

Oxford Style International Debates

Opening Ceremony welcome speech

Dear Mr Felgueiras,
Dear School Principal,
Dear colleagues and students from Italy, Germany, Poland and Spain,
Dear colleagues and students with whom I share this amazing journey,

One of these days I was sitting at the back of the classroom watching one of my students presenting her oral project and I thought to myself 'what a difference! What a great job!' She was confident, assertive, empowered. Whatever was keeping her from showing her best, was gone, which brings me to her impressions on this project 'At first I didn't want to join, I am really glad you convinced me and I don't regret it one second. I met loads of new people which helped me better my social abilities'. When asked what they were going to take with them once the project ends, I got this extraordinary sentence 'I take the personal growth that made me who I am.' This is not just a project. This is growing, respecting, learning how to deal with differences, opinions other than our own, this is about greeting each other even when we disagree, this is about agreeing to disagree. In times of dim hope, projects such as this enlighten our hearts and lead the path to a more peaceful Europe. We maybe 'preparing students for jobs that don't yet exist, using technologies that haven't been invented, in order to solve problems we don't even know are problems yet', as Richard Riley stated, but I am sure we are preparing them for life.

Thank you very much

Maria Leonor Barros

Project Coordinator

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