

People and heritage: an art education project between students from Finland and Spain

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Abstract

We present an integrative art exchange project between the University of Lapland (Finland) and Cardenal Cisneros University College (CUCC) (Spain). This project has been carried out over two academic years, 2013 and 2014, and there is an ongoing version of it for 2015.

The main aim was to invite students to approach their cultural heritage, such as public art and architecture, from an artistic point of view. The students were asked also to exchange visual creations and ideas with the students of the partner university.

The project presents effective integration within the discipline: it included art expression, knowledge in art, environmental education and media. In CUCC the project was also cross-curricular with contents of Didactics of Social Science.

The principal task was to create a poster of the town (Rovaniemi or Alcalá de Henares), focusing on an element of artistic heritage. The students should also include a image of themselves and some essential words in the poster, and upload it in the joint blog on display. Partner university students wrote their interpretations about the poster, and finally the authors gave their explanation of the cultural meanings of the work.

Students' feedback was mainly positive, especially considering working internationally and in teams. With the help of critical feedback we improved the project, e.g. making it more structured. Some timing problems still remained.

Heritage Education can be used as a powerful resource to reflect upon cultural values and develop attitudes of respect, tolerance and a better understanding between cultures. Considering current political, social and economic issues in Europe, we believe that educational initiatives aimed at building stronger bonds between countries should be enhanced. For this purpose, cultural and artistic heritage appears as meaningful content to be studied and explored. In this context, universities can play an important role, working collaboratively, to foster a sense of belonging to this shared project and to nurture a feeling of European citizenship among their students.



CIRCUS OF LAPLAND (2014)
by Eerika Karppinen, Jutta Paloranta & Hanna Oksa



WE HAVE BODY (2014)
by Alba Espinar & Natalie Oligney

According to this, we present an exchange project between two European universities: the Faculty of Education of the University of Lapland in Rovaniemi, Finland, and Cardenal Cisneros University College (CUCC) in Alcalá de Henares, Spain. This project was carried out over two academic years; first, as a pilot in autumn 2013, and then in autumn 2014. The content of the project was common to the syllabuses of both faculties of Primary Education teacher training. Specifically, three subjects were involved: Art Education (in both the Finnish and Spanish university) and Didactics of Social Sciences (in the Spanish university). In CUCC, the project became a cross-curricular experience. We aimed to conduct a joint project with mostly similar aims, but which was also adapted to fit the specific curriculum of each university.

In 2013, a total of 115 students participated in the project, and 113 students in 2014. The same number of groups was arranged in each country and each group had its equivalent group in the partner university in order to establish a communication via a shared blog.

The general aim of this project is to reflect, using an artistic medium, on our perceptions and ideas about local artistic heritage, and to exchange these ideas with the partner university. The main task of the project consisted of creating a poster of the town where our faculties are located (Rovaniemi and Alcalá de Henares), in order to transmit something essential about the culture of this area, namely, by focusing on an element of artistic heritage. The Finnish students focused their attention on public art, being able to start from examining a virtual gallery (Rovaniemen julkiset taideteokset), whereas the Spanish worked on a broader concept of heritage, including architecture, sculptures and other elements of public space. In Spain, the project was also cross-curricular including the approach from Social Sciences.



STOP. MOVE! (2013)
by Karoliina Pellikka

Two different posters of the same sculpture "Oonko mie tiellä" (Am I on the Way?) by Tom Engblom



BEWARE OF DANGER!
by Anni Rytinki, Ville Turunen, Pauliina Markoff

We tried to avoid creating a poster that resembled a typical tourist brochure and decided to research and find out new meanings and cultural values in the city heritage. Therefore, students were asked to look for something with a personal meaning or just something to be discovered. The posters were supposed to crystallise something essential about the significance of local heritage and tempt spectators to getting acquainted with it.

The meaning of this element was explored from artistic, social and historical sources. Photography was chosen as the visual medium to create the images and the students had to appear in the picture, using their bodies to create meaning within the image. For this purpose, a number of visual artists who explore the relationship between their bodies and the landscape were studied as a reference. For the Spanish students, discovering Arno Mikkinen's work was a way of understanding some important aspects of the Finnish culture, such as the importance of landscape and natural environment. In Finland students were introduced some ideas of phototherapy, as well as works of e.g. Jo Spence (<http://jospence.org/index.html>) and Rosy Martin (2001).

We also wanted the task to be an example of effective integration within the discipline, so we included the four content areas of art education: art expression, knowledge in art, environmental education and media (Figure 1, see: Finnish National Board of Education. 2004, 234-238). The students had to edit pictures and write a piece of text (no more than four or five words) in their mother tongue, emphasising a specific meaning drawn from the image. The students researched the key facts, socio-cultural meaning and historic-artistic importance of the element of artistic heritage from a social and historical point of view. Another important facet of the project was to reflect upon cultural meanings and their interpretations from a different country. Besides the visual pieces created by the students, this reflective exercise was one of the most interesting outcomes of the project.

MULTIPLE AREAS OF VISUAL ART

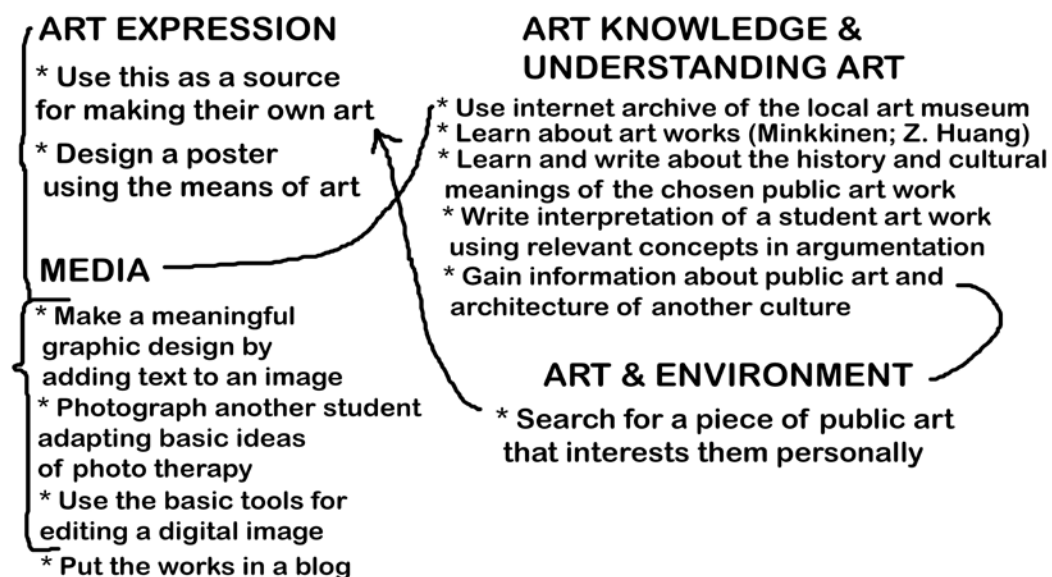


FIGURE 1. CONTENT AREAS OF ART EDUCATION OF THE PROJECT

Student groups from both countries uploaded their posters to a blog, specifically created for this project, and then commented on each other's works. In these commentaries, they analysed the visual aspects and considered the meaning of the images. Finally the authors of the posters presented some basic facts about the heritage element, explained the meaning of their piece of work to their partner groups and described the process that was carried out. English was used as the common language for this communicative purpose. Both of the subjects involved in the project in the Spanish university are taught in English, and the CLIL approach is used to facilitate the teaching and learning process.

After analysing all of the results and student feedback, we can say that most of the difficulties related with the project arose from organisation. Significant sticking points included deadlines to upload the pictures and commentaries to the blog, organization of group work and giving instructions to the students from both countries. These issues have to be clarified as much as possible when running these kinds of collaborative and exchange activities. Luckily, some students found the challenges being part of their personal growth. As one Finnish student said: "One can get most energy out of by putting oneself

in inconvenient situations”.

On the other hand, regarding the positive outcomes, most students were satisfied with working internationally and in teams. In collaborative work one learns to take new roles, to share, to compromise, and to put everyone's skills together. Finnish students also valued the chance to go out of the classroom and to study new ways to make art: “Modern technology is good means for making art easily and in various ways.” Some pointed out the importance of modern technology in pupils' daily life.

Some Spanish students highlighted they were satisfied with learning about cultural issues from another country and even with discovering new things about the artistic heritage of their own town. They also acknowledged the possibilities of visual art and cross-curricular work as a powerful tool to learn about culture.

Drawing from student feedback and our own experiences, we made the following improvements when realizing the project in autumn term 2014:

- We gave all the guidelines in the beginning in exact way and strict deadlines for each phase.
 - As one of their requests was to have a more fluent way to communicate between both countries groups, we provided a voluntary Facebook group, although this wasn't very successful.
 - In Finland students first chose an interesting public artwork individually, then we created the groups; also more contact teaching time (4 h) was devoted for digital editing.
- Despite the changes, some problems with timing remained: it was hard to make the deadlines work properly. Otherwise the results were satisfying, and the feedback mainly the same as in the pilot project. . Positive feedback and visual results have encouraged us to continue with the project at least for one more year, and to improve the activity taking into account our two years of experience.

The following posters crystallise some reached aims: students were in interaction both bodily and internationally, and followed

the good old principle “No (wo)man is left behind”.

The results of both projects can be seen on the blog (People and heritage). We would appreciate reader feedback that can be sent to both of the authors by email: seija.ulkuniemi@ulapland.fi, and alfredo.palacios@cardenalcisneros.es.



YOUR SENSES ARE OPEN (2014)

by Katarina Vestman, Pinja Puumala, Maija Suominen
& Sanna Ylipuranen.



REMEMBER COMMON PLACES (2014)
by Diego Guzmán & Elena Bermúdez



DIFFERENT LOOK
By Mónica Moya & Nuria López

FINNISH COMMENTARY TO: DIFFERENT LOOK

The poster consist of multiple camera lenses, each reflecting a different image.

Buildings in the pictures all seem to relate to different religions, same as the girls, pictured bowing towards a tower, wearing veils. Combining these images with the sentence in the poster, that I think translates near "looking through another/different eyes", makes you think of international and multicultural Spain, and how we all should sometimes try to see and experience the world with "otros ojos", another eyes.

The pictures are intriguing, warm, fun and of good quality. The use of body is clever and brings life to the pictures and the whole poster.

All in all, its a very good, clever poster that's fun to watch and wonder. Reminded me to visit Spain again.

SPANISH COMMENTARY TO: FROM THE ASHES, LAPLAND ROSE

...We present the different cultures which existed and lived in Alcalá. Most of buildings that there are nowadays in Alcalá, are created by these cultures, and also Alcalá still keep some aspects of this heritage.

Our poster named Mirando con otro ojos/ Different look. We choose this name because, according with the pictures, we want to show Alcalá but seeing into the past, referred to distribution of the city, some belongings of each culture...

...When we thought about the way to photograph the different monuments, we had an idea relate to our topic. Each picture represents the three different neighborhoods (christians, jews, muslims). Because of this, in each picture there is some characteristic elements of each culture. Also in two pictures of them, we appear prostrating according to each religion.



"FROM THE ASHES, LAPLAND ROSE"

By Minna Suominen, Hennariina Syrjä & Ville Valtanen.

We chose to do our poster from Kari Huhtamo's work of art called Lapin jälleenrakentamisen muistomerkki 1944-45. It is made of bright, acid-proof steel and if you look closely you can see a shape of tulip rising from the ashes. This memorial is an important part of Lapland's and also Rovaniemi's culture.

SPANISH COMMENTARY

The picture is located outside. We can observe a big statue held by three students. On the right side of image, we can identify three scenes. In our opinion, the scenes tell something about the history of the city where it is located.

We think that this statue has a commemorative character because in 1944 the city suffered a huge fire which destroyed most of the city. In our opinion, this statue represents that part of its history and the scenes at the back tells what happened there. We describe the atmosphere as emotive and melancholic because it's a place to remember their history and their past in which they suffered an explosion that destroyed the city.

Regarding the artistic part of the image, we can say that it is based on different greys. The most interesting is the position of the bodies in relation with the statue. They are "holding" it as if they were helping the statue to grow or to stand up.

We would like to emphasize the simplicity of the photo because they only have used a photo with a short sentence that transmits a lot of information about it. The black and white color is very important to transmit the meaning of darkness, and sadness.

We have related the phrase "FROM THE ASHES, LAPLAND ROSE" with the explosion that took place in that city in the past. The fire and the explosion destroyed practically all the city so they had to start again. We have related with this part of its history with the phrase written because we think it means that they fought to start again, to build a new city. They have rebuilt since the ruins of the explosion; which means that they built it up from the ashes.



ANOTHER POSTER EXAMPLE OF THE SAME SCULPTURE BY KARI HUHTAMO
by Herkko Ruuska, Karoliina Suhonen, Tuuli Savelainen & Valtteri Ylä-Jääski



RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE (2013)
by Juha Jänkälä, Maiju Kolppanen, Anna Kokko & Aino Kinni

SPANISH COMMENTARY TO: RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE

...Taking into account the most prominent visual elements of the mural, we could remark about the word that seems to be written in the street because it is quite eye-catching.

Looking at it deeply, we consider that is a strongly metaphorical picture. Thinking which meaning, it seems to us that the people who are touching the reindeers (represent nature) want to protect them from the driver and the car (represent the dangers), and this could be interpreted as the protection of nature from which human beings and their artificial invention (in this case the car).

Another thing related with the meaning, which is at the same time quite eye-catching, is the word that seems to be written on the street. If we are right it

means something similar to "Relationship with Nature"
Because of that, despite that we are not sure if we are right or not, the connection between the picture and their culture that we can infer by observing this photograph is that probably they are really concerned about the topic of looking after the natural environment.



A RETREAT IN MADRID
Ana Bellvis, Ana Medrano, Makhabat Murzabekova



FACTORY OF BEAUTY
Alicia de Miguel & Teresa Sánchez



CULTURE, STUDIES,
by Paula Luque & Laura Cabrera

HISTORY & RELIGION (2014)



NO MAN IS LEFT BEHIND (2014)
by Lauri Laitinen, Tuija Koivuranta, Mika Korpi & Juha Luokkanen

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