

## **Personal Portfolio Project**

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JTAM Workshop 2010

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### **Objective of the project:**

The project will help students take ownership of their learning by making their participation more concrete and visible for both students and teachers by creating a Participation Portfolio. The project will include the five Cs in the State Standards and Benchmark requirements:

Communication, Culture, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. The students will express their abilities to communicate the target language, embrace its culture, connect their target language to various curricula, compare their language and culture to the target language and culture, and expand their learning into their community.

All language teachers agree that activities outside of classrooms increase language comprehension. Consistent and active participation is vital to improving students' communicative skills and it will also increase intrinsic motivation. However these types of participations do not comprise much of the participation grade, if any. They are usually not given class credits because learning takes place through these activities outside of the classroom. If assessment was to be given for these activities, it is difficult to measure, too subjective and much more complicated for the teachers. However, if students can be given credit for these activities, they are more likely to develop communicative skills and master the target language at a faster pace. These activities may also stir their curiosity and increase their intrinsic motivation to learn the language, thus resulting in higher grade.

### **Description:**

Student participation can include many aspects of learning, such as class attendance, completing school assignments, and actually speaking the language during class. Participation can also include how students broaden their language skills by engaging in various activities outside of

the classroom. For example students can learn by making and eating foods that represent the culture, going to restaurants that serve the culture's food, watching movies and listening to music of the target language. Some students may also travel to the target country. This personal portfolio is one of the ways to encourage student involvement outside of classroom and gain points for actively taking part in learning outside of the classroom.

For teachers, however, concretizing and assessing student participation outside of the classroom is very difficult. We understand that we must encourage the students to extend their participation outside of the classroom where they will get additional exposure to the language as well as receive more direct involvement with its culture. We also are aware that classroom participation points given to the students are not necessarily objective, but rather become biased. Furthermore, many teachers' requirement of student participation leans heavily on the speaking portion of the language within the classroom, which is very difficult to assess in many cases. The personal portfolio will assist teachers so that we can assess students' learning both subjectively and objectively, inclusive of participation in and outside of the classroom.

An organized, tangible portfolio will help the teachers give unbiased, clear, objective assessments of their students' active involvement in learning a language. We will not have to depend solely on course requirements or oral proficiency skills to give them participation points. It will help us encourage the students to take learning outside of the classroom. A portfolio will also give us a reason to give credits to those who are self motivated to learn as well as encourage the other students to become more active in taking time to appreciate other cultures and languages. Parental involvement will encourage communication within their homes. If we personally practice reflection and self assessment as we read the students' reflection on their artifacts, it will help us assess our teaching skills and become better teachers. Writing comments on their reflections will help us become positive communicators and strengthen our relationships with our students.