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Nowruz Around the World: A Festival Celebration Project

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Teacher's comment

I was inspired to create this activity because the project itself was deeply motivating. It recognized the importance of our cultural heritage and reaffirmed that our traditions and identities truly matter. It reminded me that our culture is not only valuable but also a powerful tool for learning and connection. I was also directly inspired by the activities presented during the project, as well as by the creative and meaningful activities developed by my colleagues. Together, these experiences encouraged me to design something that celebrates Nowrouz while helping learners engage with the Persian language in an authentic and joyful way.

Context

This project connects to the themes of identity (exploring Persian cultural heritage and its global celebrations) and knowledge (history, traditions, food, art, and multiculturalism). Students will learn about Nowruz (Persian New Year) and how it is celebrated in Iran and other countries.

Aim

The main aim of this activity is to develop:

- Language skills: Reading (researching Nowruz traditions), writing (scripts and descriptions), speaking (presenting in Persian), listening (peer feedback).
- Academic skills: Information search, collaboration, time management, creativity.
- Cultural skills: Connecting with Persian traditions and comparing global celebrations.

Challenge Addressed: Students often lack vocabulary related to cultural rituals (e.g., *haft-sin*, *sabzeh*) and struggle to discuss them in Persian. This project builds confidence through structured, scaffolded tasks.

Content

Active Brainstorming (Week 1):

- Students brainstorm what they know about Nowruz: symbols (*haft-sin*), foods (*sabzi polo*), rituals (jumping over fire), and global celebrations (e.g., in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, or diaspora communities).
- Teacher compiles ideas into a master list and shares it with the class.

Group Formation & Topic Division (Week 2):

- Groups of 3–4 students choose subtopics (e.g., *History of Nowruz*, *Traditional Foods*, *Nowruz in Different Countries*, *Symbols and Their Meanings*).
- Each student selects a specific task (e.g., researcher, illustrator, scriptwriter, presenter).



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Research & Creation (Weeks 3–4):

- Students gather information, write short Persian texts, and collect/draw visuals (e.g., *haft-sin table drawings*, photos of Nowruz dances).
- Groups create a digital poster (using tools like Canva or PowerPoint) or a physical collage with text and images.

Festival Video Presentation (Week 5):

- Groups film a 3–5 minute "Nowruz Celebration Guide" in Persian. They can:
 - Demonstrate a ritual (e.g., setting the *haft-sin*).
 - Cook a simple Nowruz snack (e.g., *ajil* trail mix) while describing steps in Persian.
 - Role-play a family celebrating Nowruz.
- Alternatively students can act out the content of their videos in the classroom.

Form

- Group work: Mixed-ability groups ensure collaboration.
- Duration: 4–5 weeks (1–2 lessons per week).

Adjustments

- Differentiation:
 - Beginner students: Focus on visuals, simple sentences, or voice-over support.
 - Advanced students: Write detailed scripts or lead presentations.
 - Shy students: Handle behind-the-scenes roles (editing, artwork).
- Tech Support: Provide templates for posters or scripts to reduce cognitive load.

Assessment

- Successes:
 - Motivated students enjoyed the creative mix of culture, food, and tech.
 - Lower-level learners engaged through hands-on tasks (drawing, cooking).
- Challenges:
 - Some groups needed extra time for research or video editing.
 - A few students relied on English for complex ideas; the teacher provided Persian vocabulary lists to scaffold.
 - Video editing might be challenging; therefore, acting out the content of the video is another option for the students if they choose to do so.



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Why This Works

- Engagement: Combines culture, creativity, and technology (videos, digital posters).
- Language Growth: Recycles key vocabulary (e.g., **سین سفره هفت نوروز**) in multiple contexts.
- Connection: Students share their work with families or the school community, reinforcing cultural identity.