Yamalo-Nenetsky Area, Gubkinsky

The project for students of the secondary school

**Russian and American Culture and National Lifestyles in Interactive Exchange**

English teachers:

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**Annotation:**

The project is addressed to the students of Russian and American (or other English-speaking countries’) secondary schools and has a sociocultural orientation. The culturally oriented basis of the work is composed of such important aspects as the countries’ cultures, history, literatures and national peculiarities.

A prominent part of the project contents comprises practical activities which are supposed to enable students to get acquainted with Russian and American writers’ famous and less widely known works, to learn key historical facts about the country of the language studied, to become familiar with national handicrafts and to communicate with each other discussing different topics.

The project has a bilateral orientation – the participants of the both parties will be involved into the practical activities.

**The idea:**

The main goal of the project is the students’ getting to know the Russian and American cultures, national lifestyles and contemporary achievements in science, culture and literature with the help of interactive technologies, such as:

* personal computers with a broadband Internet connection,
* the Skype software,
* video conferencing software,
* a smart board,
* a camera and a camcorder.

**The aims of the project:**

The main aims of our work consist in giving a chance to the students to exchange knowledge about their countries and cultures and getting extra practice of Russian and English languages with teenagers of the same or approximately the same age who share similar interests. We believe that such an interaction of teenagers of different cultures will undoubtedly influence the development of intercultural awareness and tolerance between the younger representatives of the two great nations and states.

**the project work conceptual model:**

to achieve the main aims of the project we are going to plan and work out the project implementation in the following conceptual domains:

* **The National Domain: Customs and traditions**: traditional religions and religious holidays, national cuisine and national handicrafts
* **The historical Domain**: the origin of the country, important historic events, outstanding people, language history
* **The Cultural Domain**: literature, art,
* **Geographical Domain**: climate peculiarities, nature, native peoples

**Practical activities to achieve the set project goals**

The project is still at a preparatoru and planning stage, though we have thought out the ways of achieving the goals that we have set for this project. Choosing activities we take into consideration such points as students’ age interests, their readiness to speak on certain points and participate in activities. One of the most important principles we use when selecting the task types is their practical orientation for we believe that students learn, understand and memorise things better through doing something themselves with their own hands.

* **On-line guests**. Joint celebration of Maslenitsa, Easter, Christmas, Thanksgiving Day, Halloween, St.Valentine’s Day, using folk costumes and reproducing customs.. We are going to invite each other to watch the process of celebrations. Project participants will be able to learn some national traditions, to listen to songs and even to play original games.
* **On-line kitchen.** The students willhave a chance to share the recipes of their favoutrite national dishes and cook them on-line. We have all the necessary equipment to show the process of cooking, so our American students will be able to do the same in their kitchen.
* **Photo and video reporting.** We plan to visit northern peoples’ settlements with the main aim to get to know the customs and peoples’ way of life, to celebrate Reindeer Breeder’s Day, to design collages about northern nature and animals. The Russian participants of the project will record all the events and will broadcast them with the help of interactive technologies. The American side will show the peculiarities of their lifestyle and the ones of the native peoples with the help of video and photo reporting. After that the participants will have a chance to share their emotions and thoughts? discuss what they have experienced.

Now we are going to present our first experimental product. It’s a video telling about one of the main festivals in our region - Reindeer Breeder’s Day. It is one of the most respectful traditions of the native people of Yamalia. It’s celebrated every year at the end of March when deer-herds can take a break and relax singing their national songs, competing in their strength in traditional northern contests. Each year this event is held in different Yamalia towns and settlements. And a great number of people attend the festival with great pleasure - women in green and blue robes decorated with national ornaments drag sleeping children in a sledge. Men dressed in their clothes decorated with fur and special leather shoes get ready for traditional competitions. This is the time when the Nenets gather from all the corners of Yamalia, share news, compete in speed reindeer sledge running. We should respect and take care of this consistent cultural heritage. Our goal is to preserve traditions and customs of the local natives and pass them over to future generations.

* **Traditional craft learning.** There is a workshop for boys and a kitchen and a classroom for needlework for girls. The participants will show American students how to embroider national ornaments, braid**, to make** leather crafts or to do woodcarving. with the help of their teachers
* **Firsthand view of natural resources of our area.** Our industry companies are always ready to organise different kinds of excursions to gas and oil fields. American students will have an opportunity to ask professional experts some questions on the technology of gas and oil production. Russian students will be glad to learn new facts about car production, new information technologies and other industries in the USA.
* **Dramatisation of folktales, translation of classical works of literature, teaching some folk songs and dances.** Our school drama club will perform some folktales on stage. We can organize translation contests between the students from the both countries for them to compete in translating American and Russian authors’ poetry and prose including the works of such outstanding writers as Alexander Pushkin, Leo Tolstoy, Anton Chekhov, Theodor Dreiser, Mark Twain and many others. There is a great number of folk song and dance groups in our town and our students take part in their work. So they will teach new friends some elements of folk songs and dances.

We have managed to contact New York secondary school # 228. At the moment we are carrying on correspondence with the teachers of the school and making the acquaintance with the future project participants.