

ERASMUS WEBS

2nd Mobility

Berlin 16.09-20.09

REPORT

By BC Broekhin, Roermond

Attendants: 2 teachers and 9 students

The Dutch group of nine pupils was accompanied by two teachers. Both teachers are bilingual teachers in respective philosophy of life and mathematics. The pupils are from year 3 ranging from age 12 to 14. In Berlin we also met students and teachers of Katowice and Lurca.

The pupils were met at the airport by their German exchange partner and host family, and right away they experienced the different means of transportation in Berlin. Some pupils were picked up by car and others took the bus, the metro or the train.

The week before the exchange, the Dutch pupils got in touch with their German exchange partner. So they knew beforehand how they had to get to school and how long it would take. But still it was an experience for some of them to actually wake up early each morning, have a quick breakfast, and then go to school by train or metro. In the Netherlands it is common to ride a bike to school. They also had to get used to the fact that classes start at eight o'clock instead of eight thirty. During the week the Dutch pupils became more aware of the differences in life style. For Berlin pupils it is normal to travel with public transportation and to travel all over the city centre. After school they like to meet up with peers in parks and hang out together. They like to eat out and are very concerned about the environment and climate change. The latter was evident, when all the pupils were given durable lunch boxes to school by their host family.

The programme was diverse. During the week there were, presentations about the different school systems of the participant schools with respect to bilingualism, workshops to talk about the benefits of bilingual education, workshops for the visiting pupils to interact with each other in role play. Pupils and teachers attended classes in different subjects. For some of the Dutch pupils this was an experience, because some of the classes were given in Spanish. It was very difficult for them to know what was going on. They also had to get used to having longer lessons of one and a half hour instead of fifty minute lessons. They liked the fact that there was a Mensa. All agreed that this is one of the things that they want to implement at BC Broekhin. But there was not only time spend in school. The visiting pupils and teachers were able to get a glimpse of the beautiful city of Berlin during a visit to the Gedächtnis Kirche and a wonderful sightseeing boat ride. After school the pupils were taken to different landmarks in Berlin by their exchange partners. They usually did this as a group, which made the experience for most of them more fun and they got to know a lot more pupils from the participant schools. But most importantly, they had to speak English to communicate, which helped to improve their speaking skills.

Teachers were able to get a good impression of the bilingual system at the Friedenburg Ober Schule. What is remarkable is that all bilingual teachers are native speakers. Walking in the corridor , passing different classrooms, it was evident that each teacher had his or her own method of teaching. Most of the time, classes were working in groups or working with some kind of technology. What also made an impression was the size of the classes at the FOS. In the Netherlands it is common to have twenty five up to thirty two pupils in a class. For some subjects this is not an ideal situation.

It was also very interesting to observe how the pupils of the Friedenburg Ober Schule communicate with each other and with visitors from other countries. They switch back and forth between Spanish, German and English. This is what bilingualism is all about. A great compliment to the school and the pupils.

Furthermore , a warm thank you for the great week in Berlin. The German teachers have gone out of their way to make this both a learning and cultural experience for both the pupils and the teachers. We left Berlin with a better understanding of bilingualism and the pupils have definitely improved their speaking and communication skills.