

FRENCH MEDIA RELEASE-

Le Progrès, 5 November 2006

FOREZ High School on Australian Time

This first of November, three students from the Forez High School, and their teacher Guy Draperi, thanks to the exceptional opening of the Cyber Centre, participated to an international videoconference on the theme of ecotourism.

Pauline, Marie and Floriane were last year in grade 11 and worked on the concept of sustainable development with their teachers Mr. Martin and Mr. Draperi. Their research was put online through the creation of a blog. All three are now in grade 12 and recently received a surprising invitation. It was a request coming from Australia asking for the participation of the three students from Forez to an international conference.

For writing of a Charter

Indeed, Anne Caillaud from Townsville City Council in Australia (North Queensland, on the East Coast) contacted Mr. Draperi, teacher of Earth and Life Sciences, seeking for the participation of his students to an international conference on Ecotourism, which was the theme of the blog of the three students through a Moroccan case study. The international conference was being held from 31st of October to 3 November, and Ms. Caillaud was involved in the coordination of a Youth Ecotourism Forum in the framework of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, aiming to allow young students from Townsville and around the world to share their ideas and experiences and to come up with a Youth Ecotourism Charter.

A Success

Technical constraints were numerous, insofar as the conference was scheduled on a public holiday day in the heart of All Saints holidays. Thankfully, a solution was found thanks to the exceptional mobilization of the Cyber Centre. Pauline, Floriane and Marie and their teacher Guy Draperi were able to connect with Brazil, South Africa, Australia, Philippines, Indonesia but also Scotland, Portugal, South Africa and Brazil^[act1]. The videoconference took place at 7.30pm in Australia, which was 10.30am in France. The debates and other exchanges were in English.

Follow-up

The following day of the Conference, Pauline, Marie and Floriane and their teacher received a report of the conference along with these sentences from Anne Caillaud: *"I would like to thank you for yesterday, we were all deeply touched to see you on the other side of the Earth and the students were all excited to be able to share their experiences on eco-tourism with you. Today Maddy and Shenade, two students from Grade 11, presented the outcomes of the Forum in the plenary session of the International Ecotourism Conference and everybody found them fantastic. I translated your website to the students so that they can take your experience into account. We*

will include all this in the final version of the Charter and we will send it to you to get your feedback before sending it to UNESCO. Have a great end of holidays and once again thank you so much, you were incredible! We will stay in touch with you and Mr. Draperi to involve the Forez high school in further international ecotourism events.”