

January 2020

Description of the activity. Describe the content, methodology and the results of this activity.

- **Who were the participants in the activity (including local participants)?**
- **How was this activity related to or integrated with the normal activities**

The week spent in The Netherlands by UK students included sports and cultural visits. The approach/methodology was for students from both schools – UK & The Netherlands - to interact as much as possible and, for the sports, for all students to reflect on gender inclusivity of the different sports. The results were very positive as students worked well together, in pairs and teams, and gained an insight into sports which they knew little about. Students also reflected on the how gender inclusive sports were which was thought provoking and involved some interesting debate.

Participants were aged 13-15 years old, mixed boys and girls, from each school; plus 2 teachers from Newport and a number from The Netherlands.

The sports activities were related to PE lessons (2 Dutch PE teachers were also involved) at school although the sports were atypical; the cultural activities were not typical of normal activities although might be considered similar to a typical school trip.

On the morning of the first day Newport students were given a tour of Charlemagne College Eijkhagen which was very interesting as there were some clear differences – uniform in particular – as well as many things the 2 schools have in common.

Newport students also attended some lessons and, while differences were noted, (a lot of Dutch students used laptops in lessons for example), students agreed that lessons had a lot in common with the UK.

In the afternoon of the first day all students took part in orienteering. This was enjoyed by all and carried out in mixed teams to encourage students to consider gender inclusivity.

On the second day we travelled to a sports centre to meet up with the German and Spanish schools for a very successful day of sport involving all 4 schools. This started with floorball and football where students were split into groups mixed by nationality and gender. Then ice skating took place in the afternoon with some teachers also taking part.

On the third day, following 2 morning lessons, students travelled to Maastricht, a city of great historical interest near the Belgian border. The morning was spent on a tour of the city. In the afternoon students were allowed some free time to explore for themselves on a cold day (max 2 degrees centigrade).

Thursday morning students were treated to a science lesson with lots of new and unusual experiments. This was greatly enjoyed by all the students. The next part of the day was spent at the Citta Vals sports centre learning how to play korfbal. This sport was new to the Newport students and we were fortunate to have a former Dutch international as coach for the session. In the afternoon we went to Drielandenpunt, where NL, Belgium and Germany meet.

Friday was evaluation day: students considered how they had benefitted from the activities and how gender inclusive they were. Students were encouraged to consider how they might improve the activities for future participants. A very positive attitude was noted among students and both Dutch and British interacted well, considering thoughtfully and maturely the different sports.

How did the participation in this activity benefit the involved participants?

Students were enthusiastic about trying different sports and participation in the activities was clearly beneficial to the students as they improved their understanding of cultural differences between the two countries. Interestingly, as one British student commented, while there were clearly cultural differences, the two countries had a lot more in common than differences. The team work and communication skills employed during sports and activities were good to see and the fact that the students had to think about sport (gender inclusivity) in a way they might not normally.

This focus on gender inclusivity produced occasional differences of opinion between boys and girls which were debated in a mature fashion but the overall sense was that both boys and girls had a better idea about gender inclusivity as a result.

Indeed, a number of meaningful suggestions were made by students in the feedback session at the end of the week about how to make certain sports more accessible for all and thus more gender inclusive. In particular the UK students, accustomed to having PE lessons in single sex classes, were intrigued to discover this was not the case in the The Netherlands which meant that the sharing of ideas in this area caused quite a lively debate.