



Class of 2012 Senior Independent Projects

Beatrice Bompani

For my senior project I have taught the fundamentals of the Italian language at the Academy at Charlemont. My class was every Tuesday B period during the second semester. To teach I used lesson plans that I created myself, short videos and songs; and I have realized that art, music and drama are very important in teaching a foreign language. During this project I had the chance to explore question like “What are the most efficient steps, for me as a teacher, to teach Italian?”, “Am I able to hold a class?”, “How can I teach the fundamentals of Italian to high-school students once a week?”, and “What can my students learn in this class?” I also studied the Montessori method and applied some of her teachings to my lessons such as personal freedom, respect and the concept “Help me to do it myself”.

Milo Farley

I started out knowing I wanted to do a documentary, and, as I neared the precipice of applying to college I figured the college process would be a fun and interesting topic for my film. I called it “Leap of Faith,” and I started in the fall interviewing three high-school seniors about their experiences and journeys. Then, when they had heard back from their respective schools, I followed up, asking each about their plans and their views on the process in retrospect.

As I was piecing together my final product I was hit with the unexpected. My backpack (including my laptop) was stolen, and I was sent back essentially to square one. With a week and a half left before the deadline it looked like I wouldn’t have a project, but I received an extension until May 15th. My new product will be a “panel interview” of four seniors; we cover most of the topics I had hoped to discuss in my original film, and I believe this will be a good “retrospective” of the college process.

Nick Feld

My senior project is the restoration of a 1985 Honda Interceptor VF700F. I began the work on August 5th, 2011, and finished on February 18th, 2012. Not only did I learn how to fix a bike, but I ended up with a road legal bike to have some fun with after the project.

Colin Grinnell

I investigated the effects of river silt that washed up from hurricane Irene on seedlings. I used terrariums that were sealed so that I could mimic more real world conditions. Using two large aquarium tanks, I conducted two sets of tests. The first simply compared silt vs. no silt. The second, compared silt tilled into the soil and silt on a slope. Tilled in is a solution used by many farmers while I chose slope because it seemed like water was not absorbed by silt easily. My results showed that silt has a negative effect on growth. When looking at my first test, I have statistically significant results showing that silt impairs the growth and development of seedlings. In my second test, it suggested that silt tilled into the soil does not offer a solution to the problem. Silt tilled into the soil seemed negatively affect seedlings, almost as much as just silt. The silt on a slope test was not completely conclusive. Due to the small size of the tank, it was hard to get conclusive results. The main, significant result of that test suggests that where the water pools, after running off sloped silt, will overwater and harm the plants there. I also created a visual element to my project in the pamphlet. It was made so that anyone could easily understand my project and results without having to read my lengthy write-up.

Sarah Grinnell

My project was to make 17 plates and 17 cups, one of each for every person in my senior class. I started by creating my own studio in my basement so I could throw there and not have to do all my work at school. Each of the cups has a face profile silhouette carved into them and inlaid with black. The plates are a bit more complex: each one has a face profile stenciled on to about a third of it, and a design specific to the person the stencil is of. For example, Katja Schneider has an elephant to remember her time spend here in America, as well as a purple background because it is her favorite color. The cups and plates will be given to the parents of the graduating students to have something to remember them by as they go off to college.

Tenzin Gyalpo

As part of a large Tibetan Community in exile, I have begun to explore my heritage. I've seen barley *Tsampa* play a leading role in the lives of all Tibetans I've come in contact with both here and in Tibet. *Tsampa* is flour milled from roasted barley and used as an all-around food commodity in Tibet. It takes many forms and has many uses that are not always ingested. I'm drawn to *tsampa* because of this connection to my Tibetan heritage, and want to learn more about it. I'm also interested in exploring ways of adapting *tsampa* within an American entrepreneurial framework, complimenting my Tibetan – American identities.

My Senior Project, therefore, focused on the following:

1. Investigating the cultural, religious, and medicinal importance of barley *tsampa* to Tibetans.

2. Applying this knowledge to my entrepreneurial dream of starting my own business by possibly making and selling *tsampa* within the local Tibetan community.

Results:

1. I found *tsampa* to be a food staple with many uses in Tibet. It is their most common nutritional food source, being both native and unique to Tibet. It is also used extensively for medicinal healing and as an important religious resource.
2. Unfortunately, making and selling *tsampa* within the Tibetan community is unprofitable in the U.S. because *tsampa* is widely produced and distributed within that community without profitability.
3. I have created my own company, BLUE SKY MOUNTAIN, intending to find more profitable Tibetan products to pursue my entrepreneurial dream beyond the small Tibetan community into the larger American market. This project has allowed me to gain important insights into this process.

Gracie Hall

This fall I knew I wanted to center my project on teenage girls in one-way or another. I eventually decided to focus on the interactions between girls and other girls.

In February I conducted an hour-long school wide survey in which I received an incredible body of work that I thought should be shared. I compiled these answers and other sources into what I like to call a 'Community Help' book. Additionally, I tried to set myself up as the 'go to' person for girls with friendship troubles, drama, and overall pain. This was easily the most rewarding part of my project because I was allowed into girls' most intimate lives. The process of writing the book and talking to girls led me to my conclusion: girls within this age range often create competition with one another, which can damage their individual sense of self-worth. What I wanted to do was figure out a way to mend some of the damage and end some of the competition. I tried to accomplish this goal by planning a sleepover party for all the girls, and trying to initiate a "Big Sister, Little Sister" program here at The Academy.

Aurie Ingraham-Adie

For my senior project I wanted to answer the question: How can I help animals through my local animal shelter, and how can I educate and encourage others to do so as well? I have been exploring this question in several different ways. Dakin has a shockingly low number of actual employees, for they depend on the dedication of volunteers who work alongside their staff. As of 2011 there are more than 300 volunteers who help care for the animals. I learned about all the different ways to be part of the Dakin community. A few

of the current volunteer positions are: Dakin Community Spay/Neuter Clinic Volunteers, Adoption Center Helpers, Animal Caregivers, Dog Walkers, Closing Helpers, and Foster Parents along with many, many more positions. I have been fostering cats and kittens, as well as volunteering at Dakin's Leverett location.

Back in October I started fostering Georgia and Aphrodite who were six weeks old at the time. They needed to be fostered because kittens need to be two pounds or two months old in order to be spayed or neutered, which needs to happen before they can be put onto the adoption floor. Everyday I had to weigh the kittens to make sure they were gaining weight, as well as write a bit about the progress of each cat every day. After having the kittens for about a month and a half, they were absolutely comfortable in my home and most importantly, they had become socialized, healthy, affectionate and loving kittens. After I returned Aphrodite and Georgia to Dakin for the next important steps in their young lives; spaying and adoption to their new homes, I brought home to foster, two adult cats named Jennifer and Princess Zelda. Foster caring for Jennifer and Princess was a completely different experience from fostering the kittens. The kittens had to be watched all the time because they would get into mischief, and I had to write a journal entry for both of them daily, whereas Jen and Princess did not really need my constant attention.

When I go to Dakin's Leverett location on Thursday afternoons I clean cat cages, dishes and litter pans. Along with doing laundry, I socialize with the animals, go for walks in the woods with the dogs, take pictures of the animals for their online profile, and other miscellaneous tasks. I have also been enjoying the privilege of fostering kittens and cats that cannot be at Dakin for various reasons.

Joseph Jurek

The goal of my senior project was to create a movie script that incorporated historical elements about a Roman named Lucius Sergius Catilina. The main task throughout writing the script was to balance the historical side and the entertainment side. If I kept to the straight historical facts my movie would be extremely long and dull for the general audience. However if I focused too much on the entertainment side, my movie would lose all its meaning and just become another action film. Though I really enjoy action movies, I wanted to make a story about a very complex man who must come face to face with his challenges.

Max Kitchell

Max Kitchell's senior project was an intimate photographic exploration of the professional lives of musicians. He chose this topic because of the importance that both musicians and photography have in his life. During his project, he worked with Lee Madeloni, "Winterpills", "Potty Mouth", and Marco Benevento. His project's product is a coffee-table style photography book which shows the story of his project and seeks to offer insight into what it means to be a professional musician.

Katja Schneider

My Senior Project, Adventures in New England, is an exploration of woodworking, and a trilogy of outdoor adventures. In the fall of 2011 I built a raft and floated down the Connecticut River with it for three days. During the winter I originally had planned to go winter camping for a weekend; the lack of snow, unfortunately, cut that to one night. My spring adventure was a weekend-long backpacking trip on the Appalachian Trail. I documented my trips using digital photography and descriptive writing, as well as film photography and creative writing, both of which I had never used before. My project provoked a new awareness in me, of nature, civilization, my body, and the relationship between them. I enjoyed and benefited from every part of my project; there is not much I would change if I could do it again.

Miikka Sipila

My senior project was about trip to Hawaii. Before going to Hawaii I watched a document and read couple books that told about Hawaii and then I went to Hawaii to see if the experience is much different than what I would expect from my studies. Also I bought Ukulele and started learning it myself by watching online tutorial videos and other sources that I can use to learn it independently. My product was a journal from my Hawaii trip with photos I took there. My ukulele learning part is covered by problems I had with different songs I was learning.

Graeme Sloan

Graffiti: A View Through Different Lenses

Part one of my project focuses on photography through the questions, “Can I create powerful photography portfolios documenting graffiti and street art?”, and “Have other photographers created powerful portfolios themselves?” The second concentrates on a series of questions about graffiti concerning the graffiti’s impact on its artists, public officials, the art world, and me.

In the first part I traveled and photographed graffiti and graffiti artists. With the pictures I took I was able to create four portfolios: two from Miami, and one each from New York and Boston. I also looked through, examined, and reviewed five photography portfolios by different artists focusing on graffiti; I wrote extensively on whether or not I thought their portfolios were powerful.

In the second part of my project I explored the series of questions through extensive research and experience. I learned about graffiti’s effects on our world, and I came up with some eye-opening answers. My research, time spent in the field, and documentation through photography enabled me to capture this moment in time and its relevance to my generation.

Sawyer Thompson

Computers are everywhere. In schools, homes, libraries, and workplaces, they are quickly becoming necessities of modern society. Yet even though so many people use them on a daily basis, few people really understand how they work. For my senior project, I spent the year teaching myself the programming language ActionScript 3.0 from a combination of books and websites, working towards creating a finished video game.

It turned out that programming was much harder to learn than I had expected, and I never finished the game, but I left the year with proficiency in a skill that most people do not even start to learn until college, and got the chance to develop my own game engine, including basic artificial intelligence, that I can build upon for the rest of my life.

Abby Weems

The question I explored for my senior project was: what is the typical process of a clothing designer? My method of study was to learn the proper techniques of fashion design, sew 3 to 5 functional pieces, paint my own patterns and images onto the fabric, and photograph the end products being worn.

In order to accomplish the design aspect of my project I planned to learn the proper techniques of hand and computer-drawn composition. I took a five month class with Gayle Kabaker on fashion illustration. Then constructed the articles of clothing to resemble the designs as closely as possible, and painted original patterns within my theme of flowers and anatomy. I have a Bernina sewing machine and a mannequin at home, and brought a Viking sewing machine to school. To photograph the resulting pieces I arranged a simple studio at home with a background and sufficient lighting.

Eamon Wick

In this project, I explored multiple different areas of making a recording studio. I looked at physics of acoustics; how sound acts in a room, what acoustic problems can cause a room to sound awful, and how to combat these problems using sound-absorbent panels, diffusion, and bass trapping. I also took what I learned here and applied it to making a studio, using my newfound knowledge of acoustics to decide what acoustic treatment to use, and where to place it.

There was also the physical element of the project; I learned about the equipment that makes up a recording studio, and what each piece does. I worked my hardest to put together a studio with the highest quality equipment and gear, so that the future musical Aardvarks have the best recording space possible.

Ge Zhou

This project is to re-design Burlington. There are two reasons that I decided to do this. First is that I am considering architecture to be my major. I want to experience what it's

like to be an architect. Second reason is that Burington is a property of academy and academy would be benefit to have more space on campus. This project includes an all school wide survey about what they want Burington to be. There are also individual interviews with all the faculties. After a thoroughly investigation among the people in community, I drew out floor plans and elevation plans. I also made two models. One is a model of the original building. Another one is the re-designed Burington. Because this is my first architectural project ever, there are mistakes that I should have avoided but I am really pleased that I decided to do this.