

# RACHEL POKORNOWSKI

Graduate, Literacy Specialist  
IPDS Germany | June/July 2025



## MOTIVATION

Starting college, I knew I wanted to participate in study abroad and had been putting money aside to save for the expense. After completing student teaching in Buffalo, I wanted to gain a deeper understanding of how it felt to be in the shoes of the English Language Learners in my classroom. They were in a new country, surrounded by language and culture so different from their own, and they showed up each day, eager to learn. I found my students' strength and perseverance to be very inspiring.

I observed several elementary teachers teach English in German schools. My experiences gave me the courage to apply for the TESOL program. This was something I had been considering but when I returned home, the pull was so strong I had to go for it. I'm excited about where this new path has the potential to take me.



## CULTIVATION

Traveling abroad has made me more independent, more confident in myself, and a better problem-solver. These skills were built as I struggled to read body-language when words couldn't be translated, accomplishing a ropes course and mountain coaster, and conquering the challenges of public transportation (and train exits!). I have noticed that I am more open to trying new things. I'm a lot more active and mindful. I'm also kind of restless, always wanting to be doing something and keeping busy. I hope to possibly teach abroad one day.



## FESTIVALS

One afternoon we wandered into the middle of a food festival with stands from all over the world. I was so excited to try my ancestral Polish pierogi and sausage!

Another night we went to the Stuttgart Fischmarkt where we had amazing potato pancakes with apple sauce. The band played "Sweet Caroline" and we sang so loud the lead singer came to our table to join us!

Check Out Rachel's IPDS Blog: <https://buffalostateipdsgermany.weebly.com/rachel1>

