

## Interviewing Maike Urban



Maike Urban, a German teacher at one of Prague's private gymnasiums, agreed to conduct an interview with us. We never had a chance to discover more about her life and passions, even though she is one of the most talked about teachers at Nový PORG, therefore I am glad she shared some of her crucial life moments and legacies with us.

**By Agáta Lorencová**

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The task was simple – conduct an interview with the assigned teacher and ask them questions about their life, identity and legacies. Everyone knew from the beginning that Ms. Maike Urban was the most exciting choice. Even though she has never taught me, many of our classmates can't stop praising not only her fabulous German lessons, but also her open-minded and unique personality. We were strongly looking forward to the interview and we weren't eventually disappointed.

On Thursday, November 10, we visited Ms. Urban's cabinet, situated at the top of the school, hoping it was the most suitable environment for the interview. The beginning of our talk was standard. She told us she had been born in Munich, where she had lived only for three years and that she had enjoyed reading during her teenage years, because her mother didn't let her leave her room until she had finished her homework.

When asked about her university decision, which ended up being Bonn, I wondered if she had ever regretted that decision or had decided too spontaneously, however after a moment of silence, Ms.

Urban replied: **“I believe we make the choice to believe that our decisions are good, so I don't question it.”** Which gave me a brand-new view on choices we make during our life and prompted me into thinking about the feeling of regret itself, yet revealed Ms. Urban's modest side and the way she approaches life choices.

Ms. Urban told us why she ended up teaching at a gymnasium in the Czech Republic. We were surprised by the fact that she had gone here on Erasmus and had fallen in love with the country. She even revealed little about the evolution of her career and why she eventually chose teaching

younger people: “I’ve worked with adults most of the time, but now it’s high school and I’m very happy teaching teenagers “.

As the interview smoothly continued, we shared a laugh at Ms. Urban’s response to if she prefers cats over dogs, since the three of us strongly agreed with her opinion, which raises controversy in today’s society. **“Cats for sure. I have two cats at home. No question.”** Such a casual answer, yet made me respect her even more.

An interesting moment came when we asked: “What is your favorite food?” and Ms. Urban replied with a smile on her face “I am a vegetarian, or a fake vegetarian. I do sometimes eat meat, but very little.” The answer was surprising for me, as I thought that she was someone who strongly adheres to her beliefs. This showed me that she does not mind breaking the rules.

After Ms. Urban revealed her slight obsession with Japanese culture and poetry, we wondered about the advice she would have given to her younger self. She replied: “I would tell her to go through all her feelings and that no feeling is final, however as much we think that this is the end of something, or we will never feel different – it does always change. **All the good feelings, all the bad feelings – they go, they pass, and are replaced by other feelings.**” It was the kind of deep answer I would expect from Ms. Urban.

For me personally, the interview was not only part of our project but also valuable time with someone whose view on the world I admire. I am grateful for this unique opportunity because it was both wonderful and enriching experience. I learned what almost no student knows about a person, who they see and communicate with five days a week, making me realize that teachers are not always there to torture us and give us tons of work, but they have their own opinions and legacies, which can be revealed only in precious moments like this.