELTS test before I return to China. I think after a semester of leaning in German I will do much better on the IELTS test, especially the speaking and writing section. Next, according to the courses at TUC, we will have German A1-B1 courses, and I'm going to pass the B1 test before I return to China. That is the most important goal for me, I need this chance to improve my German.

As an English major, English courses are my main task, During my 2 years' college life, I've already learned many courses on English, such as

British Culture, American Culture, I think these courses are helpful for my B.A. courses at TUC. Furthermore I prefer some courses on English speaking and writing. That's why I want to chose integrated English. These 2 parts are quite essential for me. Speaking of German, I've seen some German courses at TUC, these courses are also important for me to survive in German. Honestly speaking, I have a plan of studying in German for my master degree after I graduate from SYSU, so I need to improve my German during my college life. If I want to apply for my Master in Germany, I need to pass the TestDaF, so studying in Germany will help me pass the test.

11. Summary

Through this exchange semester, I have obtained friendship and communication skills with foreign people and the most important is my cooking skills. Though I have to face the big pressure from getting enough credits in SYSU and finishing my B.A. thesis, I really appreciate this exchange program and hope the cooperation between TUC and SYSU will be longer. Studying in a foreign country was totally strange to me, I had to do everything by myself., now I know how to make friends with people of different cultural backgrounds and how to handle problems by myself. I will take full use of next semester and make some improvements in my academic career.