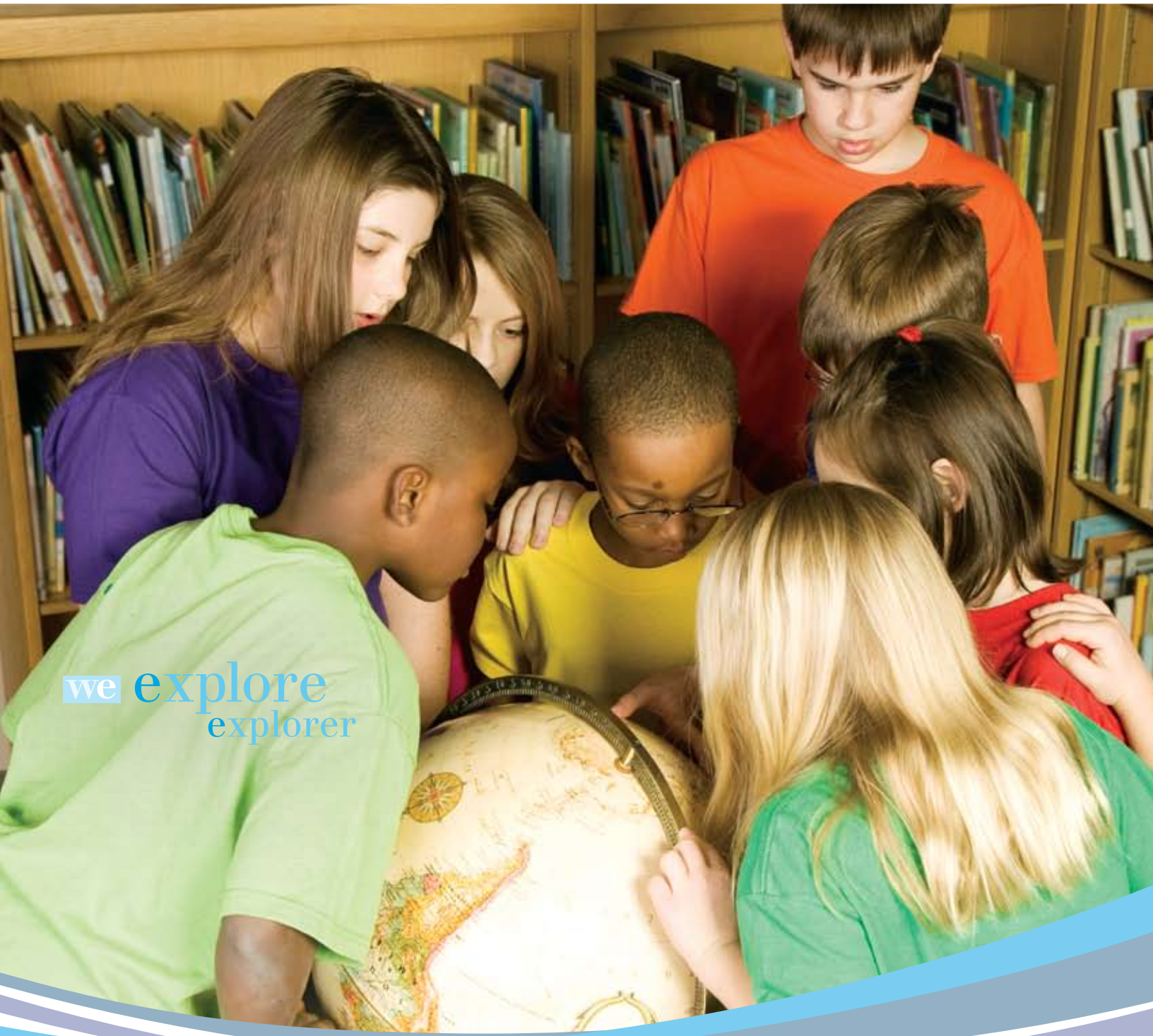
A Guide to

International School Partnerships



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A Guide to

International School Partnerships

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The primary audience for this resource is:

Teachers	✓
Administrators	✓
Students	
Parents	

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A Guide to International School Partnerships

Introduction

"Our kids can talk with kids all over the world all the time, with MSN, over all these different mediums …. But to take it to the next level, where it's a learning experience I think that's when we start to maybe see a little bit of the pat answers go away and the kids can get into these real conversations that I think are pretty valuable."[1]

With the advent of faster and widely accessible information, communication and transportation technologies, we are living in an era where our actions increasingly influence and are influenced by realities in other parts of the world.[2] Truly understanding our own communities, province and country requires gaining a deep understanding of the relationships of interdependence they have with the rest of the world. Global knowledge can no longer be associated with a small group of "worldly" people, as it once was, but is now basic and requisite for individuals to make sense of their everyday lives.[3]

In an effort to connect students to the world and provide them with global insight, many schools and classrooms across Alberta, and indeed across the world, are engaging in international school partnerships. These partnerships take different forms, from short-term, project-based partnerships between two classes of students, to long-term, ongoing relationships between two schools.

The so-called "success" of a partnership can be difficult to define, as it depends on the purpose and motivations underlying the partnership's establishment; however, a review of the literature and a scan of existing partnerships in Alberta suggest that certain methods of organizing and managing partnerships can maximize their educational value.

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This guide highlights these findings and has been developed to support Alberta schools and classrooms as they develop and maintain partnerships with schools abroad. The guide:

- describes various types of partnerships
- outlines the key steps involved in initiating partnerships
- identifies common partnership challenges and suggests mitigating strategies
- explains how partnership outcomes can link with those of Alberta programs of study
- discusses how partnerships can enhance cocurricular and extracurricular activities
- explores the role that technology can play in developing and enhancing partnerships
- provides a list of resources that support international school partnership initiatives.

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CHAPTER

1

Why Engage in an International School Partnership?

This chapter explores the benefits of international school partnerships to different partners and individuals involved in the educational environment; e.g., students, teachers, administrators, parents and community members. “To Ponder” and “To Do” sections are provided to encourage those involved to clarify their reasons for engaging in an international school partnership.

Part◆ner◆ship

A relationship between individuals or groups that is characterized by mutual cooperation and responsibility, for the achievement of a specified goal.

What are the benefits of international school partnerships?

International school partnerships provide a wide range of opportunities for all involved, from the enrichment of educational experiences and the broadening of school culture, to pedagogical dialogue. Students, teachers, administrators, parents and communities all stand to benefit from international school partnerships, albeit in different ways.

Students

- In a society bombarded by stereotypical images and negative and dramatic media, partnerships provide students with the opportunity to learn about another country or culture from the people who know it best—those that live and study there. As students engage with primary sources of information, they begin to question previously held assumptions, evaluate media biases and develop a greater appreciation for difference.

- While learning about another place and way of life, students are often forced to reflect upon their own lives. International school partnerships provide opportunities for Alberta students to research, discuss and consider their own identities.

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- Partnerships illustrate the concept of global interconnectedness in a tangible way. Conversing with their partners on issues of common concern can deepen Alberta students' understanding of international issues and enhance their sense of active citizenship at local, national and international levels.

- By incorporating collaborative learning activities, partnerships encourage students to locate and explore common ground and develop cooperative learning skills. Partnerships also bring a unique intercultural element to collaborative learning activities. While learning with and from their peers in other countries, Alberta students develop and hone cross-cultural communication and diplomacy skills.

Teachers and Administrators

- Relationships among staff members are strengthened as school staff identify and work toward the achievement of common goals and outcomes for an international school partnership.

- An international school partnership or initiative provides the impetus for the establishment of international professional learning communities. Alberta administrators may choose to connect with the partner school's administration to discuss approaches, strategies and challenges of school management. Similarly, teachers may dialogue with other educators about their experiences in the classroom and share ideas about how to enhance learning.

- International school partnerships provide teachers who are skilled at, or interested in, international relations, language and culture with an opportunity to use their skills or explore an area of personal interest.

- As international school partnerships involve students in engaging, authentic and motivating activities, they open doors for teachers to use diverse and differentiated approaches to support student learning. Peer connections made through partnerships also help teachers engage "hard-to-reach" children from diverse sociocultural backgrounds and with diverse academic abilities.

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The International Student Program of Golden Hills School Division No. 75 attracted a number of students from China to study at Drumheller Composite High School. Unfamiliar with international students in general, and with Chinese culture in particular, members of the Drumheller community were unsure of how to engage with these students. To build links between the students and the community, a number of events were organized, including a Christmas supper and a Chinese New Year celebration. These events provided an opportunity for each party to learn more about the traditions of the other.

These activities were not held in the context of school-to-school or class-to-class partnership; however, Alberta schools, in collaboration with their international partners, can organize similar events to develop greater cultural awareness and sensitivity within their communities.

Parents or Guardians and the Community

- Parents engage directly in educational processes by helping their children with partnership-related schoolwork, attending international school partnership functions and supporting partnership exchange programs; e.g., chaperoning, billeting.

- Partnerships provide opportunities for parents who have relevant cultural, linguistic or travel experience to share their experiences in the classroom.

- International school partnerships encourage a better understanding of different societies, cultures and religions and an appreciation of such values as social justice, democratic processes, equality and sustainable development. Partnerships also provide a forum in which respect for differences can be explicitly modelled. Extending the outreach of an international school partnership allows new information and ways of thinking to permeate throughout the community.

To Ponder

➢ Consider how beneficial an international school partnership may be for your school community. How clear are the reasons for involvement in an international school partnership? What are the most compelling reasons? Is there agreement on which reasons are most compelling?

To Do

➢ Drawing on the general ideas expressed in the above chapter, develop a chart that outlines how a partnership in your school or class could benefit students, teachers, administrators, parents and community members. If you are considering partnering with a school or class from a particular country, be specific about how you think a school from that country can enhance learning in your school community. Keep this chart on hand as it may form the rationale for a partnership proposal (see next chapter).

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CHAPTER

2

What Is an International School Partnership?

This chapter provides an overview of the concept of international school partnerships to encourage consideration of the variety of forms a partnership can take. The chapter also summarizes those factors that influence the successful establishment of a partnership. Questions and activities are also provided to prompt thinking about the type of partnership that would be most suitable for the local context.

What can an international school partnership look like?

International school partnerships develop in a variety of settings and situations and for a variety of purposes. As such, the following categorization is not exhaustive nor is it meant to be exclusive. Although many Alberta schools and classrooms organize partnerships around one of the following themes, many expand beyond that initial purpose, emphasizing multiple goals and the desire to provide a diverse range of experiences for students.

- **Curriculum support, extension or enrichment**. Many international school partnerships that develop around curriculum-based initiatives involve school-to-school or classroom-to-classroom pairings. The focus is on common curriculum experiences. These partnerships facilitate project-based learning through the exchange of student work and ongoing student-to-student communication. Some partnerships evolve into a long-term commitment to a project or program.

- **Second language learning**. The desire to provide authentic contexts in which students can develop and practise second language skills provides the motivation for many international school partnerships. These partnerships emphasize communication among students, classrooms and school communities through the exchange of letters, e-mails and visits between countries.

Grade 3 students from The Hamptons School in Calgary partner with Grade 12 students at Harry S. Truman High School in the Bronx, New York, to form what has become known as the New York Buddy Project. Using Desire2Learn (Calgary School District No. 19's online learning platform), the Grade 3 students are encouraged to ask mathematics-related questions of their big buddies in New York. The Grade 12 students use the partnership as an opportunity to learn more about conversions from the imperial system to the metric system.

For more information on this project, visit http://www.cbeglobalconnect.ca.

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Students and educators from Talmud Torah School in Edmonton are connected with students and educators at Levha Emek Elementary School and Emek Hchla High School in the Galilee. Contact and communication take place through the Internet, letter writing, videoconferencing and exchange visits to Israel. Through this dialogue with their Israeli counterparts, students in Edmonton begin to understand the complexities of living in confrontation-line communities and, in return, the Israelis learn to appreciate the challenges of living a Jewish life in a multicultural society.

For more information on this project, visit http://talmud.epsb.ca/showcase.htm.

- **Exploring culture and identity**. International partnerships introduce or deepen a sense of culture. Partnerships expose students to cultures that they may not otherwise come into contact with and strengthen links among communities with common interests, backgrounds, beliefs and cultural or religious identities. Exchange visits, which focus on the exchange of cultural artifacts and the exploration of places and events that reflect cultural identities, are an integral component of partnerships that aim to build cultural awareness and understanding.

- **Development projects or issues**. These types of partnerships focus on global inequity and provide an outlet for teachers and students to enact global change. Projects within development-related partnerships encourage students to dialogue on international development issues and, based on their newfound understanding, engage in responsible social action.

Who should be involved in a partnership?

An effective international school partnership requires committing to a shared philosophy, allocating the necessary time and resources and otherwise supporting partnership activities. When planning a partnership, attaining support and commitment from the following individuals is integral to success.

- **Teachers**. Teachers play a key role in the administration of partnerships. They have direct contact with the teacher and students in the partnering school, determine the outcomes for student learning, and plan and guide students through partnership activities.

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Holy Trinity Catholic High School in Edmonton formed a partnership with the Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara (UAG) in Mexico to ensure students had opportunities to interact with native speakers of Spanish. Before entering into the partnership agreement, Holy Trinity:

- conducted a survey of their staff to ensure there was full staff support
- consulted with Spanish-language teachers to ensure there was sufficient capacity to communicate with staff from UAG in Spanish
- liaised with Edmonton Catholic Separate School District No. 7 to use the capacity and expertise at the school jurisdiction level to develop a partnership agreement.

Rideau Park students in Calgary are partnered with ChildSpeak Canada. This partnership has afforded students the unique opportunity to regularly interact with students in Sunyani, Ghana. ChildSpeak Canada has an intern in a school in Sunyani who has helped facilitate communication between the two schools and is working to establish an Internet connection so the two schools will be able to videoconference in the future.

For more information on this project, visit http://www.cbeglobalconnect.ca.

- **Administrators**. In school-to-school partnerships, school administrators play an important coordination role, ensuring that teachers are working together to achieve school-wide partnership goals. In all partnership scenarios, administrators encourage, nurture and support teachers as they work to implement collaborative learning activities; e.g., administrators may be able to provide coordinating teachers with funding and/or preparation time so they may organize partnership activities. Administrators are also champions for the partnership within the school, school jurisdiction and community.

- **School jurisdictions**. Involving the school jurisdiction benefits the international school partnership in a number of ways. Partnerships can be formed through school jurisdiction–level contacts in other countries and can be supported by sponsored initiatives; e.g., language learning or technology initiatives. School jurisdictions coordinate partnerships for their schools and/or encourage dialogue among partnered schools. School jurisdictions also authorize all international travel and so must be supportive of any partnership that may include exchanges or visits abroad.

- **Parents**. Parents provide perspectives related to their own cultural backgrounds and identities and so enrich and extend experiences that students have within an international school partnership. Parents also lend organizational and logistical support to the partnership activities that extend beyond the time and space of the traditional classroom; i.e., field trips, early-morning videoconference sessions, billeting exchange students.

- **Community members**. The community is a valuable source of support for partnership activities and the general management of partnerships. University or college professors, community groups or other organizations that have ties to the country of the partner school provide valuable insight into the cultural context and help alleviate cross-cultural miscommunications. Local businesses may be willing to sponsor the partnership or otherwise assist with its promotion. Local chapters of developmental or humanitarian aid agencies may have projects in the country of origin and may be able to assist with the delivery of materials to the partner school. A partnership provides a mechanism through which ongoing links between the school and the community can be strengthened.

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To Ponder

- What do we envision for an international school partnership for our classroom, school or school jurisdiction? What will it look like?

- Entering into a partnership can be a big step for a school or class to take. Before initiating contact with a potential partner, consider whether the resources necessary for a successful partnership are in place. Is there interest and buy-in from key players? How much additional work would there be with a partnership and how would that work be distributed? Do staff members have the time required to initiate and sustain the partnership? If there are specialized skills necessary for the partnership, e.g., technical or language skills, are they readily available?

To Do

- Identify the resources, talents and skills that individuals and groups could contribute to a partnership. Explore ways that these resources, talents and skills can support different aspects of a partnership.

- Contact a school or class that has partnered with a school or class overseas. Ask if they would mind sharing their experience with you and if they have any advice for you as you begin to plan your partnership. Your school jurisdiction may be able to identify other schools in the jurisdiction that have existing partnerships. A list of school partnerships is also available on the Alberta Education Web site at http://www.education.alberta.ca/students/internationaleducation/schooltwinnings.aspx.

- Form a steering committee or group to lead the planning and implementation of the partnership. As an initial task, have the steering committee develop a brief proposal that clearly identifies the type of partnership being considered. In the proposal, include the chart of benefits, or rationale, that you developed in Chapter 1. If your partnership revolves around a specific international issue, consult with experts on the issue to see how your partnership aligns with or challenges the current research. Outline the goals and priorities of the partnership and the supports required, and identify any requirements that you may have of a partner school. Planning an effective international school partnership involves making advance decisions about the nature and type of partnership you wish to establish. Flexibility and openness to alternative ideas and approaches are also important.

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CHAPTER

3

How Do I Locate a Partner?

This chapter highlights the variety of methods through which international school partnerships are established. Additional steps are suggested that guide the formalization of a partnership once an appropriate partner is found.

Although locating a partner school can often seem like a daunting task, especially for those who have limited international networks, a variety of channels are available through which partnerships can be established.

School jurisdiction offices. Check with the school jurisdiction to see if it has an international bureau or representative who may be connected with schools from around the world.

City or municipality. Some Alberta cities or municipalities have "sister" cities or municipalities overseas and may be able to leverage these networks to locate a partner school. Developing a partnership with a school in a sister city ensures broad community support and enables the development of complementary activities.

Brooks Composite High School built on the sister city relationship that existed between Brooks and Hiroo, Japan, by initiating a partnership with Hiroo Senior High School. The partnership has been ongoing for the past 15 years.

Community groups and organizations. Some community groups or organizations have ties to schools in particular regions of the world. Local cultural associations, universities, colleges and nonprofit organizations may connect classes or schools with a school overseas.

Internet matching sites. A wide array of Internet sites are available that connect educators and students from around the world. Many of these are created by nonprofit organizations and are free to use (see Chapter 8).

Professional networks. Networking with other educators at conferences and professional development workshops helps to communicate an interest in an international school partnership. Educational councils or associations may also have international connections.

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Over 40 Alberta schools have received certificates from the Minister of Education recognizing their partnerships with schools overseas.

For more information on these partnerships, visit http://www.education.alberta.ca/students/internationaleducation/schooltwinnings.aspx.

Personal networks. Friends and family members with international connections may have a contact who can assist in finding a partner.

Alberta Education. Alberta Education works with ministries of education in a number of countries and is willing to assist schools in locating a partner school, wherever possible. Interested Alberta schools may access an application form for Alberta's International School Partnership Program online at http://www.education.alberta.ca/students/internationaleducation/schooltwinnings.aspx.

To Ponder

- Using the list above for reference, brainstorm possible contacts that may help you find a partner class or school.

- Before accepting a partnership, consider whether you and the potential partner school (as well as any third party involved) have similar goals, expectations and capacity for the partnership.

To Do

- Distribute the proposal you have developed to the contacts you have identified.

- To formalize commitment for the partnership, you and your partner may wish to develop and sign a partnership agreement.[4] A partnership agreement outlines how the partnership will function and delineates the responsibilities of both partners. It can also include an expressed commitment to curriculum sharing, teacher exchanges, student exchanges and learning activities. A sample partnership agreement is provided in the Appendix.

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CHAPTER

4

What Makes a Partnership Successful?

This chapter highlights the best practices of international school partnerships. It identifies key characteristics of strong partnerships and reflects on how longer-term partnerships are effectively sustained. The chapter encourages partnership organizers to plan for potential challenges and to measure and celebrate partnership successes.

What are the characteristics of a successful international school partnership?

At the heart of any successful international school partnership are the relationships that evolve among students, teachers, schools and communities. Above all, international school partnerships provide opportunities to learn from others. Partnerships should be carefully planned to avoid issues that encourage reinforcement of assumptions and stereotypes.

Effective and successful international school partnerships consider how to best develop purposeful relationships that support learning and the social, emotional and academic growth of students. These partnerships often share the following characteristics.

- **Commitment to the partnership**. The contexts in which international school partnerships exist can be diverse. Regardless of what the partnership looks like, it is critical that the overriding outcomes for the partnership are agreed on and that each partner is committed to working toward these outcomes. The possibilities are limitless when partnerships are approached with optimism, enthusiasm, creativity and commitment to the concept.

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- **Attention to learning outcomes**. International school partnerships are, in many instances, driven by common interests and a motivation to learn in contexts outside of the regular classroom. Exploring common issues and interests can support students' development and the attainment of outcomes in all subject areas of the Alberta curriculum. A wealth of opportunities are available for schools and/or classes to develop classroom activities and whole-school projects that encourage deeper exploration of subject areas and bring an authentic global dimension to the classroom. Effective partnerships consider how the partnership will support, develop and extend learning outcomes.

- **Emphasis on learning processes**. An effective partnership encourages students to develop a greater understanding of, and appreciation for, the processes of collaboration, cooperation and communication. Not only do students learn to work cooperatively with their peers from other countries, they also, consciously or unconsciously, observe how collaboration, cooperation and communication can bring about great things—in this case the unique learning opportunities associated with a partnership that are dependent entirely on the mutual efforts of educators.

Sustainability

The success of an international school partnership can be defined in a number of ways, including the effectiveness of the partnership in meeting its goals and involving students in meaningful learning experiences. A successful international school partnership can also be defined in terms of its sustainability. Many effective partnerships are not sustained either beyond the initial commitment or once the lead teacher leaves the school. The sustainability of some partnerships can be limited by such challenges as:

- difficulties in obtaining an ongoing commitment from the partner school or the whole-school community
- lack of ongoing access to resources and funding
- difficulties in facilitating effective communication between partners
- movement of staff who are lead or key individuals in the partnership
- increased demands on the time of lead or key individuals.

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Many successful and sustained partnerships share common factors and characteristics, such as the following.

- **A team approach to staffing the partnership**. A wide range of people are involved in the organization and activities of the partnership, including staff, students, parents and community members. These people share the tasks and responsibilities involved in sustaining the partnership.

- **Flexible planning approaches**. Planning is considered as a framework, rather than a rigid template. Planners consider how the international school partnership supports curriculum outcomes and where the partnership is best situated—in the classroom, as a cocurricular or extracurricular initiative or both.

- **Consideration of logistical factors**. Planning the activities of the partnership addresses practical aspects. Ensuring that school and community events, holidays, timetables and resources are identified and communicated to all involved minimizes the conflicts and challenges in maintaining the partnership. This also includes a careful consideration of the use of technology, including the availability and compatibility of the technology that both partners are expected to use. The frequency of communication between partners may be affected by differences in reliability or access to communication technologies; e.g., some schools have limited access to the Internet or no access at all, and some areas may have irregular postal service. Basic logistical factors can also include term times, school year plans, school development priorities and available resources within the school and community.

- **Ongoing and regular communication**. Open and regular communication between the teachers coordinating partnership activities is critical. The more that partners understand one another's situation, the easier it is to plan collaborative activities.

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- **Ongoing evaluation and monitoring**. The most successful partnerships are the ones that continually evaluate where they are and where they want to be. At the outset of a partnership, partners should take time to determine how they will know if they meet their partnership objectives; i.e., the indicators of success. The ongoing monitoring and documentation of these indicators ensures that the partnership is on track and is meeting the needs and expectations of both parties. In particular, evaluation mechanisms can help partners:
  - identify how partnerships relate to the culture and communities of schools
  - reflect on and improve partnership activities
  - identify staff development needs
  - collect evidence about the influence of the partnership on student and teacher learning
  - plan for progression and continuity in students' learning
  - contribute to wider educational policies and goals.

To Ponder

➢ Based on the goals defined in the partnership proposal and/or partnership agreement, what are indicators of success for this partnership? What evidence of learning and growth will we see in our students and staff?

To Do

➢ Plan strategies to mitigate challenges that arise during the organization and activities of the partnership.

Challenges	Solutions
☑ Clarity of goals and vision is challenged	
☑ Different social, cultural or political contexts in the partnership	
☑ Need for reflection on the progress of the partnership	

(continued)

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Challenges	Solutions
☑ Stereotypical views may be promoted	
☑ Resource inequalities	
☑ Differences in methodologies between partners	
☑ Demands on staff	
☑ Curriculum demands	
☑ Need for clear and ongoing communication	
☑ Effects of staff and student changes on continuity	
☑ Differing student populations, timetables and schedules	
☑ Lack of assessment checkpoints	

- Develop a list of partnership indicators and decide who will be responsible for tracking them. Encourage all those involved in the partnership to continually evaluate the success of the partnership and to keep notes on items to include in a summative report (see the following).

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- Have the partnership committee write an annual report on the status of the partnership, drawing on the experiences of staff and students. In the report, consider the following questions.
  - What has been our yearly progress in this partnership? Have we met the goals we set? Have all parties benefited in the ways we anticipated?
  - What aspects of the partnership/project remain important to us?
  - What tells us that learning is taking place?
  - What have we learned for use in future years?
  - What are the aims for the partnership/project for the next year?
  - What will it look like when we meet the goals of the partnership?

  Share this report with those who were involved in the formation and operation of the partnership.

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CHAPTER

5

How Can International School Partnerships Support Curriculum?

This chapter provides an overview and summary of ways in which international school partnerships support Alberta programs of study, and it includes examples that illustrate curriculum connections. It encourages consideration of learning outcomes and the wide range of curricular contexts enriched through partnership activities and initiatives. Questions and activities are provided to encourage those involved to identify curriculum connections and instructional strategies supported, developed and extended through an international school partnership.

How can partnerships support learning?

Effective international school partnerships provide opportunities for learning that are meaningful to students and relevant to curriculum. Some subject areas may have more obvious connections than others (e.g., the social studies and second languages programs of study explicitly promote global awareness and connections), but partnership activities can be linked to any curriculum area. When students share perspectives, compare conclusions or otherwise explore course material with their peers abroad, they gain a deeper understanding of the curriculum and insight into international perspectives and approaches.

What do curriculum-based activities within an international school partnership or initiative look like?

The following sections have been provided to help generate ideas for curriculum-linked activities and do not constitute an exhaustive list. There are a number of additional resources available that teachers may consult for ideas on partnership activities (see Chapter 8).

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Austin O'Brien Catholic High School in Edmonton has established a partnership with Lviv Gymnasia in Lviv, Ukraine, to support Austin O'Brien's Ukrainian 10–20–30 program and provide students with the opportunity to practise their Ukrainian language skills with native speakers. The partnership includes an exchange of students, teachers, administrators and parents with Lviv Gymnasia every two years. The schools plan to increase opportunities for students and teachers to develop other areas of common curriculum interests.

Second Languages

Second language learning emphasizes the importance and value of other cultures. Students who are learning a second or third language benefit from a learning environment where they are surrounded by their language of study and are using it to conduct real and meaningful conversations. In cases where travel and true language immersion are not possible, a partnership with a school whose students speak the language of study can create a supportive language learning environment in the Alberta classroom.

Instructional approaches that support the attainment of international language curriculum outcomes and that can be used in the context of an international school partnership include the following.

- Encourage students to use linguistic descriptions of a scene, object, situation or principle as part of their communication with partner students or classes.
- Have students imagine they are part of an event, scene or situation their partner has described. Have them write point-of-view journal entries or create a role play (in the language of study) about the event, scene or situation.
- Structure online or e-mail "partner talks," pairing students with international partners to provide opportunities for students to talk, read or write with a peer and practise their language skills.
- Provide opportunities for students to conduct research on the partner country's culture or ways of life and present their findings in diverse ways; e.g., one group of students might compose a song or script a dramatization, while others write a story or create a video or an audiotape to convey what they have learned. Have students validate their findings with their partners.
- Use global or issue-based themes to develop understandings related to the key concepts of a unit, and have student groups research topics of interest that are related to the global or issue-based theme; e.g., in a second language class exploring the theme of international global challenges, some students may focus on climate change, others on health issues and others on human rights issues. Have students then interview their partners or share perspectives while practising and applying language skills.
- Encourage students to share products with international partner classrooms or schools through projects; e.g., video or audiotape presentations, collages and posters, newscasts or Web pages.

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Art

Using art forms to communicate leaves a permanent remembrance. Students learn how to use traditional and contemporary tools, materials and media to express their feelings and worldviews. As art often communicates messages of political and cultural significance, the sharing and discussion of art across cultures provides students with an opportunity to gain greater insight into the worldview of their international partners.

Activities/projects that support the attainment of art curriculum outcomes and that can be used in the context of an international school partnership include:

- images, role plays and dramatizations that represent diversity between international partners and assist in interpreting personal and cultural experiences
- artistic expressions that enable students to share their own interpretations and experiences and to reflect on what they have learned from their partners abroad
- images or expressions that reflect issues and global concerns.

Grade 5 and Grade 6 students from Hillhurst Community School in Calgary and Westridge Primary School in Harare, Zimbabwe, reflected on the Convention of the Rights of the Child through an illustrated personal response. The work of students from both schools was collected, compiled into a book titled *The Way the World Could Be* and, ultimately, shared. Writing and illustrating personal responses gave students the opportunity to hone their art and creative writing skills. Reading the personal responses of their Zimbabwean partners gave students from Hillhurst Community School greater insight into their partners' context and worldview.

Language Arts

Because written and oral communication is so vital to their success, international school partnerships support various language arts programs of study (including English language arts) in a wide variety of contexts. The following partnership activities can assist teachers and students in fulfilling outcomes in language arts programs of study.

- After exploring media articles about and from international partner communities and countries, students identify and write or talk about common issues and concerns. Students analyze how media messages are used to present perspectives and how those perspectives are similar and different. They identify different voices or points of view in each media example, distinguish between fact and opinion and compare how different media sources present news stories.

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- Students explore expressions of popular culture in one another's countries and share film and other media examples. Students analyze understandings and perspectives presented in these examples and create their own media-based projects to provide to their partners.
- The school establishes a multicultural writing program that is implemented in various grade-level classrooms across the school. Students, who represent a wide variety of cultural backgrounds in a classroom, consider how they perceive themselves and how they are perceived by others. Students correspond with others in international partner schools on this topic, and speakers who represent different cultural experiences and backgrounds are invited to the school to explore issues relating to cultural identity and self-expression. Students then complete activities, e.g., multiple perspectives writing, to explore aspects of their identity from the perspective of self and another. International partner schools are invited to participate in the same type of writing activity, and products are shared.
- Students involved in a project-based partnership prepare and present speeches within their school, and in a community context, to raise awareness and support for the project. They apply information and communication technology skills, through the creation of electronic slide show presentations, write letters to political or popular figures, draft press releases for local media and develop a classroom Web site to share information about their project.

Social Studies

General and specific outcomes in the Alberta Social Studies Kindergarten to Grade 12 Program of Studies are effectively supported, reinforced and enriched through international school partnerships and initiatives. Global Connections is one of the organizing strands of the social studies program, and global topics and concepts are highlighted across various grade levels, including grades 3, 6, 8 and 10.

Global Connections: "Critically examining multiple perspectives and connections among local, national and global issues develops students' understanding of citizenship and identity and the interdependent or conflicting nature of individuals, communities, societies and nations. Exploring this interdependence broadens students' global consciousness and empathy with world conditions. Students will also acquire a better comprehension of tensions pertaining to economic relationships, sustainability and universal human rights." (Social Studies Kindergarten to Grade 12 Program of Studies)

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International school partnerships support the Global Connections strand, especially when paired with strategies that emphasize collaboration and cooperation with others, focus on inquiry and deliberative research skills, provide options for social participation, and help students understand perspectives and tensions related to various global issues. The following partnership activities assist teachers and students in fulfilling outcomes in the social studies program.

- Students develop a class Web site to facilitate the exchange of information and discussion of issues relating to histories and identities of different nations. Students provide images and textual descriptions, log their participation in a guest book and post questions for partner classrooms.
- Students explore the historical connections within a contemporary global issue; e.g., conflicts and tensions involved with national identity. They share their research with students in an international partner school who are facing similar issues.
- Students examine assumptions they may hold about the other country by completing a questionnaire on their ideas about the country. Students use teacher-prepared prompt sheets to focus their thinking and to help them analyze the sources of the assumptions they hold. With the help of their international partner school, they research and explore ways of life, environment and culture. They then redo the questionnaire and examine the changes in attitudes and perceptions they have experienced.
- Students help to organize and then participate in a virtual online videoconference that focuses on topics, themes and issues common to their curriculum and that of their international partner school.
- Students work collaboratively, either with a partner or small group from the other classroom or school, to create a template for an “international passport” that identifies the bearer as an international citizen. Students then individually create their passports and add their partnership experiences to each page of the passport. Students also discuss ways of sharing the passports with partners—through scanning and e-mailing, mailing or posting on a classroom Web site.

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Science and Mathematics

The Science, Technology and Society foundation of the Alberta science program provides a number of entry points for international school partnerships. Projects that emphasize an exploration of global issues related to sustainability, climate change and global warming, resource use, and application of technology can motivate students to build deeper understandings of science concepts and research processes. The following project description illustrates the type of project-based approach that can be effective in a science and mathematics classroom.

This project,[5] involving schools from the United Kingdom, Greece, the Czech Republic, Spain and Germany, was designed to help children become better global citizens through education for sustainable development. In this three-year project, students shared and investigated strategies to address sustainability issues.

- Students devised and implemented energy-saving measures, through a whole-school approach, to reduce the schools' energy consumption by 5 percent.
- All five partner schools investigated where and how energy was consumed in their schools. They all tried to think of strategies that would reduce their usage and teach them how to use resources with greater care.
- The students discussed that the world uses too much energy and that we all need to work together to save energy. They identified what energy was and what it was used for. Students took digital pictures of appliances around the school and in the classroom that used gas and electricity.
- In mathematics, students calculated how much it would cost to run these appliances for a year and then did a separate calculation for how much it would cost to run the computers for a year. The results were exported into a spreadsheet.
- Students looked at ways to cut back on their energy consumption and decided to do such things as turning down the heating and turning computers and lights off when they had finished using them. Over three weeks, the electricity consumption was measured.
  - In week one, there were no energy-saving strategies in place.
  - In week two, the strategies were put in place.
  - In week three, an extra-big effort was made to carry out the strategies.
  - By the end of week three, the students managed to reduce energy consumption by 9 percent and were implementing the strategies at home, too.
- Each school shared its results and created an energy-saving book in five languages.

This project helped students achieve a firmer understanding of how:

- energy is becoming an important issue in the world
- all energy used has to be paid for
- free energy can be harnessed via alternative sources; e.g., solar, wind turbine
- the energy issue is important to other countries of the world.

This project also raised challenges regarding how:

- to work closely with other countries that have different levels of ability with information and communication technologies
- the language barrier can be overcome
- different countries adopt very different attitudes toward energy matters.

The partners went on to complete projects on water and recycling that have also been very successful. At the moment, the students are looking at strategies to reduce their carbon footprint; e.g., planting trees.

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Cross-curricular Opportunities

International school partnerships provide a structure in which teachers can develop and implement cross-curricular activities. Students apply language and mathematics skills, explore social and global perspectives and compare biospheres or technology, all within the context of the partnership and, perhaps, within one partnership activity.

The following is a list of broad curriculum goals fulfilled through international school partnership activities.

- **Active citizenship**. Plan to reinforce and support citizenship goals through activities that consider the multiple understandings and expressions of citizenship. Relate discussions of citizenship to issues that cross national boundaries and involve Canada and/or Canadians.

- **Effective conflict management**. Reinforce conflict resolution skills with activities that encourage students to consider the causes and nature of conflict and the effect of conflict on various groups, cultures and societies.

- **Valuing diversity**. Use strategies and activities that focus on the exploration of diversity and appreciation of multiple perspectives to encourage students to understand and respect differences and to recognize commonalities.

- **Understanding interdependence**. Structure various team and group activities within the school and classroom, and within the international school partnership, to build understandings of how people, places, economies and environments are all inextricably interrelated and how choices and events have repercussions on a global scale.

- **Skilled communication**. Design projects or activities that emphasize communication, social and interpersonal skills. These initiatives provide students with the opportunity to develop their language (and possibly technical) skills and to explore and share information on topics of mutual interest.

"While at Alex Munro Elementary School, I had many curriculum and class responsibilities. I saw every class once a week for 45 minutes to provide prep time for teachers. One way that I was able to connect my work to each individual class and curriculum was to focus on global citizenship and generosity (which was one of the focuses of Circle of Courage). Both students and staff are very proud of our efforts as global stewards, helping to reduce environmental impacts, and our efforts in thinking 'globally but acting locally'."[6]

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Queen Elizabeth High School and Edmonton School District No. 7, with the support of Alberta Education, the National Research Centre and East Carolina University, have created the Four Nations Classroom. This evolving project includes a representative school from Canada, the United States, Mexico and Pakistan. Schools from each country meet with one other country through videoconferencing to delve into course content that includes three major learning outcomes.

Outcome I: Business, Economics and Career Opportunities
Outcome II: Education
Outcome III: History and Culture

Each school completes at least six conferences over a one-month period with its initial designated partner school and then rotates to a school from another country until it links with all of the countries.

The cultural exchange is based both on written communications between pairs of students (via "chatting" and combined assignments) and "web-streamed," face-to-face dialogue. Students are evaluated on written content, e.g., journals and papers, class participation and a final exam.

For more information on this project, visit http://www.fournationclassroom.com.

A Dedicated Curriculum

In some cases, international school partnerships are established through the creation of a dedicated curriculum, approved and supported at the school jurisdiction level. The learning outcomes in this type of initiative may be unique to the partnership but support or reinforce outcomes from a variety of subject areas. Opportunities for this type of program are more flexible at the senior high school level.

Cross-curricular Methodologies

The attainment of learning outcomes that cross specific program and subject areas also has implications for methodologies and strategies that are effective in engaging students in learning and in increasing achievement. Research-based strategies, e.g., those outlined by Marzano, Pickering and Pollock (2001), can also be considered for instructional approaches that are implemented within an international school partnership.

- **Identifying similarities and differences**. Graphics are an effective format for representing similarities and differences. Students can use graphics to compare, classify and create metaphors and analogies. Have students create graphics, e.g., collages, storyboards, comparison charts and Venn diagrams, to explore perceptions of a partner's country or for a pre-learning and post-learning analysis.

- **Summarizing and taking notes**. These skills promote comprehension by having students substitute, delete, maintain and apply rules to deal with information and concepts. Encourage students to summarize and synthesize the knowledge and understandings they gain through partnership activities.

- **Reinforcing effort and providing recognition**. Although research shows that not all students realize the importance of effort, they can be supported in their learning when their effort and achievements are recognized, reinforced and praised within the activities and projects of the international school partnership.

- **Homework and practice**. Homework provides students with opportunities for practice and application. Feedback should be varied and appropriate to the activities that students are engaged in through the partnership. The efforts of individual students, classrooms, the school and international partners can be recognized through school displays, recognition certificates and community events.

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- **Nonlinguistic representations**. Research has shown that knowledge is stored in both linguistic and visual forms. Incorporating visual organizers, symbols, physical models and movement into the activities of the partnership provides students with the opportunity to represent their learning in different ways.

- **Cooperative learning**. Organizing students into cooperative groups has positive effects on their learning. Cooperative learning strategies emphasize the collaborative aspects of an international school partnership.

- **Setting objectives and providing feedback**. Establishing and sharing clear and understandable outcomes within the international school partnership provides students with a direction and context for their learning.

- **Generating and testing hypotheses**. Providing opportunities for students to predict, hypothesize and test encourages inductive and deductive reasoning skills. Ask students to share predictions and hypotheses with partners. Test assumptions and encourage the exploration of questions that focus on ways of life in the partner country.

- **Cues, questions and advance organizers**. These strategies support students in applying prior knowledge, understandings and experiences to their learning. The strategies encourage analytical and critical thinking, help students focus on the purpose and context of the learning experience and should precede learning tasks. Learning in second language classes is supported by ongoing cues and activities; partners can be encouraged to provide cues. Questions and advance organizers provide the structure for a project or inquiry in a subject area–focused partnership.[7]

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How can curriculum connections be planned within an international school partnership or initiative?

Planning and implementing learning activities for an international school partnership should include careful and purposeful consideration of curriculum outcomes and alignment of activities within the goals of the partnership. Purposeful and advance planning helps ensure that learning builds throughout the whole experience of the partnership.

- Use learning outcomes from programs of study when considering options for learning activities.
- Consider how the partner community connects to learning opportunities within the partnership.
- Provide opportunities and flexibility to explore issues that may arise from the partnership activities.
- Consider how the partnership may affect the attitudes, values and behaviours of students.
- Build in time to reflect on the learning that is taking place.
- Facilitate opportunities for shared learning; e.g., invite students to share their learning with partner students and communities, with other students in the school and with community members.

To Ponder

➢ As you start to plan activities that students will be involved in within the international school partnership, have individuals or school teams reflect on the following.

- What will learning look like within the international school partnership?
- What do I, or we, want to learn from this partnership initiative?
- How will we know when specific learning outcomes are attained? What will it look like when students demonstrate their learning in subject areas?
- How will students be encouraged to share their learning?
- How might learning from the partnership school or classroom affect our learning?

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To Do

- Complete preplanning checklists to identify curriculum-based priorities within the international school partnership or initiative.

What are the priorities for activities within the international school partnership?
☑ Meet curriculum outcomes through real and relevant contexts. ☑ Provide opportunities to explore real issues. ☑ Provide opportunities to develop skills through experiential learning. ☑ Learn about other cultures and experiences. ☑ Explore global connections. ☑ Emphasize the development of interpersonal skills through relationship building. ☑ Develop strategies to reduce stereotypes. ☑ Enhance creative thinking skills. ☑ Other ☑ ☑

How will learning be demonstrated and shared through the activities of the international school partnership?
☑ Develop a presentation to teach and share with others; e.g., partner students, other students in the school, parents or community members. ☑ Create an exhibit or a display. ☑ Create a product; e.g., a booklet, brochure, report or Web site. ☑ Produce a videotape or an audiotape about the international school partnership. ☑ Organize a mini-conference or seminar to highlight activities of the partnership with others; e.g., other students in the school, students from other schools in the jurisdiction, parents or community members. ☑ Other ☑ ☑

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- Start to map activities to be implemented in the international school partnership, aligning them with curriculum outcomes and identifying resources. Map activities for each stage of potential implementation of the partnership program or initiative. Consider how each of these stages can build on one another to support specific learning outcomes.

Specific Learning Outcomes What are students expected to learn?	**Assessment** What will students be expected to demonstrate?	**Activities** What will students do?	**Resources** What will students be using to complete activities?
What is the setting and context of the partnership? How is the partnership initiated with students?			
How will students communicate with partners and others in the school and community in the context of the international school partnership?			
How will a sense of community be developed and maintained throughout the partnership?			
What will the focus of learning be throughout the ongoing interactions of the partnership?			
How will learning be shared?			

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CHAPTER

6

How Can International School Partnerships Enhance Cocurricular and Extracurricular Activities?

This chapter provides an overview of ways in which international school partnerships enhance and enrich cocurricular and extracurricular activities. It encourages consideration of how partnerships can provide opportunities for students to develop, practise and demonstrate new attitudes, skills and understandings that enhance their educational experiences. Questions and activities are provided to encourage those involved to identify cocurricular and extracurricular activities that can be developed or enhanced by an international school partnership.

How do partnerships support the development of the school community?

Cocurricular and extracurricular activities can be the impetus or setting in which international school partnerships are developed and sustained. Participation in extracurricular activities is associated with lower senior high school drop-out rates and strengthens students' independence and interdependence, helping them feel more connected to the school and broader community.

Extracurricular activities have traditionally fostered student leadership, school culture and community. Applied to the context of international school partnerships, they provide opportunities for students with diverse learning abilities and interests to apply and extend their learning beyond the classroom. They also emphasize the development of collaborative skills, conflict resolution strategies and the broadening of interpersonal skills as students come into contact with other students and adults outside of their own communities.

International school partnerships foster the development of citizenship and character skills. They provide students with experiences that they might not otherwise have and help students develop skills in contexts that are unfamiliar and new.

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In what cocurricular and extracurricular settings are international school partnership activities situated?

International school partnership activities are incorporated into a variety of cocurricular and extracurricular programs. Some activities enhance other activities that already take place within the school; e.g., student publications, leadership programs, student councils and performance-based groups. Clubs or projects specific to the partnership can also be developed. Often cocurricular and extracurricular activities extend beyond the school environment and so too can partnership activities; e.g., student exchange programs. The following sections discuss exchange programs, service learning opportunities and other school-based cocurricular or extracurricular activities that are enhanced by international school partnerships.

Exchange Programs

The experiences students have outside the classroom can be an extension and enrichment of the experiences they have in the classroom. Outside experiences are facilitated through international school partnerships that involve exchange programs or school visits. As they engage in activities and interactions with partners from another country, culture and way of life, students are encouraged to think critically and question their assumptions.

A group of administrators in a school in Norway noticed that Alberta schools had higher results on international tests. They initiated the search for a partnership by spending some time at the University of Alberta. Because it is located in a pocket of Norwegian settlements, Sexsmith Secondary School was contacted to form a partnership. The Norwegian educators spent a great deal of time at the school and some teachers from Sexsmith Secondary School visited Norway. Teachers exchanged knowledge and ideas about curriculum, pedagogy and assessment strategies.

Exchange programs provide diverse experiences that influence the whole-school community. Educators make valuable connections with professional colleagues in another country and exchange pedagogical and management expertise. Exposing educators to very different learning and teaching contexts also deepens their commitment to the global dimension of learning. Student exchanges produce closer relationships between students and encourage mutual understanding and new ways of thinking.

Exchange programs rooted in international school partnerships often provide:

- opportunities to develop and practise second or third language skills
- experiences with other cultures, histories and ways of life
- exposure to new and different environments
- authentic contexts within which to develop and practise cross-cultural communication, problem solving and diplomacy skills
- time to reflect on ways of living and learning.

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Many times, exchange programs involve tours of the environmental, cultural and historic attractions that are part of the partner's local area. Participating in classroom learning and with the partner's school community is also an important aspect of an exchange program.

A number of considerations are involved in making a commitment to an international exchange program, including the:

- support of the school jurisdiction and parents
- capacity of the school and community to support student visits, including billeting or hosting students
- time required to organize and conduct activities for visiting students
- logistics of selecting students to participate in the exchange
- liability issues that may arise as a result of student travel
- financial requirements involved in running the international exchange
- provision of meaningful opportunities to meet the goals of the exchange.

Successful exchange programs distinguish themselves from tourist travel by creating opportunities for learning and reflection. They focus on collaboration and dialogue with international partners and ensure that, as much as possible, participants gain or provide local insight into sites of significance. Participants are encouraged to internalize their learning and reflect on how it might relate to their own school, community, province and country.

Lindsay Thurber Comprehensive High School in Red Deer is involved in partnerships with:

- École Jeanne d'Arc in Mulhouse, France
- Carl Schurz Schule in Frankfurt, Germany
- Ryoun Senior School in Asahikawa, Japan.

These partnerships have developed into student exchanges to facilitate and support second language learning. Students exchange places on alternate years, and activities are focused on tours in the local community and on providing students with opportunities to practise their language skills.

For more information on these partnerships, visit http://www.rdpsd.ab.ca/internationalservices/Twin%20Schools%20Program.

Cooperative Education

Cooperative education programs enable students to apply the skills they learn in school to a work or volunteer placement in a private or public organization, sometimes for credit. These programs provide students with unique experiential learning opportunities and greater insight into the world of work. International school partnerships bring a new dimension to cooperative education programs; e.g., placements are developed with an organization that works with the country of the partner school, giving students the opportunity to use knowledge gained from their partners in a tangible and practical way. Where these kinds of linkages are not available, placements might be made in organizations that address issues of global concern or issues of particular concern to the partner country.

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In-school Initiatives

International school partnership activities are also incorporated into a number of in-school extracurricular and cocurricular activities.

- **Clubs**. School or student councils or clubs can take on many of the same responsibilities as a classroom for an international school partnership. Many international school partnerships that run through a school or student council are project-based and include participation with nongovernmental organizations or nonprofit groups that have existing international projects.

- **School newspapers and yearbooks**. International school partnerships also provide student reporters with interesting material for their stories. Student reporters could dedicate a section of the paper to the partnership and report on partnership activities in the school. Students involved in the partnership, both in Alberta and abroad, could submit articles or personal accounts to the paper for publication. Incorporating the partnership into the school newspaper helps to promote its presence and activities in the school community. Partnership organizers may also consider setting aside a section in the school yearbook to highlight the partnership and its activities over the past year.

- **Performance groups**. Music, dance and sports groups are also involved in international school partnerships. Students record their products (e.g., bands or choirs may record their music, and drama and dance students may record their productions) to share with their partners overseas. Sports teams could record clips of games or practices to teach their partners about the sport they play. In instances where they are brought together, either abroad or at home, students with like interests can engage with one another in their activity of choice.

To Ponder

➢ Consider how the international school partnership can include cocurricular or extracurricular activities.

- To what extent does the partnership go across or extend curricular goals and outcomes? In what school context will the initiative best fit?

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- Is there a particular group of students who are motivated to become involved in a partnership initiative? If so, who are they? How will their involvement affect the whole school community?

- If an outside organization is involved in the international school partnership initiative, what are their goals and mandate? To what extent are their goals and mandate aligned with the goals of the partnership or activity?

- What impetus for change is involved in the international school partnership initiative? How can students be encouraged to believe they can effect change in the world?

To Do

➢ Complete the following chart to determine the value and structure of international school partnership activities that take place in cocurricular or extracurricular settings.

What is the depth and breadth of the international school partnership?	
☑ Would the incorporation of the partnership into cocurricular or extracurricular settings motivate students to achieve partnership goals? If so, how? If not, why not? ☑	
How does the partnership meet students' interests and abilities?	
☑ What activities could complement and enhance students' existing interests and skills? ☑ How are diverse interests and abilities integrated into the partnership's activities? ☑	

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How are the activities of the international school partnership balanced with the demands of students' academic needs?	
☑ What limits are established to ensure that the extracurricular activities of the partnership are balanced with academic responsibilities? ☑	
How do the activities of the international school partnership encourage students to develop new interests and skills?	
☑ How do the activities of the partnership provide new opportunities to apply classroom learning to the real world? ☑	

➢ If an exchange program is a desirable partnership activity, develop and complete an organizational checklist or flowchart that, at minimum, includes the items below.

Preparation	
☑ Consider time requirements and limitations. ☑ Provide time for advance planning. ☑	

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Financial	
☑ Prepare an initial budget that identifies financial implications. ☑ Identify how contingency fund requirements will be dealt with. ☑ Consider who may be excluded from participating in the program due to financial need. ☑	
Living	
☑ Identify accommodation needs and how they will be met; e.g., billeting, hotels. ☑ List the day-to-day routines that will affect exchange students in both settings. ☑	
Program or Curriculum	
☑ Identify the curriculum outcomes that the program will support, either directly or indirectly. ☑ Identify activities that participants will engage in. ☑ Consider how to provide opportunities for breaks and sharing. ☑ Describe the responsibilities of participants after the exchange has occurred. ☑	

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Participation	
☑ Describe how participants will be selected for the program. ☑	
Research	
☑ Develop backgrounders on the partnership, the partner school, the partner school's country of origin and the exchange program for staff and students. ☑ Consider language and cultural implications. ☑ Gather resources that relate to the program. ☑ Consider what information should be exchanged in advance of the visit. ☑	
Travel	
☑ List the travel requirements, including visas, health certificates, vaccinations and insurance. ☑ Identify travel needs for both visitors and hosts; e.g., transfers from airports, contacts and instructions. ☑	

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CHAPTER

7

How Can Technology Facilitate Partnerships?

This chapter provides an overview of the role that technology can play in international school partnerships and encourages those involved to consider the possibilities and implications of using different types of technology. Questions are provided to guide reflection on the use of technology in an international school partnership.

What role can technology play in an international school partnership?

The use of technological resources, e.g., computers, digital cameras, software applications and the Internet, in the classroom has become increasingly common in North America. In Alberta, a number of schools have used some form of technology to facilitate a partnership with classes or schools in other countries. When technology is used effectively, it provides students with opportunities to:

- explore multiple sources of information, including primary sources
- apply different research strategies
- collaborate with other students, teachers, communities and experts anywhere in the world
- express understandings and perspectives in a variety of ways, using images, sound and text.

To enhance learning, technology should support the attainment of curriculum outcomes and provide students with new opportunities to develop and apply critical thinking, inquiry and research skills. Because international school partnerships usually require technology to communicate across large distances, they are a natural forum in which students can learn how to use information and communication technologies and learn how to use them appropriately.

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Although there are many successful partnerships that rely on more traditional forms of communication between classrooms, e.g., letter writing, computer technology has increased opportunities for innovative international school partnerships. Technology used in international school partnerships takes many forms; e.g.,

- E-mail enables students to engage in asynchronous but current and regular dialogue.
- Instant messaging permits students to interact in real time.
- Live video streaming or videoconferencing enables students to see and speak with one another.
- Wikis or content management systems provide a platform for online collaboration.

(Descriptions and examples of wikis and content management systems are available in Chapter 8.)

Technology can be incorporated into partnership activities in numerous ways. Aligning activities with specific information and communication technology outcomes ensures that the use of technology is purposeful and specific to curriculum goals. Types of technology-based activities that can be developed include the following.

- **Interpersonal communication activities**. These activities include electronic communication with other individuals or groups via e-mail, messaging programs and blogs. In these activities, technology serves to connect students and educators with their partners and facilitates information exchange across borders.

- **Research**. These activities provide opportunities for students to collect, compile and compare different types of information. In research-based projects, students use technology to conduct information searches, develop databases, publish electronically, participate in virtual field trips and analyze and compare data.

- **Problem solving**. Activities that encourage the development of problem-solving skills also promote critical thinking, collaboration and problem-based learning. They include information searches for directed or independent research, peer-feedback activities, simulations and social action projects.

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The following excerpts provide some examples of the ways in which Alberta schools and classrooms are using different forms of technology in their international school partnerships.

A Grade 3 classroom at The Hamptons School in Calgary has used both Google Earth and Desire2Learn to connect with Harry S. Truman High School in the Bronx, New York. The Hamptons School created an online learning forum around the mathematics curriculum. First, the students were able to "fly" to New York using Google Earth and then used the Desire2Learn shell to introduce themselves to the New York students. Experiments were designed and conducted to support mathematics outcomes. The age and grade differences allowed the New York students to be big buddies to the Hamptons students, and the Grade 3 students were encouraged to ask their big buddies mathematics-related questions. This project allowed students to use technology to connect, learn and teach each other, eliminating the barrier of distance. Examples of students' e-mail correspondence can be found at http://www.cbeglobalconnect.ca/pdf_documents/hamptons_d2l_introductions.pdf.

For more information on this project, visit http://www.cbeglobalconnect.ca.

An example of effective videoconferencing is the Four Nations Classroom, created by Queen Elizabeth High School in Edmonton. In partnership with Alberta Education, teachers and students at Queen Elizabeth brought together students and teachers from four countries—Canada, Pakistan, Mexico and the United States—through videoconferencing, Web-streamed face-to-face dialogue and Web chatting.

In the videoconferencing sessions, teachers delivered their lesson plans cooperatively. Students completed written assignments to learn about one another's history, culture, language, economy and other topics.

For more information on this project, visit http://www.fournationclassroom.com.

The Many Faces of Poverty and Homelessness Web site is an example of a project in which students are encouraged to share perspectives on homelessness and poverty by posting messages, submitting work and taking part in online discussions. The site is meant to provide both a Canadian and global perspective, and, as a result, content has been submitted by teachers and students from around the world. Students are encouraged to look for similarities and differences in perspectives and to explore what action they can take as global citizens.

For more information on this project, visit http://www.thehomeless.ca/teachers/about.htm.

Through the use of Elluminate Live, an online conferencing environment licensed by Calgary School District No. 19, students at Langevin Community School connected, in live sessions, with one school from Ontario and three schools from Brazil. The international Fire and Ice II initiative is part of the Fire and Ice series of interactive, international dialogues among students in various countries around the world. The event's objective is to translate dialogue into action by inspiring students to develop their own small-scale solution for helping combat climate change in their local areas. Students from each school shared electronic slide show presentations related to the theme of global warming, specifically in relation to their own geographic and political context. Translators were hired to translate the Brazilian students' presentations into English and the Canadian students' presentations into Portuguese.

For more information on this project, visit http://www.cbeglobalconnect.ca.

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How can technology be managed?

The following questions and answers[8] provide an overview of the considerations involved in implementing technology within an international school partnership program or initiative.

Q: Do students need to have their own individual e-mail accounts?

A: Students do not have individual e-mail accounts in many schools. In these situations, students write messages with word-processing software. The letters are saved and sent as an attached file to the partner teacher or school. Another option is to cut-and-paste the letters to an e-mail template to create a classroom letter. The partner then prints the letters or saves them as individual text files.

Q: My school jurisdiction has Internet protection software that prohibits some free e-mail sites because they also include chat rooms, and students do not have school e-mail addresses. Besides Yahoo and Excite, can students get free e-mail accounts to use for school?

A: Your school jurisdiction may provide access to a learning platform, e.g., Desire2Learn, that includes filters.

Q: How is information shared with partners using technology?

A: Students exchange first names, some information about themselves and their interests when they first make a connection with a partner classroom or school. Students should be coached about security issues and netiquette and cautioned about providing last names, addresses or telephone numbers. They should also be cautioned about asking their partners for personal information. When interacting with their partners, students can be provided with structured questions to facilitate information sharing or, alternatively, be given the freedom to write informally about their interests.

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The following Web sites and resources provide information about safe and appropriate Internet use.

- Alberta Education's Internet safety page links to various resources for teachers.
  http://education.alberta.ca/admin/technology/standards/internetsafety.aspx

- Media Awareness Network resources are licensed by Alberta Education to be used by all Alberta teachers. The Web site contains resources for teachers on critical media (including Internet) consumption and information on cyber bullying and Internet privacy.
  http://www.media-awareness.ca

- Be Web Aware is a national, bilingual public education program on Internet safety. The objective of the project is to ensure that young Canadians benefit from the Internet, while being safe and responsible in their online activities.
  http://www.bewebaware.ca/english/default.aspx

- In 2001, the Government of Canada published a CyberWise strategy to promote safe, wise and responsible Internet use.
  http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection/Iu64-30-2005E.pdf

Q: What types of issues should be considered when implementing e-mail exchanges?

A: A common problem in e-mail exchanges is a lack of interest if the project goes on for too long. Three months seems to be the limit for simple key pal exchanges. Beyond that, the classrooms need to be engaged in project work to sustain the relationship.

Q: Should e-mail messages be monitored on a regular basis?

A: It is appropriate to review and monitor students' communications.

Q: What about chat rooms and blogs?

A: Some software applications, e.g., Elluminate Live, provide a safe and secure environment in which students can conference with one another. Chat rooms and blogs are very difficult to monitor and privacy is not guaranteed. Students should not be allowed to use them unless they are provided as part of a secure site.

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Q: When is videoconferencing a good idea?

A: The use of videoconferencing in learning environments is expanding and providing broader program choices to students and those involved in international partnerships. International connections with specialists and peers are increasingly being made by students and teachers via videoconferencing, enhancing teaching and learning experiences.

When viewed as a way of supporting student and educator learning goals, the focus of videoconferencing remains on teaching and learning rather than on the technology itself. It is critical to engage students through inquiry- and research-based teaching and learning strategies before, during and after the videoconference session. The technology should be invisible, acting merely as an enabler of authentic learning experiences. It is necessary for teachers to choreograph student-to-student or student-to-expert collaborations, interactions, presentations or discussions and to provide access to media-rich resources.

Recent research[9] shows that videoconferencing benefits students by:

- providing them with authentic learning opportunities that provide collaboration and interaction with others
- enhancing their academic performance, self-confidence and accountability
- improving their presentation, communication, media awareness, teamwork, critical thinking and independent inquiry skills
- stimulating their curiosity and improving their motivation to learn
- developing within them a “sense of community/ globalization” through dialogue with communities that have diverse perspectives.

Synchronous learning opportunities provided by videoconferencing require students who live in different time zones to be organized so that everyone is present at the same time. When time zones are hours apart, it can be challenging to coordinate the attendance of all students; however, when planned properly, videoconferencing provides an excellent opportunity for students to meet their international counterparts “in person.”

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To Ponder

- Consider how technology can be effectively integrated into an international school partnership.
  - What technology is available to be used as part of an international school partnership?
  - How widely accessible is the technology? Does your partner have access to it? How reliable is it?
  - Based on the already defined goals of the partnership, what type of technology would most enhance this partnership?

To Do

- Investigate technologies and technical support that may be available. Contact your school jurisdiction, Alberta's Video Conference Regional Leads Network (http://www.2learn.ca/VCRLN/), relevant professional development and/or networking associations or local businesses.
- Identify information and communication technology (ICT) outcomes that can be developed and reinforced through the activities of the international school partnership. Use a chart or mind map to develop activities that support these outcomes.
- Work collaboratively with staff, students and parents to develop a set of guidelines for use of the Internet and e-mails and/or for conduct during videoconferencing. Ensure that everyone has a copy of the guidelines and that all individuals sign to show their agreement.

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CHAPTER

8

Resources

The following list provides initial suggestions for resources that support international school partnership initiatives.

Many of the following resources are Web sites that are external to Alberta Education. These external sites are listed as a convenience and as added sources of information to users on an "AS IS" basis, without warranty of any kind. Alberta Education is not responsible for maintaining the content on external Web sites, nor does the listing of these sites constitute or imply endorsement of their content. The responsibility to evaluate these sites rests with the user.

Project Ideas and Cross-cultural Interaction

Web site: Alberta Council for Global Cooperation
Host: Alberta Council for Global Cooperation
Description: The Alberta Council for Global Cooperation (ACGC) is a coalition of voluntary sector organizations located in Alberta. Teachers who are interested in embarking on global projects may be able to draw on the expertise or networks of its members.
URL: http://www.acgc.ca

Web site: Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration (CILC)
Host: Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration, Inc. (CILC)
Description: The Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration is an American nonprofit organization that offers resources and services that support the use of videoconferencing and other collaborative technologies to advance education. Using the CILC collaboration centre, Alberta teachers can post their project for potential partners to see or respond to posts made by teachers from schools around the world.
URL: http://www.cilc.org

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Web site: Centre for Intercultural Learning
Host: Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada
Description: The Centre for Intercultural Learning Web site provides tutorials on intercultural effectiveness and country-specific information.
URL: http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/cfsi-icse/cil-cai/home-en.asp

Web site: ePals
Host: ePals Inc.
Description: ePals is a free online global learning community for K–12 teachers and students. It enables educators to find one another and protect children from unfiltered content. It is already in use in many school jurisdictions in North America.
URL: http://www.epals.com

Web site: eTwinning: The Community for Schools in Europe
Host: European Commission
Description: eTwinning is part of the European Commission's eLearning programme. It encourages European schools to partner with schools in other European countries. Although not aimed at North American schools, the Web site contains information on how to organize a partnership. It also contains activity kits for teachers and highlights projects undertaken by eTwinning participants.
URL: http://www.etwinning.net

Web site: CBEglobalconnect
Host: Calgary Board of Education
Description: Calgary Board of Education's CBEglobalconnect Web site highlights the international projects taking place within the school jurisdiction and contains a wide variety of resources about global citizenship for teachers and students. Schools from around the province and around the world are welcome to browse for a partner and/or post proposed projects on the E-partner bulletin board.
URL: http://www.cbeglobalconnect.ca

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Web site: Global Gateway: Bringing an International Dimension to Education
Host: United Kingdom's Department for Children, Schools and Families (managed by the British Council)
Description: This site provides information on school partnerships. It also helps schools from around the world link with one another. Schools do not have to be from the United Kingdom to register.
URL: http://www.globalgateway.org/default.aspx?page=325

Web site: Global Leap
Host: Global Leap
Description: Global Leap is a nonprofit organization based in the United Kingdom. The Web site contains information on international videoconferencing and can connect schools through the International Classroom Network. This site requires schools to register.
URL: http://www.global-leap.org

Web site: Global SchoolNet
Host: Global SchoolNet Foundation
Description: This site engages teachers and students in project learning exchanges with people around the world to develop literacy and communication skills, foster teamwork and collaboration, encourage workforce preparedness and create multicultural understanding.
URL: http://www.globalschoolnet.org/

Web site: iEARN-Canada
Host: The International Education and Resource Network (iEARN)
Description: iEARN-Canada is a member of iEARN (The International Education and Resource Network), the world's largest nonprofit global network. The network enables teachers and students to use the Internet and other new technologies to design and collaborate on educational projects that make a difference in the world.
URL: http://www.iearn-canada.org/

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Web site: Joint Academic NETwork (Ja.net) Collaborate Prototype
Host: UK Further and Higher Education Funding Councils (managed by JANET UK)
Description: The JANET Collaborate Prototype is a membership-based Web site based in the United Kingdom that allows educators to locate partners with similar interests.
URL: http://www.janetcollaborate.ac.uk

Web site: OneWorld Classrooms
Host: OneWorld Classrooms, Inc.
Description: OneWorld Classrooms is a nonprofit organization based in Saratoga Springs, New York, that links K–12 classrooms and schools around the world. The site offers password-protected, curriculum-based connections and a variety of other opportunities for K–12 classrooms to interact with overseas partners.
URL: http://www.oneworldclassrooms.org/aboutus.html

Web site: Taking IT Global for Educators
Host: Taking IT Global
Description: This site enables educators to access online teaching applications and global education resources, link their classrooms with students around the globe and access information on global events and issues. This site is free but requires registration.
URL: http://www.takingitglobal.org/tiged

Web site: United Kingdom One World Linking Association (UKOWLA)
Host: United Kingdom One World Linking Association (UKOWLA)
Description: Developed predominantly for schools that are partnering with schools in developing countries, this resource contains information on how to organize and sustain a partnership. It highlights aspects of partnerships involving schools in the developing world.
URL: http://www.ukowla.org.uk/main/toolkit.asp

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Exchanges

Web site: Alberta Education
Host: Alberta Education, Government of Alberta
Description: Alberta Education's international education Web pages provide information on student and teacher exchange programs organized by the ministry and provide other information on international programs, events and funding.
URL: http://education.alberta.ca/students/internationaleducation.aspx

Web site: Exchanges Canada
Host: Canadian Heritage, Government of Canada
Description: While the Exchanges Canada Web site predominantly focuses on Canadian exchange programs, it also contains links to international exchange programs that are not funded or operated by the Government of Canada. The program and contact information for the international exchange programs may be useful to teachers who would like to establish a connection with a specific country overseas.
URL: http://www.exchanges.gc.ca

Web site: Society for Educational Visits and Exchanges in Canada (SEVEC)
Host: Society for Educational Visits and Exchanges in Canada (SEVEC)
Description: SEVEC provides information and support for organizing school exchanges.
URL: http://www.sevec.ca

Hansel, Bettina G. *The Exchange Student Survival Kit*. 2nd ed. Boston, MA: Intercultural Press, 2007.

King, Nancy and Ken Huff. *Host Family Survival Kit: A Guide for American Host Families*. 2nd ed. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1997.

Mitchell, Lynne et al. *Ready, Set, Go! An Interactive Pre-departure Workbook for Students Going Abroad*. 4th ed. Guelph, ON: University of Guelph, 2007.

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Paige, Michael et al. *Maximizing Study Abroad: A Students' Guide to Strategies for Language and Culture Learning and Use*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis, MN: Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, University of Minnesota, 2007.

Paige, Michael et al. *Maximizing Study Abroad: A Program Professionals' Guide to Strategies for Language and Culture Learning and Use*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis, MN: Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, University of Minnesota, 2006.

Paige, Michael et al. *Maximizing Study Abroad: A Language Instructors' Guide to Strategies for Language and Culture Learning and Use*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis, MN: Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, University of Minnesota, 2005.

Seelye, H. Ned, ed. *Experiential Activities for Intercultural Learning*. Vol 1. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1996.

Technology

Web site: Alberta Education
Host: Alberta Education, Government of Alberta
Description: Alberta Education's school technology pages contain a wealth of information about the use of technology in Alberta schools and numerous links to technology-related Web sites.
URL: http://education.alberta.ca/admin/technology.aspx

Web site: www.2Learn.ca
Host: The 2Learn.ca Education Society
Description: The 2Learn Web site provides information relevant to teachers interested in international school partnerships; e.g., Internet safety and tips on how to incorporate technology into the classroom. The Project Centre highlights collaborative learning projects that teachers may wish to join and assists teachers in building their own collaborative learning projects. The Video Conference Regional Leads Network is administered by the 2Learn.ca Education Society and assists with SuperNet and videoconferencing-enabled learning by providing support and professional development opportunities to jurisdictions.
URL: http://www.2learn.ca

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Content Management Systems
Content management systems have traditionally provided schools with a Web-based platform on which to deliver courses and manage information. Because content management systems grant remote users access to a learning platform, they provide space in which international collaborative learning can occur. A myriad of content management systems are in use in Alberta; e.g., Desire2Learn, Web CT and Elluminate Inc.

Web site: Global SchoolNet—Harnessing the Web
Host: Global SchoolNet Foundation
Description: This guide helps users understand collaborative, project-based learning on the Internet. It uses the term NetPBL (Networked, Project-based Learning) to describe this kind of learning.
URL: http://al.gsn.org/web/index.html
(See also Diehl, W. et al. *Project-based Learning: A Strategy for Teaching and Learning*. Boston, MA: Center for Youth Development and Education, 1999.)

Industry-based Educational Tools and Resources
A number of private companies have developed educational resources or tools that could enhance international school partnerships. Some of these resources, e.g., Google Earth, are free and others must be purchased. Teachers may wish to investigate the tools and resources provided by commercial educational sites; e.g., Microsoft, Apple, IBM and Google.

Web 2.0 Tools
Web 2.0 tools, e.g., wikis and blogs, provide students and teachers with the opportunity to communicate more interactively with their partners overseas. Some Web 2.0 tools, e.g., PBwiki (http://pbwiki.com/education.wiki), can be accessed at no cost and include a number of user controls.

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Web site: Teacher's Guide to International Collaboration on the Internet
Host: United States Department of Education
Description: This site was developed to help teachers use the Internet to reach out globally. Materials were prepared as part of the U.S. Department of Education's International Education Initiative, but the ideas can be applied to Canadian classrooms. The site includes tips for using the Internet, project ideas and processes.
URL: http://www.ed.gov/teachers/how/tech/international/index.html

Web site: VCAlberta.ca
Host: Videoconference Alberta
Description: VCAlberta.ca, developed with funding from Alberta Education, provides Alberta schools with advice and information on videoconferencing.
URL: http://www.VCAlberta.ca/

Web site: The Global Virtual Classroom
Host: Give Something Back International Foundation
Description: This virtual classroom Web site provides information on how to motivate students and get support from your school (including administration and IT) and community for your partnership. It also contains information on how to incorporate videoconferencing and includes a tutorial on netiquette for students.
URL: http://www.virtualclassroom.org/

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Appendix: Sample Partnership Agreement

The following agreement is an example only. It is meant to give partners an idea of what a partnership agreement might look like and what content it might include. Please customize the following agreement to suit the needs of your partnership.

Sample Partnership Agreement between School A and School B

Purpose of the Partnership

To create a lasting partnership that will assist both schools in incorporating a broader international perspective into the subject areas that their students are studying.

Shared Goals

- Create a mechanism for ongoing and regular contact and information sharing between the staff and students from School A and the staff and students from School B.
- Incorporate the cultural expertise and the ideas and opinions of School A into the learning taking place in School B and vice versa.
- Arrange student and teacher exchanges between School A and School B.

Shared Responsibilities

- Promote the school partnership within the school and school community and encourage participation.
- Dedicate the human resources necessary to achieve the main goals of the partnership and ensure that each partner understands who its main contact is.
- Ensure that partnership activities have the approval of the proper educational authorities, where necessary.

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Communication and Troubleshooting

- Develop a communications schedule that identifies periods when communication may not be regular due to holidays or exam periods. The schedule should include key and backup contact information.

- Notify the partner school, in writing, if one school would like to end or is unable to sustain the partnership.

Indicators of Success

- Before engaging in a partnership project or activity, both partner schools will identify indicators of success for their respective schools. After each project, the partner schools will collaboratively develop a summary evaluation report that they will share with their superiors.

- The partnership as a whole will be considered successful if:
  - there is regular communication between partner schools and there are visible school or classroom activities that involve both partner schools
  - students and staff are aware of the partnership and how they can become involved
  - there is evidence of a greater understanding of the partner school, culture and country as a result of partnership activities.

Evaluation

- Every year, the partnership will be evaluated according to the above indicators and the partner schools will have the opportunity to end or continue the partnership.

Funding

- Each school is responsible for providing funding for their own partnership activities unless otherwise agreed.

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Notes

1. Terry Godwaldt, as quoted in David Howell, "Kids Make Global Connection: Teleconferencing Project Connects City Students to Youth in Pakistan," *The Edmonton Journal*, Thursday, November 29, 2007, http://www.canada.com/edmontonjournal/news/story.html?id=906b665e-24c9-468d-a5fc-a388a9d6859d&k=81265 (Accessed October 3, 2008).

2. Gary Marx, *Sixteen Trends: Their Profound Impact on Our Future* (Alexandria, VA: Educational Research Service, 2007), pp. 249–270.

3. David Blaney, "Global Education, Disempowerment, and Curricula for a World Politics," *Journal for International Education* 6, 3 (2002), pp. 268–282.

4. The term and concept of a partnership agreement was taken and adapted from the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the British Council, "Partnership Agreements," *Global Gateway*, 2008, http://www.globalgateway.org.uk/default.aspx?page=1625 (Accessed September 16, 2008).

5. Adapted with permission from DEA, "Becoming a Better Global Citizen," *Global Dimension*, 2008, http://www.globaldimension.org.uk/CaseStudies/?id=248 (Accessed October 28, 2008).

6. Carol Berger, Comment on "Global Citizenship," *CBE globalconnect*, February 25, 2008, https://d2l.cbe.ab.ca/d2l/lms/blog/view_userentry.d2l?d2l_stateGroups=Grid~GridPageNum~Search&d2l_stateScopes=OrgUnitSession~GridPageNum~Search%5EOrgUnitUser~LCS%5EUser~Grid~HPG&d2l_statePageId=187&d2l_state_Grid=userEntriesList~20~~~~0&d2l_state_GridPageNum=userEntriesList_pgN~1&d2l_state_Search=userEntriesList_s~false~~~&ou=6605&ownerId=208589&entryId=663&ec=1&iu=1&gb=usr#commentsSection (Accessed October 15, 2008).

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7. These research-based strategies are based on the work of Robert J. Marzano, Debra J. Pickering and Jane E. Pollock, *Classroom Instruction That Works: Research-based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement* (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development), 2001.

8. The first five questions and answers have been adapted with permission from Joan Vandervelde, "Improve Student Performance—Teacher's Guide to International Collaboration on the Internet: Helpful Suggestions from K–12 Teachers," *U.S. Department of Education*, August 27, 2008, http://www.ed.gov/teachers/how/tech/international/guide_pg13.html (Accessed October 15, 2008).

9. Adapted from Alberta Education, *Videoconferencing Programs to Support Student and Educator Learning: A Summary of Final Reports* (Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education, April 2008), p. 12.

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