While I was studying for a Master degree named “French as a foreign language”, I thought that becoming a French language assistant in New Zealand would represent a great opportunity for me to write my thesis. New Zealand always represented a dream to me. As a small country located so far away from my home in France, I was especially very curious to see the importance of languages in Kiwi schools. Today I graduated and my written work about the impact on students on learning a language thanks to a language assistant, revealed quite positive results - I must admit. Too often we focus on the role of a teacher in the learning process. However I definitely think that schools profit from having a native speaker language assistant who enriches lessons not only with the spoken language but also with a variety of cultural aspects.

In a student perspective, it frequently was the first time they interacted with a ‘local’ person. So quite often, they asked me many questions. I remember some lessons when I was told to teach groups for about 10 minutes each. Only many times it ended up being longer due to their curiosity. I almost didn’t want to interrupt them because I was surprisingly touched to see how interested they were. Although, the questions were frequently the same such as “Do French people eat frogs? Snails?” or even “Why are French people so well in shape?” They made me smile a couple of times.

For senior students, I enjoyed interesting conversations and I was astonished to see how passionate and good they were. They were also very proud to understand what I was saying. I remember hearing some students whispering “Oh, I did understand everything she said! Yay!” I thought then: Mission accomplished!

In a point of view of an expert, from time to time I was able to do presentations about subjects I mastered such as about my beautiful region Alsace or also about The World Wars (I could even relate to my family’s stories). It sometimes gave an opportunity to the teachers to learn more as well. Also when it came to lighter weeks, I spend more time creating resources which are activities teachers don’t always have much time for. They were always very grateful.

Being part a this big education family allowed me to take part to many events organised by schools such as festival of French movies, visiting a French boat, getting introduced by the school’s Haka, and the list goes on.

Furthermore, by analysing the situation, if we compare a lesson taught in the same timeframe between a regular class composed of a teacher and students and one with the duo teacher-language assistant and students we notice that obviously the proportion decreases of course which has a positive impact for languages learners that hear and produce more language.

So far, my life pathway brought me to learn seven languages, I am definitely seeing a plethora of reasons why learning languages is a must do. It definitely opens doors as nowadays the world tends to strengthen diversity and international relations.

In a nutshell, this position has a significant meaning to me and it certainly adds a real value to my professional career. Now I am getting ready for new adventures back in Europe as I will teach French in Switzerland. I am already very excited about it and I am convinced that again as a language ambassador I will put into practice what I’ve learned in New Zealand, in a different environment this time.