

Preparing World Citizens

Middle schoolers at Independent Day School-Corbett Campus connect regularly via ooVoo and Skype with peers in China and Sweden. They work together on global lessons, implement international projects, and sometimes discuss cultural differences – it may even be the merits of Chinese rice dumplings, Swedish hot chocolate, and American pizza.



After greeting their peers in China and Sweden, IDS students discussed a subject with them that is a favorite among teenagers around the globe: food. The students meet regularly to work on global lessons and share ideas and experiences on a variety of topics.

April 12, 2011 (TAMPA, Fla.) – It’s 9 p.m. in China. It’s 4 p.m. in Sweden. On the east coast of the United States, it’s 9 a.m.

Regardless of where they are in their school day, students at the Second Foreign Languages School of Nanshan in Shenzhen, Vasa Real Middle School in Stockholm, and Independent Day School-Corbett Campus in Tampa are always eager to connect via videoconference.

Middle schoolers at Independent Day School-Corbett Campus have many opportunities throughout the school year to collaborate with peers across the globe. Gathered in small groups around laptops in the William & Virginia Laney Library for their March international videoconference, they share this particular experience with fourth grade observers.

The three-way meeting is part of the International School Connection’s (ISC) Global Partnership Project. Independent Day School has been part of the initiative since the ISC began several years ago and has been partnering with schools in Stockholm and the Nanshan School District. Through the use of shared Internet resources such as Skype, ooVoo, and Moodle, the partner schools have been able to provide a forum for students to share projects, ideas, thoughts, and experiences on a variety of topics.

Last year, for example, IDS students participated in a year-long partnership through the ISC with schools in Sweden and China on recycling. Students in each country researched recycling practices at home and at school, and then they all met virtually to share their findings on a global platform.

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“As an International Baccalaureate school, IDS is committed to creating curricular lesson units that include global perspectives,” said middle school English teacher Jen Jagdmann. “The goal is to prepare students for a global age of living and working together by encouraging greater cultural understanding.”

Jagdmann and Kim Fields, IDS librarian and coordinator of global studies, lead the global connection efforts at IDS. Modeling the benefits of international collaboration for students, they meet regularly with their ISC colleagues - Helena Lewin from Vasa Real Middle School and Ray Zhou from Second Foreign Languages School. Together, the team develops lesson plans and creates opportunities to promote global learning and understanding.

“At Independent Day School, getting students ready for the unlimited international opportunities available in the future begins with both exposure to the greater world community and lessons about appreciating commonalities and differences,” said Fields.

Sometimes those commonalities and differences focus on cultural topics such as food.

Seventh grader Jacob Hudson, for example, learned from Jojo, a Chinese student, that American-type fast food is quickly becoming popular in her country. IDS student Brandis Linn said her group spoke with Katy and Rose in China and learned about rice dumplings and the Chinese Dragon Ball Festival.



IDS is part of the International School Connection's Global Partnership Project and has been working with schools in Stockholm, Sweden and the Nanshan School District in China for several years.

Meanwhile, middle schooler Sam Goetz was excited to see students from Vasa Real whom he had met when he visited Sweden last fall with other IDSers for an ISC student conference. “They actually remembered how much I liked their hot chocolate,” he said. “I showed them the recipe for meatloaf and corn-on-the-cob that I had translated into Swedish. It was a great experience.”

Eric Wendell agrees. “I liked how we could talk to the Chinese and the Swedish kids at the same time,” he said. “I had a chance to really connect with the students.”

“For our students, their biggest ‘ah-ha’ moment is when they realize, ‘Wow, those kids in China or Sweden are just like us,’” said Fields. “It’s a lesson we hope stays with them for the rest of their lives.”

Founded in 1968, Independent Day School-Corbett Campus is a fully accredited, nonsectarian private school located on Orange Grove Drive in northwest Hillsborough County with over 500 students from PreK3 through 8th grade. At IDS, all children experience the International Baccalaureate Programme in a highly academic and nurturing environment focused on excellence and excitement in learning. IDS-CC has become recognized as an exemplary school with over 6,500 visitors observing and learning from IDS-CC teachers. For more information, visit www.idsy.com or contact the Admissions Office at 813-961-3087 for a personal tour.

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