

IOS: Building Partnerships through Cultural Education

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International Officers maneuver through Project X- while sharpening their leadership/followership abilities



IO capture the moment in DC during their FSP trip; utilizing the "learn by seeing" model



The Library of Congress illustrates the beauty and refinement of American Cultural, Heritage and Democratic philosophy

The Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC) recently taught an Introduction to American Culture lesson to 26 international officers from 20 different countries at the International Officer School (IOS). The two-hour lecture, taught by Drs. Robert Sands and Lauren McKenzie, gave students a glimpse of American culture, an approach to understanding culture, and communication patterns. Although the interactive discussion did not resolve why Americans use "soccer" instead of "football", the officers better understood US culture and the differences shared by all cultures.

Capt Silviu Marincas from Romania enjoyed the lesson. He said, "The speakers were great! It was one of the best lessons about culture and to understand US culture." Clearly, Drs. Sands and Mackenzie engaged and challenged the students to keep an open mind about culture. "It opened my eyes to why Americans do things differently than in my country, but all cultures are different, even the sub-cultures in the US," Capt Marincas added.

The lesson prepared by the AFCLC is one way to introduce both international officers and USAF airmen to cross-cultural competence (3C). The importance of building enduring relationships is vital in today's multi-national and joint operations. Combined with the culture center's expertise and the IOS mission, teaching culture to international students reinforces the importance of 3C and is certainly a unique way of 'building partnerships through *culture* education'.

The International Officer School preparatory course prepares international officers for professional military education at Air University. More than 75 international students prepare annually for the academic and physical challenges of Squadron Officer School.