

Alliance of Civilizations

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In order to achieve improved relations and coordination between nations, it is imperative to create a system to educate the world and leaders of tomorrow about the different cultures and to promote cross-cultural dialogues. This can best be accomplished through the school systems and use of the internet by focusing on the similarities, understanding each others differences, and recognizing the perceptions of the different nations.

Children are the leaders of tomorrow. If every nation incorporated a curriculum designed to facilitate cross-cultural understanding and dialogue among children, over the years a greater tolerance of differences will develop and even new partnerships will be created. The program could be called the Alliance for Civilizations through Education (ACE). An ACE committee will be formed by the United Nations. The ACE committee will work with each member nation to create the curriculum by focusing on providing information about their nation they want the world to know and understand. As part of the curriculum, each classroom will be connected with other nations through the internet.

The program will be introduced in elementary schools. As part of the curriculum, each elementary classroom will review the cultural practices, beliefs, and “life in the day” of children from other nations. The internet discussions will focus on each nation’s traditions. For example, the American children will do a presentation on such traditions as Thanksgiving and the Chinese children will present the August Moon Festival.

The ACE program for middle school children will continue to focus on increasing understanding of other nations but also increase interactions with children around the world. Classroom blogs will be created to discuss global topics such as global warming, poverty, and epidemics. Students will also be assigned a “partner” from another country to correspond with on a monthly basis. A clearinghouse of interpreters will be provided to assist the students with translations. A calendar of monthly topics will be created by the ACE committee to provide students with topics to be addressed in the monthly correspondence.

In addition to the current high school graduation requirements, high school students must also select a Foreign Nation Specialty (similar to the current foreign language requirements). The Foreign Nation Specialty will require each student to focus on developing critical thinking skills while achieving an in-depth understanding of another nation. Since it will be cost prohibitive to offer classes on every nation to satisfy this requirement, this requirement will be an independent study requirement that is facilitated by participation in a Foreign Nation Specialty class. The class will be offered each year and will be designed to help guide the student through his or her independent study. The student will be responsible for following the selected nation throughout his or her high school years and must report on events and statistics of the country selected throughout the years. A final dissertation or report will be submitted at the beginning of the Senior Year and students participating in the Foreign Nation Specialty Senior class will present their nations to the class. High school students will also participate in mock United Nation sessions on a quarterly basis and discuss topics currently discussed by the United Nations.

In addition, each child will be required to focus on a Cultural Fair, similar to the Duval County School Board Science Fair program. The Cultural Fair will require each of the participants to research other cultures and to create a presentation highlighting the nation. Elementary school children will do class projects and middle and senior high schools will be required to submit individual presentations. High school students will also be required to conduct actual interviews of other high school students in the selected nation. Like the science fair, formal judging will be conducted to identify finalists that will then be submitted to the ACE committee for reviews. Winning entries will receive special recognition and become ACE ambassadors for future cross-nation programs and interactions including possible participation in summer programs that allow students to make ambassador trips to other nations.

Children are the leaders of tomorrow and our leaders need to be connected to nations beyond the borders of his or her country. By educating children about different cultures and by creating partnerships among children throughout the World, there will be an increase in cross cultural understanding and tolerance throughout the World. The ACE program will help reduce cultural tensions and build partnerships throughout the World.