

My experience with Open Minds Open Borders

Open Minds Open Borders is a project that aims to promote interaction between students from different countries. The four students from Galilei, representing Italy, collaborated with representatives from Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany and the UK over a one-week period in Tunbridge Wells, Kent. We were hosted by families of students from Bennett Memorial school and travelled with them to school each day.

The participants were divided into groups of three; each group was made up of two foreign and one British student, for a total of ten separate teams. In order to maximize the amount of interaction between the different countries, no two people in a group originated from the same country. The end goal of each team was to collect and create material that could be featured in an art exhibition. The theme of this exhibition was the contrast between cultures, time periods and traditions. The first day was mainly spent socialising with other students and staff who had accompanied them, as well as receiving details about the project, the schedule for the week and the logistics of the trip to London. The following day was devoted to the collection of material to be used in the project. We took a tour of London, equipped with cameras for both still photography and making videos. We walked around the city in the morning and spent the afternoon touring the Tate Modern, a contemporary art museum.

On the third and fourth days, the groups participated in a variety of workshops. The main focus of the workshops was processing the photos and videos that we had taken on the London trip. After this image processing phase, we created a number of monoprints based upon certain pictures. We learned that monoprinting is an interesting technique which results in a unique ink replica of the original image. Each group also spent a lot of time producing a short film to incorporate all the material that students had gathered, including the various photographs we had brought along from our respective countries. The last day was devoted to completing these films and setting up a final exhibition displaying our work. In the late afternoon, the exhibition was officially opened to the general public and will remain open for several weeks. This first stage of Open Minds Open Borders in the UK concluded with closing speeches by the various organizers and supervisors who had managed the project and the presentation of certificates to each participant.

Personally, I found this project to be very interesting and I am glad to have had the opportunity to meet so many nice people. I am looking forward to hosting a student from another country in Autumn 2018, when it is Italy's turn to organize the event, and I hope that everyone else involved enjoyed it as much as I did.