

ALLIANCE ABROAD

Best Practices: Teacher Exchange Cross-Cultural Activity Component

Per Department of State regulations, exchange teachers now must complete at least one cross-cultural activity from each of the categories described below for each academic year. That means that each teacher is required to complete a **minimum of two activities per academic year**. Below we have listed the specific regulations and provided some “best practices” for each. **After you complete an event, document it in the required annual report immediately!** If you wait several months to record it you may forget many details. Also be sure to take pictures and/or collect other documentation if possible. Documentation of completed cross-cultural exchange activities on AAG’s Annual Report template is a required component of both the annual renewal and/or extension processes.

Activity #1: Share your culture with Americans

Requirement: An activity for the teacher’s classroom, larger host school or host school district population, or the community at large designed to give an overview of the history, traditions, heritage, culture, economy, educational system and/or other attributes of your home country.

Exchange teachers placed at international schools must conduct at least one cross-cultural activity per academic year outside the host school in nearby schools or communities where international opportunities may be more limited than those found in their host school.

Best Practices/Suggestions

- **Teach a cooking class** to prepare your favorite foods from your home country. Look for international clubs or other globally-minded groups to host and fund this activity.
- **Teach students/other teachers to play a sport** that is popular in your country.
- **Host a presentation/lecture** at the local library to tell community members about the history, traditions, culture, economy, etc. of your home country. Examples: Talk about a holiday and how it is celebrated in your country around the time when the holiday occurs; Talk about the political system in your home country around the time of U.S. elections.
- **Talk about the education system in your country** to your students, other teachers, or local university students who are studying to be teachers.
- **Go to a senior center or retirement community** and talk to them about your country’s arts and crafts traditions, or one of your hobbies.
- **Give an overview of your country’s economic system** to local business groups, Chamber of Commerce, etc.

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Activity #2: Initiate dialogue between U.S. students and students in your country

Requirement: An activity that involves U.S. student dialogue with schools or students in another country, preferably in the exchange teacher's home school, through virtual exchange or other means, in order to supplement the goals of the in-person exchange.

Best Practices/Suggestions

- **Conduct a written letter exchange.** It's important that you and the teacher of your selected school decide on some parameters first (language level, frequency of exchange, topics of letters, etc.) and communicate frequently to make the exchange as rewarding as possible. Include pictures of the students if possible in introductory letters. See this website for more guidance: <http://www.aroundtheworld.com/2010/12/14/how-to-run-a-successful-international-penpal-exchange/>
- **Conduct an email exchange.** This can be a great option if both schools have enough computers and a reliable internet connection.
- **Make a video of your classroom/school/town** to send to the other school and vice versa with introductions from the students themselves. Include what they are studying in school that year, favorite activities outside of school, favorite foods, etc.
- **Plan a Skype session** so the classes can talk to each other in real time (This may be difficult due to time zone differences).
- **Read the same book in both classrooms** and have students exchange ideas about the book through letters/emails.