



INTERNATIONAL PRESENTERS

Making the most of the Presenter in the Classroom

Introduction

We've put this guide together to help schools gain a better understanding of our program and discover how the Presenter might be involved in both the classroom and the school as a whole. Since each placement is built around the individual circumstances of host and visitor, the scope of the program can be very wide indeed ~ therefore, this is not a definitive guide but rather a starting point from which to develop ideas according to your own needs and interests.

Given the nature of the program, there will always be some adjustment needed on the part of the visitor when settling in, just as there will be some uncertainty for the host with regard to how the Presenter will fit in. IIP endeavors to manage expectations as best we can so that both sides have a clear sense of the opportunities the program can bring. However, we are also careful not to over manage things as doing so risks limiting the potential of the visit. We believe the program works best when the host and visitor collaborate to develop their own unique set of activities.

Please share this information with colleagues, parents and others who may be unsure of the Program's purpose. We hope this brief guide helps everyone gain the most from the visit, not only through classroom activities and cultural presentations, but also through the visitor becoming involved in the whole life of the school and community.

Role of the Presenter

The Presenter's role will vary from placement to placement. The precise role will depend on a number of factors, including the visitor's background, age and experience, as well as the duration of the visit and the interests of the school. Moreover, the role typically evolves as the placement progresses. In addition to the factors above, the immigration and visa regulations of your country may place restrictions on various aspects of the program and what is possible through it. (This last point is particularly complex and not really within the scope of this guide. However, when setting up the placement, IIP will have discussed this aspect of the program with the contact person at your school. Please feel free to contact IIP should you have any questions in this regard.)

Taking the above factors into consideration, the Presenter's role generally involves the following three areas:

1. **Cultural Ambassador** – sharing and promoting their culture within the school
2. **Language Teacher/Teaching Assistant** – Delivering language classes or supporting the teacher of their language
3. **General Teaching Assistant** – supporting classes in any subject or curricular area

Cultural Ambassador

As a Cultural Ambassador, the Presenter is able to act a valuable resource and asset to the host. Whether in a structured capacity delivering a planned program schedule or simply by being a face around the school, the potential can be realized in varied way.

In most cases acting as a Cultural Ambassador forms the bulk of the visitor's contribution and is the primary reason for schools to host a Presenter. Different Presenters have different skills and expertise, just as different schools and grades have different needs and interests, but popular themes include:

- Food
- Arts & Crafts
- Music & Dance
- Costume & Dress
- Stories & Legends
- Games & Sports
- Festivals
- Symbols of Cultural Identity (flags, landmarks, etc)

Almost every theme lends itself to hands-on activity and the potential for students to become immersed in the culture. Moreover, activities and classes tend to feed into one another helping to build up a deeper, richer experience. A popular activity is Calligraphy, which not only introduces students to a traditional and culturally significant practice, but also leads them into exploring another writing system and learning a little of the language and how to read it. Fortunately, it is also great fun and highly rewarding when students get to write their own names in a new script and have something to display or take home to their families. Similarly, the opportunity to sit through a tea ceremony, put on a Kimono, do Origami, or sing a popular song, brings the culture to life.

More analytical approaches are found in comparing and contrasting two different countries, lifestyles and societies. Projects can be developed around making maps, writing reports, plotting charts, collaging images and more, which allow students to examine aspects of the wider world in an absorbing and fascinating way.

Beyond the classroom, after school clubs, school festivals, concerts, exhibitions and events might also be enhanced by the inclusion of Presenter's culture. A display of student work generated throughout the visit brings the whole experience together and lets the wider school community see what the visit has brought.

Prior to their arrival, Presenters spend a significant amount of time planning and developing ideas. IIP provides seminars and guidance through which we disseminate information, advice and experience based on the many years of running programs. Many Presenters and hosts contribute to our knowledge pool after returning from the program. We encourage all Presenters to begin discussing ideas and expectations with their hosts well in advance of their visit and we guide them to keep an open-minded, flexible approach.

Since many themes entail particular materials, tools, space and other resources, it is important that ideas are discussed in advance. The Program aims to bring cultural enrichment at no cost to schools, however there will invariably be some incidental costs involved. While we hope the school will support the activity by supplying some of the more basic materials, such as paper or paints, the Presenter will plan carefully and take responsibility for any specialized resources, which they will arrange to bring from home. If however, you have any concerns or wish to clarify what the school needs to provide, please communicate with IIP at any time.

Language Teacher/Teaching Assistant

Most visits entail some language teaching, whether in the form of simple greetings and names of objects or in delivering a full curriculum. However, unless the visitor is a qualified language teacher or equivalent in the host country, the most likely case is that they are supporting the school's own language teacher. In such a case, the Presenter brings the advantage of being a native speaker to the classroom. We would encourage the school to allow the Presenter to be as involved as much as possible and be given some key responsibilities.

If the school already has a course in the visitor's language, it would be a good idea to confirm with the Presenter beforehand, which text books are being used or the syllabuses being followed so that they can prepare for classes. A popular approach is for the Presenter to give the study materials a context or real life substance by tying the text and materials to themes and activities similar to those they would share as a Cultural Ambassador.

General Teaching Assistant

While teaching about their own country and introducing their own culture forms the main purpose of the placement, Presenters frequently contribute to their host more widely. If the school has an interest in the visitor supporting regular classes as any other assistant would, that is quite appropriate in most cases. Presenters typically have a dual purpose, to engage in cultural exchange and gain insights into the host education system. Depending on the needs of the school and the Presenter's knowledge and abilities, assisting in the classroom may be an ideal way for the Presenter to gain a deeper understanding of teaching styles and methods. For this purpose, in addition to performing assistant duties, the Presenter may also be interested in observing classes. IIP recommend discussing specific options with the Presenter throughout their placement, but it will be very helpful for IIP to know in advance the anticipated activities and balance of time spent in this capacity.

As far as possible, we would hope for the Presenter to be part of the school team. Therefore involvement in meetings and school events is most welcome, as is performing any regular duties

expected of school staff. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns in this regard.

Common Stages of a Placement

In order to plan activities and meet expectations, it may be helpful to consider how the typical placement progresses. In general, there are 3 phases:

1. The **Introduction Stage**
2. The **Participation Stage**
3. The **Review Stage**

Generally, the Participant will have some knowledge of how they can deliver classes and support teaching staff. However, the progress and ability to do so will be dependant on the their English ability, the rate at which they can adapt to their new environment, the school's curriculum and the duration of the placement.

Introduction Stage (Typically 1 or 2 weeks)

To help the Presenter make initial adjustments and start settling in, we would advise the following:

- Assign a staff member (host teacher) to help support the Presenter's integration into their new environment. This may include a tour of the premises, acting as a point of contact for support and information and facilitating meetings and interaction with other staff members.
- Arrange an introduction to the host school's staff and students during a wide event, such as the weekly assembly.
- Once settled, the host teacher should take some time to talk through what the school hopes to achieve from the visit and allow the visitor to explain their goals.
- Discuss class management styles, codes of conduct and any relevant health and safety matters. This may be especially important, since Asian school systems tend towards a highly regimented approach and the Presenter's initially adjustment may be hindered if they are unable to accurately perceive the rules and boundaries.

Participation Stage

This would form the main part of the placement. During this phase, the involvement is likely to develop and evolve. The content will vary a great deal depending on individual circumstance, but it would be useful here to outline some of the common objectives that Participants have so that a prospective host might see how ideas could be implemented. Objectives typically include:

- Learning teaching methods and curriculum development in an overseas education system
- Gaining quality teaching experience and knowledge in support of careers
- Learning classroom management techniques and strategies
- Challenging abilities in English (or other language as appropriate)
- Sharing knowledge and experience

While some Presenters are fully qualified teachers in their home country and may have many years

professional experience, it would generally be best to consider their position as that of a classroom assistant. As the placement progresses the precise level of responsibility can be established, but until that point we would advise the following approach:

- To help the Presenter prepare, advise them on the contents to be taught in the next class and where possible provide copies of the material for their reference.
- It may take some time for the Presenter to feel confident about taking the initiative as well as judging what to do and when to act. If that seems the case, taking a few moments at the beginning of the class to brief the Presenter on the level of contribution that is expected, advising on who corrects errors and how discipline is managed, would be very beneficial.
- The Presenter will be interested in receiving feedback on how classes went. Please take time to discuss his or her approach and how they might further develop skills.
- Throughout the placement we encourage both the Presenter and host teachers to discuss how things are progressing. If a regular session can be set up, such as an informal chat once a month, this will allow for all issues and concerns to be addressed.

Review Stage

At the end of the placement, we would be very grateful if you could provide the more formal feedback to the Presenter and IIP. For many participants this is a valuable record of their participation and for some who might be college students, they may be in a position to gain college credit through overseas experience. We welcome hosts following their own assessment procedures, but IIP will also provide evaluation forms and letter of reference templates to assist the process.

Helping the Presenter adapt

From time to time a placement will get off to a shaky start. We do our best to ensure this never happens, but as with any kind of international exchange, there are challenges and surprises and these sometimes conspire to create issues. In our experience, 9 times out of 10 the reason is miscommunication arising from differing cultural attitudes. Asian societies tend to place a much greater emphasis on seniority and position than those in the west, which do not delineate roles and expectations to quite the same degree. A Presenter may not immediately grasp this and therefore hold back through being too cautious, indeed they may be expecting instruction or permission from those around them. Equally, they may internalize worries or stresses through consideration to their host, since expressing negative ideas might be considered burdening others or appearing critical in some way. Such responses may be quite natural in the Presenter's own culture, but unfortunately, are ineffective elsewhere and often more likely to exacerbate the situation.

Some participants naturally take longer to adjust to their new surroundings than others, but if you do feel there is an issue, IIP are always available to assist. However, one key idea that has proven very effective is simply to give directions to the Presenter.

While certain things may seem obvious to the staff in the host school, a Presenter may not immediately recognize when taking a particular action is acceptable. Perhaps due to concerns about making a mistake or stepping on someone else's toes, they may decide the better course of action is to do nothing and wait.

On the host side, you may feel awkward about asking the Presenter to do something that seems obvious or very menial. IIP's advice is to just go ahead and instruct the Presenter to act. There is a very good chance they are waiting for you to do so and will feel relieved by being given directions. In most cases, this will lead to the Presenter taking the initiative and recognizing the differing attitudes and approaches more readily. Though it may not happen overnight, activating the Presenter is often the key to overcoming initial barriers and avoiding an issue developing down the line.

Please visit us online or get in touch for further information

CONTACT



International Internship Programs - IIP
7-5-4 Koyama, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo 142-0062, JAPAN
tel: +81-3-5750-6055 | fax: +81-3-5750-7712
email: intl-presenters@interntraining.com

www.interntraining.com