A GlobAl look At CtE

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Conversations were begun during Manes’ visit to Oklahoma. During her subsequent visit, arrangements were made for a tour of Francis Tuttle Technology Center, because she wanted to see an American technology school. During the tour, the idea was sparked for an initial partnership: the culinary program at Francis Tuttle seemed a good match with the French culinary academies. When she met Chef Claes Passmark, the ideas began to flow, along with the chef’s famous cookies.

During the course of the year, and with many e-mails exchanged, a plan was developed to pair Francis Tuttle with Lycee le Hotoie in Amiens. Hotoie’s Chef Thierry Blanet and Chef Passmark determined they could alternate teaching between them with a monthly teleconference. It was this pilot that provided Manes with a model to seek funding for an exchange project.

When Manes was awarded a grant from the French Ministry of Education, she contacted Belinda McCharen, Francis Tuttle Endowed Chair for Occupational Education Studies at Oklahoma State University, with whom she had engaged in previous conversation; the idea was to begin plans for four Oklahoma technology centers to partner with four Lycees in France. The French Lycee schools are noted for excellence in hotel and restaurant management and culinary arts. This first international partnership was based on the pilot with Francis Tuttle.

Oklahoma Culinary Programs Cook up Great Partnerships with French Counterparts

BY BELINDA MCCHAREN

Oklahoma Culinary Arts Programs Think International

The four technology centers in Oklahoma with culinary programs that were ready to expand from good to exceptional with an international flair were: Francis Tuttle Technology Center in Oklahoma City; Meridian Technology Center, Stillwater; Tri County Technology Center in Bartlesville; and Tulsa Technology Center in Tulsa. Boards of education had to be convinced that such a partnership was beneficial, and a teacher and administrator from each technology center were sent to France to begin planning a yearlong project with the French Lycee.

The technology center superintendents, boards of education, and teachers all understood the potential for changing instruction and changing the opportunities for CTE students in the future. Stephanie Lemoines, of Lycee Charles de Gaulle in Compiegne, coordinated the partnering schools in France, and McCharen coordinated the Oklahoma technology centers. A date was selected
and travel arrangements set. The Oklahomans were headed to France.

Meeting the French Partners
The anticipation was palpable when the Oklahoma group met at the Gare du Nord train station in Paris to take the hour-long trip to Soissons. The Lycee Le Corbusier would serve as host for the initial meeting of the technology centers and Lycee schools. LeCorbusier is the largest Lycee and also has a dormitory for its resident students. The group was met with vans, smiles and bises (kisses) in the French tradition at the train station. A welcome dinner was planned to welcome the Oklahomans to France.

At the dinner meeting, Lemoines and Dominique Mallet, headmaster of Le Corbusier, greeted each technology center and its Lycee partner. The beautiful dinner was prepared by the Le Corbusier students who also served it. Being France, wine was served and was expertly accompanied by the students. Chef Blanet and one of his students.

The partnership includes: cross-curricular lesson development, team teaching, coupled with business update experiences.

The next morning the partners departed to each school with the charge of developing a partnership project that would involve instructors and students for the next year. The goal was for the schools to continue the monthly teleconferences and demonstrations/lectures using Skype during the 2009-2010 school year.

Finally, Dominique Cosson, headmaster of Lycee Gustave Eiffel in Reims, and Sophia Newby, English instructor at that Lycee, were paired with Tammie Carlson, culinary instructor—both from Tri County Technology Center.

Getting Down to Business
The next morning the partners departed to each school with the charge of developing a partnership project that would involve instructors and students for the next year. The goal was for the schools to continue the monthly teleconferences and demonstrations/lectures using Skype during the 2009-2010 school year.

The connections among the new partners and friends were instantaneous and quite amazing. In their presentations, Francis Tuttle and Lycee Hotoie will continue the monthly teleconferences and co-teaching with Chef Blanet. They will expand into developing an international cookbook that will be delivered and demonstrated on CD.

Keeping in Touch
The projects will continue during 2009-2010 with visits to Oklahoma by the French instructors and students tentatively set for fall 2009. These projects will provide the Oklahoma CTE students with exposure to another culture through food and language. Students will also be integrating social studies, foreign language, writing, presentation skills, and practice of their culinary skills through this unique project.

Oklahoma students and teachers will travel to France in spring 2010. It is the hope that these partnerships and similar projects will continue and expand into CTE areas such as hospitality, tourism, and perhaps others. The excitement and learning does not end with the students. The instructors and administrators are also really energized and are bringing French into the classrooms in these four technology centers in Oklahoma. Who knew that French would be important to Oklahoma CTE students? The CTE students in France are all engaged in learning English. In time, the French spoken with an Oklahoma accent may become more familiar to the partners.

Global exchanges such as this will help CTE students be successful in the workplace of the 21st century. Who knows, such exchanges may also create a world with a little more understanding, appreciation of culture and the proliferation of fine cuisine.