

Create a Culture Display at the International School of Aruba

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Culture is a very abstract idea, yet it influences every aspect of our lives including the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the language we speak and the holidays/traditions we celebrate. To facilitate students' understanding of culture, ISA held a "Create a Culture Day" on Thursday, December 2, 2004.

Students in grade 8 take a course "World Cultures and Geography" a course which studies the political, cultural, physical and economic aspects of the countries of the world. The first unit was a study of culture. All people, no matter where they live have the same basic needs – food, clothing, and shelter. Plus, all people need communication, relationships with others, education, work and justice in their society. Culture is the way a society fulfills these needs. Climate and geography has a major impact on how a society is able to satisfy these needs. This is why there are so many unique cultures in the world. The second unit focused on geography and its affects on physical and human characteristics, adaptation of environmental influences, movement of ideas, people and goods, and regional distinctions.

Throughout the units, students studied and analyzed selected countries to figure out how the people's cultures depended on the climate and geography, along with their interactions with other people. The final project for the quarter enabled the students to demonstrate their understanding of these concepts.

"Create the Cultures of Eysa" was the title of the project. Each student received a section of land in a fictional world named Eysa. After creating a map of the country, students analyzed the landforms and location to determine the climate of their country. The climate and landforms then determined the natural resources available, which influenced the early history of the country that the students also needed to create. Other aspects of the culture that students established included: language, government, holidays, food, shelter, clothing, entertainment, art, religious beliefs, and national symbols.

On December 2, 2004 the students displayed their work for the rest of the school and parents. Each visitor received a "Passport" to record information of each display such as the national symbols, early leaders or typical shelters. The World Culture students eagerly explained their created cultures and the visitors were an excellent audience.

Part of ISA's philosophy states "That education in an international school with students from diverse cultural, religious, and economic backgrounds promotes a respect for differences in relation to all cultures and the values of their citizens." (From the ISA philosophy statement at www.isaruba.com). "Create a Culture" day was just one way the teachers and students strive to understand themselves and others better within a global setting.