



## Project Starter Kit for Online Collaborations

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## iEARN Ideas for Preparing Students

1. Try this Telecommunicating Activity:
  - Have pairs of students sit with their backs to each other. Assign them a topic (tell about your weekend, a book you read, a problem you are aware of) and have them write on one piece of paper, passing it back and forth.
  - Join the whole class together and discuss what worked and what did not.
  - Discuss ways of making it work better. Generate a list of guidelines to post in class.
  - Distinguish between public forums and private email.
  
2. Compose an introductory email/posting as a class.
  - Consider an interesting Subject Heading to entice readers.
  - Review the **Tips for International Communication** (attached) and check the message for problems.
  - Edit as a class and post to the forum.
  
3. Individual student postings:
  - Students may sign in under your account and post under your name.
  - You may also assign individual accounts to each student. To do so, sign into Membership Database. You should be on your iEARN page. At the bottom see *Click HERE* to add students.
  - Have students agree to the rules of the **Buddy Contract** (attached).
  - Establish peer editing system while posting initial messages. Have students read their partners message aloud to see if it sounds the way it was intended to. Allow students to discuss how messages could be clarified or made more interesting.
  - Introduce the **Response Rubric** (attached) for students to follow as they reply to others.
  
4. Be sure to have **Permission Forms** (attached) for all participating students or check with your district for Internet Rules.

## **iEARN Tips for Successful International Communication**

- ❑ **Names:** Do not assume that other students will know if you are male or female by your first name. If you want them to know that you are male or female, tell them.
- ❑ **Metric:** Almost all other countries use the metric system for measurement. A temperature of 30 degrees may seem cold to you but it be warm to your partners. (30 degrees Celsius is 86 degrees Fahrenheit.) Convert your measurements to metric in your communication. Most often the other student will have to translate the rest of your communication into their first language. Science Made Simple has a metric converter that is easy to use. <http://www.sciencemadesimple.com/conversions.html>
- ❑ **Slang:** If you use slang expressions be sure to explain what they mean.
- ❑ **Language:** Remember how tedious it is to look up words in a dictionary. Use simple English words. Consider how phrases are translated literally. Can you imagine what someone would think if you wrote you had dirty blond hair?
- ❑ **Abbreviations:** Explain abbreviations when you use them.
- ❑ **Time:** Remember that most of the world uses a 24 hour clock. Three in the afternoon would be written 15:00. (You add 12 to number for the P.M. hours)
- ❑ **Dates:** Most other countries will write dates with the day, month, year or even year, day, month rather than our system of writing month, day, year. Write out the name of the month to avoid confusion.
- ❑ **Humor:** Remember the reader cannot see your face in your communication. Humor may often be interpreted literally and misunderstood. Use emoticons (smiley faces and other symbols) and punctuation such as asterisks to make emphasis. Be certain to state your emotions, do not assume they are known.
- ❑ **Spelling:** Most of the world learns British English language rather than US English. Words such as centre or colour may look misspelled but are correct for them.

## The iEARN Buddy Support Contract

This is a contract developed by the first iEARN Learning Circle class at the Edmonds Cyberschool. We felt that the use of this contract would help us all stay respectfully in the bounds of internet use/discussion forums of the iEARN network. We also acknowledge the importance of supporting each other in our endeavors.

The following are items that I have agreed to:

1. I have read and understood the Internet User Agreement of the Edmonds School District.
2. I agree that the plan of this contract is to match pairs of buddies in class. These buddy pairs will help each other stay in the bounds of respect conducive to positive online work.
3. I agree that I have a responsibility to help my classmate STOP when I sense that the language/tone/topic of a message is becoming inappropriate or disrespectful while on the internet/forums.
4. I will do this by verbally saying that I am uncomfortable with what is happening.
5. I will ask my classmate to change the discussion format to a respectful, appropriate message.
6. Inappropriate messages include the use of disrespectful, hurtful terms, profanity, slurs, and inappropriate topics including pro-substance abuse, stereotypes (racial, sexual, ethnic, religious), and pro-violence issues.
7. I will also be aware of the use of the iEARN forums by all aged students. Therefore, messages will be sensitive to both the younger and the older student. Messages will also be sensitive to those with physical, emotional, or learning handicaps. Messages will also be sensitive to the many different types of families.
8. If I am the one typing, and my buddy tells me that he/she is uncomfortable with my typing, I will stop.
9. Even if my classmate is a good friend, I will honor our joint commitment to this contract.
10. If the message continues, and my buddy and I do not stop, we both know that the possible result may be expulsion from the class. This contract is an effort to help myself and my classmates work in a productive, respectful manner that will result in a positive connection between ourselves, our school, our school district, and our iEARN world.

\_\_\_\_\_ (my name)

\_\_\_\_\_ (my buddy's name)

Dated on \_\_\_\_\_

## iEARN Response Rubric for Project Forums and Email Postings

Adapted from Kristi Rennebohm Franz © September 2004

Thoughtful responses to the postings of global peers generates ongoing, in-depth dialogues on important iEARN project topics, issues and actions. The following rubric components have proven helpful to students as they prepare and post project forum and email responses to global peers.

<b>Writing Rubric for iEARN Project Forum &amp; Email Responses</b>
1. Begin with a <i>thank you and compliments</i> to the author(s) of the posting. Include an introduction of yourself, classroom and school community.
2. Comment on the <i>specific content presented in the posting</i> , i.e. topic(s) addressed, important insights, ideas, reflections, experiences, perspectives, concerns, issues addressed by the author(s) in posting. Comment on how the content of the posting makes contributions to and builds understanding of important project topics, issues, and actions.
3. Make <i>connections of commonalities</i> and diversities between the content of the posting and your own experiences, ideas, insights, perspectives, reflections, understandings.
4. Contribute ideas on how the content of and understandings from the posting <i>suggest actions</i> that project participants can take to make positive differences within your local to global communities.
5. Ask thoughtful questions of inquiry to extend the dialogue with the author of the posting and all project participants, for example: ask questions for further clarification  ask for additional information to learn more  ask the author's opinion on positive actions that could be taken with ideas, reflections, experiences, & concerns shared in the posting  ask questions on how support can be provided for issues/actions addressed in the posting, what are partners hopes and ideas  offer your ideas, hopes, and purposes for ongoing collaboration.

## **iEARN Sample Internet Technology Permission Form**

In our classroom, we are using internet technologies to support our curricular learning including opportunities for email, website publishing, video production, and videoconferencing to learn and connect with schools in United States and around the world through the International Education and Resource Network (iEARN).

Within these opportunities, please consider the following permission for your student to communicate his/her writing, artwork, and documents of classroom learning including digital images and video online.

My student has permission to:

\_\_\_ write and read curricular topic email messages with students and teachers in schools around the world with whom we are doing curricular topic projects

\_\_\_ have his/her curricular topic artwork on a classroom website and iEARN website

\_\_\_ have his/her digital image in curricular project activities on a classroom and iEARN website

\_\_\_ have his/her image in curricular project videos shared with other schools in iEARN, on the classroom website and iEARN website

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# iEARN Teacher Planning Worksheet #1

Adapted from Teaching for Understanding with Technology by Martha Stone Wiske with Kristi Rennenbohm Franz and Lisa Breit. Jossey-Bass 2005.

1. Generative Topic What topics are important for your students to understand?
  
2. Understanding Goals: What do you want them to understand about those topics?  
 Consider: National, state and district standards.  
 Consider: What do students need to understand to apply what they have learned and make a difference in their local to global community?
  
3. Performances of Understanding and Ongoing Assessments:  
 Consider: What would it look like if students demonstrated understandings? What would be acceptable evidence of their understandings?  
 Result: Assessments tied to generative topic and understanding goals.
  
4. Collaborative Learning Community: What instructional and learning experiences will lead to student understanding and skill acquisition?  
 Consider: Research-based repertoire of instructional options that lead to desired outcomes.  
 Result: Instruction tied to generative topic and understanding goals, performances and assessments.

<b>Project Title</b>	
<b>Generative Topic</b> (Essential Question)	
<b>Understanding Goals</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy <input type="checkbox"/> Culture <input type="checkbox"/> Subject Area Content	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Student Performances of Understanding</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Skills and Knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> Inquiry to gain understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Apply Understanding	
<b>Collaborative Community</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Student	
<b>Ongoing Assessment</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring <input type="checkbox"/> Culminating	

## iEARN Teacher Planning Worksheet #2

1. Teacher goals/Student goals:
2. A timetable:
3. Specific lessons:
  - How will you present this project to your students?
  - How will you tie it into their curricular studies?
  - How will you get them interested in the topic?
  - What background knowledge do your students bring to the project?
  - Will your students need to do research for their project?
  - How will they be organized to gather information?
  - Who will be responsible and in charge?
  - How will the appropriateness of their work be evaluated?
  - How you will handle the e-mail exchanges, how often, who will be in charge?
  - Conclusion of activity: When does your participation end?
  - How will the students draw their projects to a conclusion?
4. Identify technological and material requirements
  - Technological requirements
  - Material requirements

<b>Project Title</b>	
<b>Phase 1: <u>Introductory Performances</u></b> Activities to set the stage: What do they know? What else do they need to know to begin the project?	
<b>Phase 2: <u>Guided Inquiry</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities to engage students in learning (fieldtrips, visiting experts, vocabulary sets, map work, interviews, research....)</li> <li>• Activities where students prepare documents to share locally and globally.</li> </ul>	
<b>Phase 3: <u>Culminating Performances</u></b> Activities in which students share knowledge in culminating event, as well as reflect on project and learning.	

## iEARN Tips for Teacher Success

- Visit the **Teachers Forum** to find out who is active and what they are doing.
- If you do develop a partnership with a particular teacher, there are some **general details** you and your partner may wish to sort out before the students start transmitting messages. These may include:
  - number of students in respective classes?
  - how the respective teachers plan to incorporate the exchanges into their classroom activities
  - school holiday schedules
  - how much time will be spent on planning and preparing the first transmissions
  - who will initiate transmission and when
  - date by when responses will follow

This kind of **planning** can be done via email, or even on the Teachers Forum itself, as this may draw additional partners into your planning and activities.

- Try to create a **globally aware classroom**/school environment. The collaborative, community nature of iEARN may provide a very different online experience to those young people who are used to "anonymous" correspondences on the web. Having systems for students to better understand the interconnectedness of the world will make their online collaboration with global peers much richer. E-mail messages come to life through maps, and a basic understanding about the background and culture of their online peers.
- Create a system for **peer-editing** in your class. Preparation and transmission should be seen as two different tasks. Preparing the message, researching and creating material to be transmitted, is a very important part of the whole process. Students will be writing with real purpose for a very real audience. The presence of this audience provides an incentive for students to produce the most effective communication possible. Consider creating a feedback process where students have the opportunity to comment on each others work, peer edit, and then revise accordingly.
- **Communicate**. Even if you can't contribute for weeks, send a note to say so. That way, your partners know that you are still interested in participating.
- Ensure **language is cross cultural**. How much of what is being sent needs explanation or description for an audience from a different culture? Slang or colloquial language needs to be used carefully. Translating student writing into a context that is most universally understandable can open interesting discussions in your classroom. An example might be "dirty blond hair".
- The single most important thing you can do to have a **successful collaboration** is to build a **strong relationship** with your partner class. Many iEARN classrooms have poor internet connections, large class sizes and other difficulties. The strength of the relationship can help partners to overcome problems, and all partners need encouragement and patience at times.