



CAS PORTFOLIO

YEAR 1 AND 2

*INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE
DIPLOMA PROGRAMME*

LO: Identify own strengths and develop areas of growth

Throughout the first year of CAS, I have had several experiences that have allowed me to reflect on my own strengths and weaknesses. Specifically, what I can aim to improve in the future and grow to be a better person.

Yoga: Activity

Before beginning this CAS Experience, I had little physical activity incorporated into my routine. This CAS activity consisted of attending weekly yoga sessions in my local community. The personal goals that I hoped to achieve when starting this activity were to incorporate more physical activity into my routine, improve my physical ability, work on calming techniques and new healthy coping mechanisms.

During the months in which I attended Yoga, I started to feel different. Particularly, I noticed that my strengths in the field were limited. I wasn't able to concentrate for long periods of time, or hold certain positions, my body would grow tired quickly and my breathing would alter. These non-consistent habits during the sessions made me reflect upon what I needed to improve, ultimately areas of growth.

As time went on my body became more resistant and could hold positions of higher difficulty for longer periods of time as well. I was also able to develop my breathing techniques, which ultimately helped me in my everyday life.



As a very anxious person, Yoga helped me realize that I have the ability to control situations and environments around me through focus and personal reflection. I have adapted the breathing techniques into my daily life, specifically when I'm feeling stressed or tired.

Some of the strengths I was able to identify throughout this CAS experience were my ability to push myself even if I felt tired or was in pain, I would continuously try to persevere in order to reach my full physical potential.

CECD: Service

This CAS experience collaborates with an Organization called CECD which aims to provide help and support as well as several resources to both mentally and physically disabled communities. For this service we organize events alongside those from CECD in order to allow them to do activities, create friendships and overall create a positive atmosphere for them to enjoy. My personal goals for this CAS experience are to become more comfortable around people who have these disabilities as there are several social stigmas and reservations that exist towards them. Through this I hope to improve upon my communication skills as well.



Here is one of the group photos taken during the Sintra trip, where we went to see the snowy mountains.

Throughout this CAS experience I attended two main events. One was an approximately week-long trip in Serra da Estrela, and another was a hike through the Sintra hills. Both trips were some of the most incredible experiences I have ever had in companion with others. Before Joining the CECD CAS experience I felt slightly uncomfortable and didn't know how to communicate with those who suffer from disabilities. This was an area of growth that I identified early on and feel that has improved immensely since both trips. During the longer trip, I was able to get to know the CECD community and understand each person and who they are. I feel that I even made friends with a few. By the end of the week I was completely comfortable with them and leaving was incredibly hard as all the CECD people waved goodbye as we parted on our bus.

One of the strengths that I identified in myself was that I pushed myself into a new situation and continued to communicate and talk to the CECD folk even when I could feel that I was uncomfortable or that I wasn't sure what to say. I think this strength helped me break down any walls that were present and really made me step out of my shell; of communication.

Throughout the year I have undertaken several new challenges and developed new skills in due to several different CAS experiences. I think that some of these experiences have changed my perspectives on many things and have helped me develop as a person.

Climb together: Service

The goal of the 'Climb Together' organization is to orchestrate different events to help raise funds for the organization 'Soroptimist International Clube de Caravela'. This organization will use these funds in order to provide a scholarship for a young girl who cannot afford higher education. My main personal goal that I'm looking to develop are working with a group of people that I'm not familiar with in order to grow my confidence and comfort around others. I'm also looking to help someone get a scholarship through this project by using my own skills and ability (arts) to raise funds for them.



One of the most significant challenges for me during this process was selling tickets for the event. This is because this required me to be able to persuade people into buying tickets. I sometimes get uncomfortable when speaking to strangers, so I really had to push myself in order to try and sell them. I was only able to sell 1 ticket because I did not know very many people who were interested in purchasing or attending the event.

Another one of the main challenges I faced for this CAS activity was social and communication skills which involved speaking Portuguese to those attending the event. While I am fluent in the language, I do make some mistakes which cause communicative errors during conversation. I think I was able to overcome this pretty well as by the end of the main event, I had successfully sold several items to Portuguese customers attending the fundraiser without too many difficulties.

I think that the main skills I developed during this process were my communication skills and confidence. I often struggle with my confidence when it comes to more social events, however I feel that this experience helped me overcome some of this struggle as I was forced to communicate to strangers whom I'd never met, organize stands for the event and also work with other students from foreign schools.

CECD: Service

Throughout both CECD trips and meetings, there were several challenges that I feel helped me to develop new skills.

I think that this CAS experience was the most challenging I had faced this academic year. The main reason for this was that it a deeply personal challenge to develop new relationships with groups of people who were unfamiliar. I had never gone on a lengthy school trip in which I had to stay overnight so I was slightly anxious for how it would go.



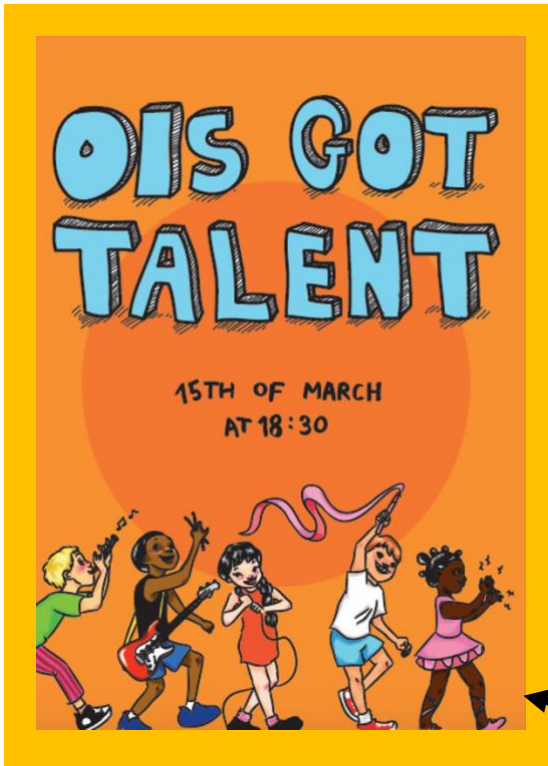
The three main challenges that I feel that I faced on this trip were:

- Maintaining a positive and active attitude
- Participating as much as possible in all of the events
- Dealing with my own personal barriers towards new friendships and communication

Maintaining a positive and active attitude throughout the trips was hard as there were moments that were incredibly tiring. In the Sintra trip which lasted for approximately 4 days, we would wake up early, attend breakfast and then begin the activities of the day. This would last the whole day with lunch half way through and a short hour break before dinner. The days were long and tiresome and would end at around 10 pm. There were moments where I was extremely tired and struggled to maintain an energized spirit. However, alongside my friends and colleagues we were able to push through and keep the positivity throughout the day, often using the tiredness as fuel for jokes and laughter with the CECD members.

During both the trips and all the meetings, I sometimes felt that I could be more useful, so I tried to push myself to ask organizers or CECD members if they required any help. Being helpful was one of my main goals for the CECD experience as I knew that, that was what the organization was all about; helping each other overcome difficulty and disadvantage.

Talent Show: Service



For this Cas Experience I helped the school organize the talent show and created the posters/ set for the show as well as T-shirt designs. I also assembled a team of volunteer students who helped me in order to make a good set/ talent show for the year.

The specific focus for the talent shows this year was Diversity and how there is a large range of talents within our school community. Using the money that the annual school talent show made, it was then donated to a needy organization.

One of the most difficult challenges that helped me develop my artistic skills was to incorporate this theme into the advertising artwork.

This is one of the posters that I created for this CAS experience

I don't particularly like drawing digitally but felt that it would be the easiest and most concrete way to produce the posters and logos. This created a challenge for me because I am not very good (or not as good as I'd like to be) and have trouble with digital software's like Adobe illustrator. Creating the posters, shirts and logos took me several days and was extremely hard work. However, I feel that this allowed me to practice my digital drawing skills.

I feel that these challenges that allowed me to develop my own artistic skill will be incredibly helpful in the future, as I am an artist and want to pursue art as a career. In order to pursue this dream, having dominated as many different medias, techniques and skills can help me portray my ideas in an effective and unique manner.

LO: Show commitment and perseverance in CAS experiences

Throughout the year one of the learning objectives that has been most important, and that can be applied to my future life is that of commitment and perseverance. These two principles are fundamental in order to create good results in no matter what field or area they are applied to. Specifically, in my CAS experiences, I have tried my best to incorporate these factors into them in order for them to be as successful as possible.

Creative Club: CAS project – Creative and Service

Alongside a few other students, we created a club that runs twice a week, where on Tuesdays we do creative writing classes and Thursdays we do arts classes for any students who want to join. I did this alongside 3 other colleagues. We collectively planned and designed each class and taught the classes ourselves. Our main aim is to be teaching art techniques (such as shading, sketching, portraiture, water color etc.) and creative writing techniques (such as character development, plot enhancement, setting description, imagery). These classes took place during lunch times. This CAS project involved around an hour and 30 minutes of work per week, including the actual club which will be 30 minutes for 2 twice a week and 30 minutes of planning for the club. My Goal for this project was to help the school community by creating a program where younger kids have an outlet to learn and express themselves creatively as well as increasing my confidence for speaking and articulating my own ideas as well. I also hoped to explore my own abilities and techniques with the students to better my own understanding of the arts and how I can improve my own techniques by helping others better theirs.

As this was my CAS project which I created alongside others, commitment and perseverance were critical factors in maintaining the club to be successful and for it to actually help those attending. The commitment which I applied to the project was attending every Tuesday and Thursday as well as spending time outside of school to create lesson plans which could be used for classes. I also checked up on certain students who I felt benefited from the club or who were interested in arts but were sometimes too shy to attend. Specifically, one boy drew very well, and in seeing his potential I urged him on several occasions to continue to come or gave him to tasks that were specific to his interests.



CECD: Service

The commitment that I showed in this CAS experience was attending several meetings throughout the year that held the purpose of organizing certain events. Whilst I didn't have a principle role in the event organization which the CAS project leaders took on, I still made sure to attend all meetings as best I could and be on time. Furthermore, by attending these events, I was committed to the project and placed it as one of my priorities.

Climb Together: Service

My commitment to the Climb together CAS activity was show through attending all meetings that were organizing the main event, using my own time to create logos, posters and other factors and also supplying the event with some contributions of food. These factors all showed how I was willing to help in any way possible and commit to doing what the organizers wished me to do in order to provide service.

Yoga class: Service

I committed to this CAS experience by attending every weekly session of the class for an hour. If by any chance I wasn't able to attend due to unforeseen circumstances, I would make up the class in the following week on a Tuesday and then also attend on a Thursday. As I live fairly close to the establishment it wasn't particularly hard to commit to attending, however it was hard to commit when I was incredibly tired or simply not in 'the mood' for Yoga. Despite these 'moods' I managed to push myself into each class out of necessity and understanding that it was a positive activity for me.

LO: Demonstrate the skills and recognize the benefits of working collaboratively

Throughout this academic year, I think that most of my CAS experiences involved working collaboratively. Whilst I recognize the importance of this as it can be much more efficient than working alone, specifically in real life situations, I felt that this may have been one of the most Challenging learning objectives to obtain and exercise.

Climb Together: Service

The climb together project required team work. It was critical that we all worked together in our separate dictated tasks in order to create a successful end product: an event that would garner enough funds to provide someone with a scholarship. Working collaboratively with my colleagues made me better understand how each person can contribute to a larger scheme of things, whether it be on a small project or on a worldwide scale. Working collaboratively is what allowed this project to succeed despite difficulties sometimes involving miscommunication or general problems, we were able to reach our goal.

During the main fundraiser for the project, I was put on duty of selling merchandise to those who were going to attend the talent show at the fundraiser. I had to work with several of my friends, which in its own way wasn't incredibly hard, however I also had to work with people who wasn't so close to or barely knew at all, improving my collaboration skills greatly through new experience.

CECD: Service

It was incredibly important to work collaboratively with my colleagues in CECD. This is because we had to make sure that we were organized and consistent when entertaining and engaging with those from the CECD organizations and therefore needed to plan activities and conduct them efficiently. I think we achieved this pretty well as most activities were received well by the participants and both trips had positive feedback from those working in CECD.

There were also several group activities which involved team work such as the one shown on the right, where we were divided in teams and had to participate in different games.



Above is a picture of several of the CECD members, fellow colleagues and I competing in teams during a game. This activity was during the day and was an opportunity for all of us to spend time and get to know each other better.

Creative Club: Creativity and Service (project)

Working collaboratively for my Creative Club CAS project was crucial. As I was working with my colleagues on the club in both the planning and classes, I began to understand the importance of communication and how relationships between people especially in a work environment can really affect the work. There were moments where our collaboration wasn't as great as it could have been, sometimes their disagreements on certain activities or sometimes I or another colleague would be more disconnected and not participate as much with the group. This sometimes caused some disorganization; however, we always were able to pull each other back into focus and back to the students who were there to learn. This relationship of looking out for each other, helped us practice these collaboration skills.

4th of November 2018

I have spent the past week talking to my colleagues about planning each session and also replying to any emails regarding questions about the club from any students who are interested. By creating CAS Project, I have learnt a lot about the responsibilities involved in organizing these sessions.

An example of a reflection looking at working collaboratively

LO: Demonstrate how to initiate and plan a CAS experience

Initiating and planning certain CAS experiences are very important for these experiences to run smoothly and without error. I felt that throughout the year I planned certain CAS activities very well, such as The Creative Club project, however I would've liked to help out in the planning of other activities such as the CECD experience. I felt that I did take initiative when pursuing these experiences as they were all things that I enjoyed and wanted to go well.

Creative Club: Creativity and Service (project)

Here are two examples of Lesson Plans for both Creative Writing and Arts sessions. This is how I and my colleagues planned for the club and its classes. We constructed a series of these plans throughout the year and used them accordingly to the wishes of the students. If there were particular days where students were having trouble with a certain task, we would improvise and help. Other days we would follow a certain lesson plan accordingly. This portrays the initiative and planning that I took towards creating structured and ordered classes that met the students' needs creatively.

Furthermore, I think by using the practice of planning out things beforehand, helped me understand how it can make things a lot clearer. I am naturally a semi-organized person and generally like to immediately jump into a project or work without planning beforehand. This has created some problems in the past both academically and in my own personal life.

I have learnt that taking initiative and planning can help you organize your thoughts a lot better and can be used for stressful situations. An example of this is that recently I had a lot of work to complete and felt overwhelmed. I decided to plan out what work I was going to complete in what order. This helped me calm down, clear my mind and work more efficiently as I then had a set of goals to follow from.

Lesson Plan- November 28th, 2017

Subject: Creative Writing

Subtopic: Freytag's Pyramid

Teacher: Jackie LaBruzzo

Introduction: The common plot pattern of stories world wide.

- Every story has a plot line. They usually follow a pattern.
- This pattern has been used for many years in all types of creative stories.
- What is "Freytag's Pyramid"?

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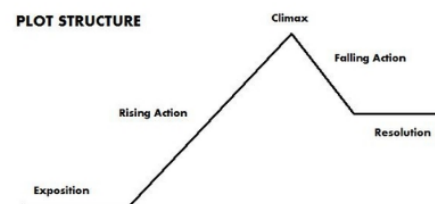


Figure 1- Freytag's Pyramid (Brittney Kreuger 2013)

[Ask student to see if they can explain it.]

Freytag's Pyramid shows the basic plot structure of creative stories written by many authors. Let's break it down into parts:

Exposition

- Background information, the beginning of the story- introduces setting and characters.

Lesson Plan After Mid Term Week #1

Creative Club – Arts

Observational drawing

- 10 minutes – Ask each student to pick an object in the room and place it in front of them. They will draw what they see. No introduction or Tips on how to successfully complete the task.
- 10 minutes – Give feedback on the work, highlight what went wrong, initial mistakes
- 5 minutes – Introduction of how to do an observational drawing, technique
- Last 25 minutes – allow students to use these techniques and re-do the drawing, giving feedback throughout

Lesson Plan After Mid Term Week #2

Comic Creation (Thursday) and Jack do Character development for the (Tuesday session) in order to use for this class

- 10 minutes - Write on the board the the main "rules" of creating a comic strip, frames, composition, bleed etc. Keep it brief. Give brief example of what one would look like: own work
- 20 Minutes – Allow students to create their own. Give feedback throughout, with Jackie as help referring back to development of characters.

LO: Demonstrate engagement with issues of global significance

This learning objective is a critical part of CAS experiences as it has allowed me to be part of a global community and help solve global problems. Engaging in global issues has helped me achieve more awareness with how I can help and participate in global communities and become an active member of society.

CECD: Service



My participation in the CECD CAS project has allowed me to engage with the global issue of making sure that the mentally and physically disabled community can be well integrated into society.

By interacting and helping those with disabilities I have learnt many things, specifically I have come to realize how intelligent and friendly they are despite often being cast aside.

Above is a picture of Carla, a member of CECD with down syndrome who I met during a trip to Serra da Estrela this year (2019). Through meeting people like Carla, I grew more aware of how fragile people with disabilities can be and how it is very important to help them not only locally but globally as well. Especially as disabled people are often marginalized in several parts of the world and not taken care of properly.

Being part of the initiative to propagate adequate health care systems for those with disabilities all over the world has helped me recognize the importance of taking action; even if it may seem small or insignificant. Acknowledging that I was part of making the CECD members days more interactive and better was one of the best parts of this project.



LO: Recognize and consider the ethics of choices and action

Several ethical choices and decisions can come up in different CAS activities. It is important to recognize the ethics behind decision making as it guides how our decisions affect others and how we make our choices. Whilst considering ethics for nearly all of my CAS activities such as Creative Club or Climb Together, one of the activities that I found this learning outcome to be the most relevant was CECD. The project lasted throughout 2 years and it made me constantly engage with the LO.

CECD: Service

Throughout the CECD CAS project I recognized the importance of ethics in choices and decision making by growing aware of how important my own choices are in how I interact with the CECD members. The ways in which I choose to act around them can impact them tremendously as they can be very vulnerable or sensitive. Considering the ways in which I speak to them, treating them as individuals that are valid and have great personalities was an important thing to be conscious about whilst being with them. I found that often people would treat them as if they are incapable of understanding the world around them, outside of CECD groups. My experience with seeing them being treated and perceived this way in my own personal life helped me understand the importance of my own actions and their consequences towards others.

Final Summary

I found that my most meaningful experience throughout these 2 years of CAS was CECD. This is because I had never had the opportunity to spend so much time with disabled people and really understand them as individuals. This project helped me create impactful and emotional connections that have made me a better and more understanding person. Being with the CECD members brought me a lot of Joy and learning experiences and gave me unforgettable memories.

The process throughout CAS has allowed me to develop as person by helping me better my collaborative working skills, communication, organization etc. Participating in events, running my own Club for students interested in the Arts and helping the environment have all been examples of projects that have allowed me to broaden my skills and reach new goals of improving myself.

