**Samples of GAPP Projects**

The revised GAPP guidelines demand that the partner schools work on a joint project in order to qualify for a grant. Some ideas proposed in the Questionnaire and the Grant Applications are listed below:

Partners:

One of the topics which is chosen by a number of GAPP schools is the connection between them and their **partner** school in Germany and their ongoing transatlantic friendship. Some schools look at their shared past (some schools exchange students for more than 20 years!) and where it has led them. There are numerous ways to carry out the topic. One pair of exchange partners plans to establish a Facebook page which will function as a platform for former students. Another will produce a reunion via video between multi-generations of participants.

Culture:

Another topic chosen by many groups is **culture**. The majority of those groups compare American culture and German culture; sometimes in general, sometimes their specific schools’ states. They investigate similarities and differences on many levels: pop culture, cultural stereotypes, youth culture, intercultural understanding through everyday life, teenage life, music, and festivals. One group focuses on the concept of “Heimat” and explores (national) traditions of both countries. Another group’s topic is “Cultural Expansions”: “While the German exchange students were in the US, they researched the influence of Mexican culture and identity in Texas. When the American students travel to Germany, they will be discussing and researching the role of American culture in Germany."

Music:

The universal topic of **music** is chosen by some of the exchange groups. They compare the “sounds of home” as well as their likes and dislikes and try to find similarities and differences among the students.

Sports:

An all-time favorite topic is **sports**. A popular approach is the comparison between Germany and the United States: What kind of sports culture is promoted? Which are the favorite kinds of games? What role does sports have in society at large? How do you pick teams? What are the requirements to earn the Deutsche Sportabzeichen (German sports badge)? In order to explore the topic, groups are planning to visit various sport events and stadiums, participate in PE in their partner school, and creating (video) reports about it.

Food:

A very popular topic choice is **food**. Some groups take a comparative approach and look at eating habits in the US and in German (e.g. “Americans eat Burgers, Germans eat Sauerkraut”). One of the projects focuses on creating a German-American cookbook in order to teach their partners how to prepare regional dishes. For example, every student (both German and American) has a recipe that is important to them/their family. They work with their partner to translate it into the other language. The student prepares it once for their host family. We format the recipes and put them into a bound book. Each family will get one. Emphasis can also be put on nutrition (e.g. “Learn/discover/experience the culinary differences and nutritional differences”).

Social Media:

A highly relevant topic in our times is **social media**. Some groups chose to engage in that field while doing research about it (e.g. “Social Media use in Germany and America: A comparison of how teenagers use social media to communicate, what platforms they use and what sort of role it plays in their daily life”) or using it as a platform to connect (e.g. setting up Facebook pages in order to connect current and past GAPP students).

Architecture:

Another good idea for a topic is **architecture**. One group which conducts its exchange with Munich will look at the “Jugendstil: Architektur und Kunst am Bau.” Another group will explore the “Castles of the Rhineland-Palatinate” and expand the topic of architecture to spirituality and faith.

History:

Another interesting topic is **history**. Some groups focus on certain aspects of US history, e.g. the Westward Expansion in the 19th century, or an exploration of the Founding Cultures. Others focus on Germany’s history in the light of the 25th anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall. The comparison between German and US history is the topic of other students. They investigate the theme of unity or the impact of Civil Rights in both countries.

Geography - Regions:

Another topic choice is **geography.** Groups can take a closer look at the regions of the partner schools. They chose a comparative approach and look at the states in which they live (“Rhineland Pfalz and Illinois....A Closer Look at Each State”). A further option is to look at certain aspects of the regions like rural life and suburbs.

Environment:

One topic that is never out of date is **environment** and its sustainability. Emphasis can be put on climate change, solar energy, renewable energy, or recycling (e.g.). One group’s field trips in the US focused on environmental sustainability. They visited an urban farm, a youth center with aquaponics, an Amish farm, an organic dairy farm, an organic restaurant, and an open museum about colonial Indiana. They also helped clear a walking/equestrian trail in their town. The German and American students also made upcycling crafts together (ornaments out of plastic bottles, bracelets out of pop tabs, etc). They sold these crafts at lunch and donated the money raised to environmental organization that they visited on one of their field trips. The German students and their American hosts also designed lessons about environmental sustainability and taught them to an area 4th/5th grade class.

Industry/Economy:

Some exchange groups take a look at **industry** and **economy**. A historical approach is taken by researching industry throughout the ages. Another point of departure is the comparison between German and US global economic interests. One group focuses on the differences and similarities of forest based economies of Germany and the USA.

Education:

Another approach is taken by some groups who use their recently acquired knowledge of the German **education**al systems to fuel their topic. There is a wide variety of implementations of this topic: some groups focus on multicultural education, others take a look at sports and school clubs. Another possibility is the focus on the differences in the relationships between teachers and students in Germany and the US, or to take a look at German professions and the path that leads to them (conducted via interviews with the host family). One group will take a deeper look at the German school system by visiting a School for the Deaf as well as a School for the Developmentally Disabled in addition to their partner school.

Politics:

The upcoming elections in the United States inspired some groups to compare the (Presidential) Elections in the US and Germany. Another approach is taking a look at European **politics**. One group plans to go to Brussels and study the European Union.

Immigration/Emigration:

Many exchange groups chose the topic of **immigration** (and emigration) due to its current omnipresence and importance. Some compare immigration in their hometown in the US with the situation in their partner school’s town (e.g. “Immigration/refugees in Cologne and Sugar Land”; “Immigration and Emigration: Minnesota and Bavaria”). Others take a broader perspective and investigate the refugee situation in Germany in comparison to the United States. One of the approaches involves the students in half a day of volunteer work at a local Food Bank in order to give back to the community including the refugees.

Another approach to this topic is the discussion of multiculturalism with a special focus on diversity, acceptance, and tolerance. One school incorporates their topic into the celebration of an Ethnic Fest in which the German and American students take part. And finally, another angle on immigration is to study history and heritage. Possible interpretations of this approach include interviews conducted by the students asking their host families about their heritage in combination with a museum tour focused on immigration (i.e. Angel Island).

Specials:

Some topic choices are hard to put into categories because they deal with certain events in their partner cities, special fields of interest of the school, or XXX. They are listed below:

* Additive Manufacturing Techniques (3D printing) to design and build robots.
* Public Transportation (Creation a “How to..”--Guide for taking the bus/train/etc. in Germany)
* Scavenger Hunt through the school/city
* Roots in Rhineland-Palatinate (interviews with host families, investigate ethnic roots, trace immigration)
* Tourism: Both Michigan (w/the Great Lakes) and Koblenz (w/the Rhine River) attract many tourists. The students will look at major attractions - the best/worst aspects of having many tourists and perhaps what tourists often miss that they should know or see in our areas.
* Fairy Tales Here & There: The German students will do presentations on Grimm's fairy tales -- origins, history, etc. They will also involve the district’selementary students by going to their school to read stories to 1st & 2nd graders and share some cultural things with these young students. The American students will be making presentations on American fairy tales/folklore while in Germany and will also be visiting some lower grade levels as part of the cultural exchange.
* "Deutschspuren in Amerika, Amerikaner in Deutschland": German traces in the US, Americans in Germany.
* Globalization

Sometimes there are no clear-cut borders to the topics. Some groups connect the themes of sport and culture, education and history, or history and culture