

World Culture through Project Based Learning: The CAS Seminar.

Develop creativity, communication skills and knowledge of world cultures by establishing a Cultural Ambassador Society (CAS) chapter at your school. Allow your students to experience some of the greatest treasures of world cultures while teaching them to create engaging educational presentations for your extended community.

How the CAS Seminar works:

The CAS instructor offers a semester long course of study on your campus. The course is structured around a core project: forming an active student organization dedicated to promoting intercultural understanding and friendship. This project forms a compelling motivation for students to expand their own knowledge of world cultures while developing communication skills in writing and public speaking. In addition, students develop interpersonal skills and experience with teamwork in the process of creating presentations to share their own cultural knowledge with others.

The CAS instructor introduces topics (treasures) in world culture designed to stimulate student interest in other cultures and in the presentation process. These cultural presentations serve as models to inspire the cultural presentations which students are learning to design and present. In addition, each world culture topic introduces and models skills which are crucial to designing and performing engaging presentations relating to the cultural background of each student.

Through this project based learning approach, the CAS instructor provides modeling, explicit instruction and ongoing feedback to students relating to strategies for creating the design and performance of each presentation. These instructions include how to brainstorm for creative thinking and writing, training in basic educational methods, and the use of language, visual aids, posture and voice in public speaking.

Through this process of modeling, explicit instruction and ongoing coaching, the instructor guides students to the experience of success: each student gains knowledge of world cultures and an enhanced ability to empathize with others and to successfully communicate familiar cultural patterns to others.

The school community gains an active and sustainable student organization dedicated to promoting intercultural understanding and friendship. Having this organization on campus creates a better experience for students and a higher probability of retaining and recruiting students. The extended community enjoys opportunities to experience the cultural treasures of the world and an appreciation for the cultural richness and communication skills of local students. The global community benefits from people who are now more able to understand, befriend and cooperate with others worldwide.

CAS Seminar Sample Curriculum:
Sharing the Treasures of World Culture

Unit 1:

Content Focus:

The Perfume of India: Yoga as Knowledge of Self for Learning Readiness.

Communication Skills Focus:

Develop postures, gestures, breathing patterns and embodied awareness to consciously enhance effectiveness of spoken presentations.

Unit 2:

Content Focus:

The Canvas of France: “Life as Art” Culture for Enhanced Creativity.

Communication Skills Focus:

Develop creative identity and create apt and powerful metaphors with concrete references to audience background knowledge in order to consciously enhance effectiveness of written and spoken presentations.

Unit 3:

Content Focus:

The Dance of Columbia: Moving in the Here and Now for Clarity of Sensation.

Communication Skills Focus:

Develop the power of presence to adapt presentations to the background and interests of audience members and to promote interactive and engaging presentation experiences.

Unit 4:

Content Focus:

The Silk of China: Humility and Kung Fu as Dedicated Effort over Time

Communication Skills Focus:

Develop the ability to humbly and objectively reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of one's own culture. Develop appreciation for the dedicated efforts of others to develop culturally specific abilities. Develop the ability to listen to others carefully and use to your understanding to tailor your presentation of information to them.

Unit 5:

Content Focus:

The Banquet of Korea: Long Spoons, Kind Words and Living Foods.

Communication Skills Focus:

Develop the ability to establish rapport with others through actions and concepts designed to create awareness of commonalities and interdependence. Develop understanding of the importance of exercise, nutrition and adequate rest for excellence in presentation performance.

Unit 6 :

Content Focus:

The Golden Circlet of Islam: Zero and Creator Culture by Design

Communication Skills Focus:

Develop the ability to assume the role of conscious creator and balance advance planning with the need for improvisation. Develop confidence in public speaking based on well practiced improvisational strategies and careful planning rather than faith in "luck" or "chance".

Unit 7:

Content Focus:

The Crown Jewel: Enlightened Connection in Action for Friendship and Global Synergy.

Communication Skills Focus:

Develop the ability to elicit kinesthetic responses from audience members in order to anchor memories of new concepts and language patterns. Develop understanding of the importance of going beyond the idea of “friendship” into actions that create actual friendships and actual opportunities for intercultural cooperation and synergy.