

This project was intensive, and Tara, Shannon, and I all put a tremendous amount of work into it. Overall, I am very happy with the outcome of this project, and feel that it was a true collaborative effort; there was never a task that went without feedback from the other two group members. We accomplished this by putting in at minimum 20 hours in meetings, collaborating in the classroom, and using email to send each other proposals. Highlights of our collaborative tasks include lesson planning, actually teaching the lessons in the classroom, and creating the poster.

Creating the final product, our handbook, was the largest task and collaboration that was achieved. We divided into groups of three and independently organized two fieldtrip tours of locations on campus. I personally took students to the Lory Student Center and organized a visit to the Health Center where the Director herself gave us a tour. She said no one had ever asked to bring international students to the CSU Health Center before, so I feel this was a particularly successful community outreach venture. While we were there I collaborated with my students, gathering data and pictures, which were then compiled for the handbook. There was a great sense of community building and sharing of culture during the fieldtrips. As we were walking from one place to another, we discussed cultural similarities and differences in regards to university life and resources.

In terms of the handbook construction, Tara, Shannon, and I first created our prototype handbook page, 'Health', together. We then showed it to our students during a class period, gathering feedback about what we had and ideas for what other information would be relevant. For example, the idea to add the website for each building was that of a student. After we revised given student feedback, we presented our pilot material to INTO CSU administrators and

got it approved. Shannon and I then reorganized the old handbook and took separate sections. I was in charge of 'CSU Resources', the bigger chunk of the two. I reorganized, reworded, and re-defined everything in my section, focusing on more concise information, clearer formatting, and vocabulary at the 1,000-2,000 word list level. Shannon did the same for her section. Tara put our revisions into the correct program format, and added vocabulary-enhancing visuals such as pictures and vocabulary boxes. When the handbook was complete we all gave our final input.

Overall I feel this project was successful because I feel we achieved all of our primary goals; we wanted to work in the local community and create a product that fulfilled a practical need. From this project I gained teaching experience, cultural knowledge about the Arabic and Japanese students in our class, and a better idea of the resources our campus offers. We worked in the CSU community, bridging the international student community with the rest of campus via the fieldtrips, and we have created a useful handbook based on INTO students' and directors' input. By including feedback from the actual people it is designed for, I believe we have been able to address many of the cultural and linguistic gaps in the original handbook. For example, now the handbook includes recommendations for halal food, how to get a driver's license, and definitions of useful medical terms like pharmacist, optometrist, and gynecologist. It also has pictures of real international students using the resources available, which increases the accessibility and welcoming appearance of otherwise intimidating places like the police station and the library. I hope that this handbook is able to showcase our local on- and off-campus community in a way that helps new students feel more confident in navigating their new homes.

References

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