First of all, thank you for agreeing to answer our questions for our class magazine!

We will be interested to find out what is the structure of the school year. Can you tell us?

We start in the beginning of September and we end classes in the beginning of July, about the 5th of July. We have more holidays than you do, we have holidays in November, October, a two-week period, then we have the Christmas holidays, then in February, March, another two-week period and, for Easter, again a two-week period.

Our daily schedule is from 8 pm to 5 am with just one hour break for lunch.

On Wednesday afternoon we don’t work, we don’t have classes on Wednesday afternoon, only in the morning.

Do the students have lunch at school if they finish classes at 5 am?

Most of them eat in the school canteen and some of them go home. We have a school canteen, we also have boarders cause we are a sports school too and we have students sleeping at school. They come from everywhere from France.

What is the regular structure of a school in France? Is it common for a school to be equipped with showers or swimming pools?

We have two swimming pools and the third one is being built at the moment, but other schools in France are not that lucky and the students have to take the buss and go to special structures that have swimming pools and train.

So, the swimming lessons are usual for French students?

Yes, they all take swimming lessons, especially by the age of eleven, and after that it becomes a top priority in the PE classes to teach students different tipes of swimming.

This is a more personal question. When did you realize that you wanted to become a teacher?

For me it was at an early age. I think it was during the summer holidays. I would already teach my friends. They were already been given lessons.

When I started, I thought maybe it's not for me. Let's see how it goes. And then I think I was starting to like it more and more. My parents are teaching my sister is teaching…

And another one is if you think that reading had an impact in your teaching career and especially on you but as well on the students.

For me reading was essential. That's how I learned French. But I see that for my students and for my kids it’s not that important. I tried everything. With the new technologies it’s difficult to make the kids read.

-And you are okay with them if they had a problem

-Yes. There's no homework in primary schools in France. They're not supposed to be given homework... well it depends on the teacher I think... but the rule is no homework.

-Is there a difference between Romanian primary schools and French primary schools? Is there also only one teacher?

-They have assistants in class, one or two people who can help with students that have difficulties in learning.

-Do they also finish at 5 in the afternoon?

-Yes but they usually don't have class on Wednesday, at all.

-Is Wednesday a special day in France?

-It's special because we wanted kids to have enough time for sports and other activities and the only way was not to have school.

-I also have another question: What's your advice for someone looking to study in France? What would you tell them?

-Well my son started school in Romania and then went to France. He was in primary school. But still, what was difficult for him was the method for the essays, it's very strict in France. You can't say what you think in your own words. You have to respect a really strict plan, a structure. That was really difficult for him and I think this could be really difficult for Romanian students.

-I know a lot of my friends want to leave the country to go to university, some of them in France. Is France a country that accepts everybody?

-We're not quite sure. We have a limited number of places for foreign students

P: That’s a difficult one. I think the students are different, maybe more open minded or more aware of the importance of being open minded, or the importance of foreign languages for example. France students don’t have that, they don’t think it’s important, for them it’s not important, so they are not invested as you are.

E: What can u tell us about baccalaureate in France? Is it a difficult exam?

P: It’s really changing nowadays, it’s really changing. We had a lot of tests, but now we have two or three. It started because of the pandemic, but now they think that is a good idea to reform everything, so there are only 2 tests left. They take into account all remarks from all the highschools.

E: What extra curriculars activities do you do with the students, outside of the school?

P: A lot! A lot of our students are interested in sports so we have sport academies for skiing, snowboarding, swimming, football, rugby, paraglinding, wrestling. Most of our students do that! Track, horse riding. We also have a drama club in our school, school radio, school magazine. The students are being selected to represent the school. They are selected mostly on sports grounds.

E: So how would you define your relationship between you and your students? Is it a healthy one? A good one?

P: We hope so. The only thing is that we tend to lack time, because we only have at the best 5 minutes between the classes. Sometimes is difficult to give them as much time and attention as we wished we could. And we have a lot of students like 150, I have 150 students this year, so it’s really difficult to learn more about them.

(in french:) In Romania, the head teacher holds a class for 4 years, while in France it's only for one year, right?

A: Yes, one of the major differences of being a head teacher is that, in France, you would follow the same class only for one year. Uh, it's always been like that, but then you would give the pieces of information to the next head teacher, so that he knows about the individual situation of every student. Classes change, students are not the same because of the sports, mainly, and then we try to separate those that talk too much in class... Also depending on the options they take, like Latin and Catalan - these are the two options that they could have in our school.

Q: What interactive methods do you use while teaching, especially now with the online school, i know you can make break-out rooms and things like that?

A: Well we have a video projector in our classes and we use different websites like padlet, quizzlet, mentimeter, all kinds of websites to create online quizzes, interactive <activities>, also we use a lot the etwinning platform, we have different projects and different tools on this platform. At the end of a chapter maybe a kahoot game is also very popular... do you know this website, do you use it?

Students: Yes, we used to, especially in middle school in geography most of the times, but right now we don't use it as much.

Q: What was the nicest thing that a student or group of students has done for you?

A: Different notes in the end of the year and also drawings as well. A lot of drawings... I had a class that sang to me 'Happy Birthday' and then i opened the door and the students in the corridor also sang.