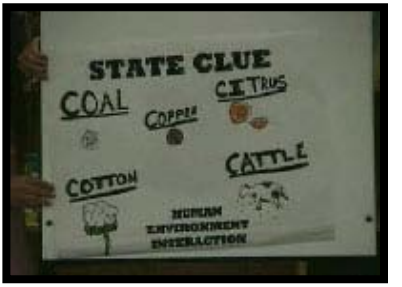
Planning Kid2Kid Videoconference Projects



3rd Edition (2008)

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Introduction

What is a Videoconference Project?
A collaborative project gives you and your students an opportunity to learn and interact with another school or classroom. Videoconference technology makes it possible to connect to students around the world. The many possibilities include projects planned by educational service agencies, and others planned by teachers and media specialists.

Point-to-Point Projects
Point-to-point projects involve two classrooms connecting to each other and sharing information. Two-classroom projects are a great place to start because they are simple to organize and implement.

Multipoint Projects
Multi-point projects require a bridge or multi-point videoconference system to connect three or more classrooms to each other and sharing information. Multipoint projects are usually coordinated by an educational service agency, content provider, local distance learning coordinator, or other organization. The work involved in coordinating a multi-point project makes it hard for a teacher to spearhead. However, a teacher may come up with an idea for a multi-point project and then find facilitation and bridging assistance from a local distance learning coordinator.

Project Templates
This booklet contains project templates for you to use as idea starters. Plug in your curriculum specific content, find a partner, and connect to another class for a quality learning experience!

Exchange Projects

Topic Ideas: Scientific demonstrations, explanation of math concepts, social studies topics, communities, reading or cultures. You might have students present a poem or essay, share a reader's theater, sing a song, or present research.

Time frame: You will need a few class periods prior to the connection to prepare your presentation and a 45-60 minute videoconference.

Preparation: Decide how to present the topic (lecture, discussion, hands on activity). Then decide how to involve the other class in your presentation. Plan for visuals. Assign tasks and involve as many students as possible. Prepare your presentation.

Agenda: 50 minutes

5 min. *Welcome and introductions.* Each class shares their location and brief information about their school.

Visuals: Use the document camera or PowerPoint to share a few pictures of local interest.

30 min. *Presentations.* Each class shares a 15 minute demonstration and/or presentation on the assigned topic. Teachers should negotiate who will cover what to prevent duplication.

Visuals: Can be a live scientific experiment demonstration, iMovie of the experiment, or PowerPoint with digital pictures of the experiment/concept, posters with large letters.

15 min. *Question and answer.* Each class has prepared questions for the other on the content and generates questions while/after listening to the presentation. After the content questions, if time remains, students may enjoy asking each other questions about their respective locations and schools.

Examples: See Michigan Week Connections and Read Around the Planet at www.twice.cc.

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Exchange: Increasing Interaction

While a traditional exchange consists of a 15 minute presentation by each class followed by a question and answer period, there are ways to increase the interaction between the two classes. These work best when you've discussed the session with your partner teacher ahead of time.

- ***Snowball fight.*** Northern classes matched up for Read Around the Planet with classes in the south enjoy explaining snow. A paper snowball fight is always exciting.
- ***Interactive readers' theatre.*** Create a PowerPoint slideshow with the words to a readers' theater and have your audience read some of the lines.
- ***Game shows.*** If classes are studying similar topics, prepare a game show for the other class to answer questions.
- ***Trade off presenting.*** Instead of presenting for the full 15 minutes, trade off small sections, i.e. when sharing poetry, each class shares one poem at a time.

K-2 Repetition Exchange

To adapt an exchange format for short attention spans, start by making the interaction 15-25 minutes instead of 45 minutes.

- ***Book exchange.*** One class reads a book; the other class reads the book; then read it together.
- ***Repetitious pattern learning exchange.*** Take a similar learning pattern such as Zoo phonics, and share with each other. Both classes do the actions or routine.

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Descriptive Writing Exchange

Topic: Any descriptive writing used to practice following directions or identify something based on the description (monsters, how to writing, pen pals, etc.).

Time frame: You will need several class periods prior to the connection to prepare the writing, send it to the other class, create a response, and then the 45-60 minute videoconference.

Preparation: Each class prepares the original descriptive writing and sends it to the partner class. Classes prepare their response (i.e. making something based on the writing).

Agenda: 50 minutes

5 min. *Welcome and introductions.* Each class shares their location and brief information about their school.

20-30 m. *Revealing Answers.* Classes take turns sharing their response and seeing the original object/plan or guessing their pen pal.

5-15 m. *Question and answer*. Students may enjoy asking each other questions about their respective locations and schools.

Examples:

Monster Match: http://vcrox.pbwiki.com/Monster%20Match

Pen Pal Descriptions: http://kusdevcopps.blogspot.com/2006/11/descriptive-writing-put-to-test-via.html

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Exchange Plus Artifacts & Objects

Exchange projects can be extended by including artifacts or objects. Here are some examples:

Showing Things

- ***Growing seeds***. Plant seeds at the same time and under the same conditions and compare the growth between classes at different latitudes.
- ***Worm farm***. Any classroom experiment such as a worm farm can be shared with another class.
- ***Show 'n' Tell***. Have students bring in a favorite object to show and share with the partner class. This helps break the ice for students nervous about videoconferencing and gives them something to talk about. Classroom pets are popular too.

Sending Things

- ***Care packages***. Some classes send chocolate, samples of leaves, souvenirs and other special objects to their exchange partner classes.
- ***Mystery box***. Send a box of clues about your location and/or clues to solve some other type of curriculum related mystery.

Examples:
Worm Farms: http://wormfarm.notlong.com
Show 'n' Tell: http://showntell.notlong.com
Growing Gardens: http://gardens.notlong.com
Mystery Box: http://mysterybox.notlong.com
Clue Box: http://collaborativevcs.pbwiki.com/GS+Project+2

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Topic Ideas: Difficult math and science problems or brainteasers for any grade level.

Time frame: You will need at least one period prior to the connection to practice the format and a 45-60 minute videoconference.

Preparation: A teacher or coordinator prepares the problems ahead of time. A PowerPoint presentation with the problems will make it easiest for students to understand the problem. Students may practice ahead of time with similar problems.

Agenda: 50 minutes

5 min. *Welcome and introductions.* Each class shares their location and brief information about their school. The lead teacher gives instructions & reminders.

2-3 min. A problem is presented visually and orally.

3-5 min. Both sites mute and students attempt to solve the problem.

3-5 min. Both classes present their solutions and wait for confirmation from the lead teacher.

3-5 min. Classes share a math or science joke.

Repeat this process until you run out of time. If time and interest allows, students may enjoy asking each other questions about their respective locations.

This format is based on the following two projects:

Math Marvels:
http://www.lcisd.org/Administration/Technology/DistanceLearning/KatyISDsMathMarvels/

Science Seeker:
http://www.lcisd.org/Administration/Technology/DistanceLearning/ScienceSeekers/

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Topic: Students enjoy playing roles from popular game shows such as Jeopardy, Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader, etc.

Time frame: You will need a few class periods prior to the connection to prepare the questions and possibly even to negotiate the question categories with your partner school. Plan for a 45-60 minute videoconference.

Preparation: The hosting school should decide if they will just host the game show or also have a competing team. The hosting team should develop the questions and communicate the rules to the other participating class. A plan for points and various categories should be developed as well.

Agenda: 50-60 minutes

5 min. *Welcome and introductions.* Each class shares their location and brief information about their school.

Visuals: Use the document camera or PowerPoint to share a few local pictures of interest.

30-40 min. The format of the questions and interaction will vary based on the game show format selected.

Visuals: Students enjoy creating a set to look like the real game show. Encourage this type of planning and creativity if you have time. See page 36 for a list of potential student jobs.

5 min. *Conclusion.* If time is available, students may enjoy asking each other questions about their respective locations and schools before signing off.

Note: Game shows make a great format for presentations in other activities as well.

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Topic: You could run a quiz bowl on a specific topic, or on a collection of general knowledge topics, depending on your goals for the event.

Time frame: You will need a few class periods prior to the connection to prepare the quiz bowl questions and a 45-60 minute videoconference for the event.

Preparation: The hosting school should have a team to lead the quiz bowl and may also wish to have a competing team. The lead team should develop the questions and communicate the rules to the other participating classes. A plan for points and various categories should be developed as well.
Note: A quiz bowl is more fun with more than two schools connecting. A facilitator and a technician managing a bridge to connect multiple sites would be needed to make this a multi-point project.

Agenda: 50-60 minutes

5 min. *Welcome and introductions.* Each class shares their location and brief information about their school.
Visuals: Share a few pictures of local interest.

30-40 min. Three-to-four ten minute question rounds. Moderator indicates the order of questions and reads the questions. Another person should keep track of the points. Rotate through each of the participating schools/teams.
Visuals: The document camera could be used to have teams record their answer and then share it. In addition, some questions may be enhanced with a visual aid.

5 min. *Conclusion.* If time is available, students may enjoy asking each other questions about their respective locations and schools before signing off.

Reference: http://www.fgse.nova.edu/saxophone/

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Point to Point MysteryQuests

Topic: Choose a topic where students would need to guess what is presented by the other participating class. For example, a geographical location, a historical figure, a president, an author, a book, a time period, etc.

Time frame: A week or so to prepare your presentation of the clues, and a 45-60 minute videoconference with your partner class.

Preparation: Decide on the required clues or clue categories and communicate that with your partner school. Decide how to present the clues. Plan for visuals. Assign tasks and involve as many of your own students as possible. Prepare the presentation.

Agenda: 60-90 minutes

5 min. *Welcome and introductions.* Each class shares their location and brief information about their school. *Visuals:* Use document camera or PowerPoint to share a few local pictures of interest.

15 min. *Clues presentation.* Each class shares a 5-7 minute presentation of clues. *Visuals:* Skit, iMovie illustration, or PowerPoint with digital pictures, posters with large letters.

20-30 min. *Silence on the videoconference.* Each class works busily solve the mystery or guess the event, person, location.

20 min. *Answers and discussion.* Each class presents their solution and discusses the answer with the other class. Students can ask each other questions regarding the problem solving process and content. If extra time, students may enjoy asking each other questions about their respective locations and schools.

Example:

LiteratureQuest: http://www.remc11.k12.mi.us/dl/LitQuest/

Topic: Choose a topic where students would need to guess what is presented by the other participating class(es). For example, a geographical location, an historical figure, a president, an author, a book, a time period, etc.

Time frame: A two month lead time to advertise to classes and give them 3-4 weeks to prepare. A two & a half hour videoconference with four to six classes.

Preparation: Decide on the required clues or clue categories and communicate that with the classes. Decide how to present the clues. Plan for visuals. Assign tasks and involve as many students as possible. Prepare the presentation.

Agenda: 120-170 minutes

10 min. *Welcome and introductions.*

50 min. *Presentation.* Each class shares a 5-7 minute presentation of clues.

30-40 min. *Silence on the videoconference.* Each class works busily solve the mystery or guess the event, person, location.

20 min. *Clarifying questions.* Each class has a chance to ask clarifying questions of all the other classes.

10 min. *Silence.* Classroom teams reevaluate their answers.

10 min. *All classes share their guesses.*

10 min. *All classes reveal the correct answers and sign off.*

Examples: MysteryQuest World Geography: www.remc11.k12.mi.us/dl/MysteryQuest
MysteryQuest USA: www.remc11.k12.mi.us/dl/MQUSA/
Where in Michigan: www.twice.cc/WhereInMI/
MysteryQuest Beaches (for training): www.remc11.k12.mi.us/dl/MQBeach/
Facilitating Your Own MQ: www.remc11.k12.mi.us/dl/MysteryQuest/facilitation.html

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Data Collection Projects

Topic: Data collection, analysis, and comparison projects have been popular collaborative projects since the advent of email. Students collect weather data, compare schoolyard animals and plants, observe tourist data such as license plates near their respective locations, count local types of trees, or analyze water quality data to practice data collection and analysis skills.

Time frame: Prior to the conference, students should spend time collecting the required data. You will need a class period or two to prepare your presentation. The actual videoconference can be 45-60 minutes.

Preparation: Decide on the type of data to collect and discuss with the other teacher. Collect the data. Decide how to present the data and what questions to discuss with the other class. Plan for visuals. Assign tasks and involve many students.

Agenda: 50 minutes

5 min. *Welcome and introductions.* Each class shares their location and brief information about their school. *Visuals:* Use document camera or PowerPoint to share a few pictures of local interest.

30 min. *Presentations.* Each class shares a 10-15 minute presentation of their data collection process and results. *Visuals:* Photos or digital pictures of the process and graphs of the data collected.

15 min. *Discussion.* Teachers could team facilitate a discussion of the results and their significance. What can be learned from the information? What further questions arise for study? What issues can be discussed based on the data?

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Design Projects

Topic: Do you already have your students build something in your science classes (i.e. a bridge, a rocket, a pinewood derby vehicle, a musical instrument, an invention, an egg drop cage, or a kite.)? Instead of creating alone, build the project in tandem with another class and compare results.

Time frame: A 45-60 minute videoconference to meet your partner class, introduce the concept, and establish guidelines for building.

A few weeks or more to create your invention/project and document the process using a digital camcorder or still camera.

A few class periods to prepare your process presentation.

A 45-60 minute culminating videoconference to present your building process and the final product to each other. Q&A is important in this session as students will enjoy comparing their building process adventures.

Preparation: *Before the first connection:* Decide on the project and guidelines. Decide how to introduce the concept. Your students could present, you could present it, or you could team teach with your partner teacher.

For the building process: Arrange for use of your school's digital camera or camcorder to record the process. Collect all materials necessary. Communicate with your partner teacher on the process.

For the presentation: Decide on visuals and the best way to show the process and final product. Assign tasks and involve as many of your students as possible. Prepare your presentation. Prepare questions for your partner class.

Session 1 Agenda: 45-60 minutes

5-10 min. *Welcome and introductions.* Each class shares their location and brief information about their school and respective classes.
Visuals: Use the document camera or PowerPoint to share a few pictures of local interest.

30 min. *Project overview.* Classes could present related scientific concepts to each other. Teachers could team teach. Show sample products. Share the guidelines of the process.
Visuals: Demonstration, document camera, etc.

5-10 min. *Question and answer.* Students could ask questions about the process or product. They may have questions for each other related to the content or process. If time they may have questions for each other about their respective locations.

Session 2 Agenda: 45-60 minutes

5 min. *Welcome and introductions.*

30 min. *Presentations.* Each class shares a 15 minute presentation of their process and final product.
Visuals: iMovie or PowerPoint or the process or other creative multimedia presentation; live or taped demonstration of final product.

15 min. *Question and answer.* Each class has prepared questions for each other on the content and generates questions while/after listening to the presentation. After content questions, if time, students may enjoy asking each other questions about their respective locations and schools.

See also http://avonoh-ivc.blogspot.com/2007/03/are-cookies-done-yet.html and www.webquest.org for additional ideas.

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Point to Point Discussions

Topic: You pick! What are you teaching that includes a controversial topic? Take a current events topic or a challenging issue such as homelessness, terrorism, tax cuts, or an environmental issue. Each class takes a side and makes a presentation based on reading and research.

Time frame: You will need a few class periods prior to the connection to prepare your presentation and a 45-60 minute videoconference.

Preparation: Have students read and research the various sides of the issue and decide on their personal stance on the topic. Decide how to have students present their stance. Assign tasks and involve as many of your students as possible.

Agenda: 50-70 minutes *(depending on class periods of participating classes)*

5 min. *Welcome and introductions.* Each class shares their location and brief information about their school.

Visuals: Use the document camera or PowerPoint to share a few pictures of local interest.

15 min. *Share Your Stance.* Each student/group briefly shares their stance on the topic. *Visuals:* Illustrations enhance the experience if there is time.

25-40 min. *Discussion.* Students from each class take turns discussing the issue. Students should include supporting facts and details from their research in all comments that they make. Participating classes may wish to assign a student facilitator for each class to assist in the flow of discussion.

5 min. *Debrief and Conclusion.* After the discussion, teachers may wish to debrief and comment on the process and content/curriculum discussed. If time is available, students may enjoy asking each other questions about their respective locations.

Topic: Global Nomads Group, MAPGI, and Cooperating School Districts are a few examples of organizations that offer facilitated multipoint discussions between classes on current events, hot topics, and controversial issues. These discussions work well because people have a variety of opinions. So pick a topic that students will have differing opinions and where there is no correct answer.

Time frame: Classes will need a few class periods of preparation prior to the connection and a 45-60 minute videoconference.

Preparation: Classes should research the topic ahead of time and gain an understanding of the various points of view and issues involved. Lesson plans for the topic can be obtained online with a simple search. The facilitator should prepare discussion questions.

Agenda: 50 minutes *(depending on class periods of participating classes)*

5 min. *Welcome and introductions.* Each class shares their location and brief information about their school. Breaking the ice will help relax students so they focus on the discussion. The facilitator should introduce the topic and lay the ground rules for the discussion (respect of others' opinions, etc.)
Visuals: Share a few local pictures of interest.

5 min. Each class shares a brief statement on the first question.

5-10 min. Classes have an opportunity to respond to the other classes. "Do you agree...?" "What other examples can you think of...?"
Repeat the initial response rotation until time is up.

5 min. *Conclusion*. Facilitator wraps up the discussion.

A Google search will also reveal additional resources on facilitating discussions on sensitive or controversial issues.

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Debates

Topic: This project is similar to the Discussions but formalized as a debate. Take a current events topic or a challenging issue such as homelessness, terrorism, tax cuts, or an environmental issue.

Time frame: You will need a few class periods prior to the connection to prepare your presentation and a 45-60 minute videoconference.

Preparation: Teachers should pick four issues for the debate. Students at each site should be divided into two teams with each team taking one issue. Teams prepare both support and opposition. Teams must also prepare a visual in support and in opposition of the issue for display during the debate. The entire class formulates questions for each issue to be asked during the 5 minute Q & A after each debate. Teachers hold a "draw" for positions (support or oppose) prior to the beginning of the debate.

Agenda: 50-70 minutes *(depending on class periods of participating classes)*

5 min. *Welcome and introductions.* Each class shares their location and brief information about their school. *Visuals:* Use the document camera or PowerPoint to share a few pictures of local interest.

50 min. Two 15 minute debates following this schedule. (The number of debates/topics could be adjusted depending on your schedule.)

5 minutes for the support
2 1/2 minutes for rebuttal from opposition
5 minutes for opposition
2 1/2 minutes for rebuttal from support
5 min. for Q&A from the audience to the presenting teams.

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	Questions must alternate between the teams opposed and teams in support of issue.
5 min.	Audience at each site votes on the most persuasive/prepared team. Then repeat the schedule for the second issue. *Visuals:* Each team is required to present 1 visual aid for their position. Color cards should be available at each site for voting on most persuasive/prepared team.
5 min.	*Debrief and Conclusion.* After the discussion, teachers may wish to debrief and comment on the process and content/curriculum discussed. If time is available, students may enjoy asking each other questions about their respective locations and schools.

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Coffee House Sharing Projects

Topic: Pick something short that students could share in a round-robin fashion. Poetry definitely lends itself well to this format; however, other work such as issue posters, short stories, essays, and other short works.

Time frame: You will need a class period or two prior to the connection to help students prepare, and a one to two hour videoconference.

Preparation: Have students write/create the work they will show. Have them practice with the mic if necessary.

Agenda: Often this type of event is done through a morning or through lunch hours (11-2-ish). You'll need a moderator to facilitate an open mic session and call on the participating schools round-robin if you have more than one school participating.

Competition Projects

Topic: Poetry, advertising, essays. Any topic where students create something could be a competition. Poetry slams are popular. Ads on current issues such as the environment, internet safety are also possibilities.

Time frame: Preparation time for the student created work and the videoconference.

Preparation: Students create work and practice presenting.

Agenda: After introductions, students present and the audience rates each performance.

This videoconference works with both classes presenting or just one class presenting with one or more classes as a rating audience.

Literature Circles

Topic: Student-led discussion of a novel.

Time frame: Four to eight weeks to read the book; weekly videoconferences for the literature circle.

Preparation: Decide on a book and negotiate with your partner teacher which jobs will be taken by each class. You might trade off each week. Each week the student leaders may need to communicate via web or email ahead of time in preparation of the videoconference.

Agenda: 35-50 minutes

5 min. *Welcome and introductions.* In the first session, take some time to get to know the other class and share about your location. In subsequent sessions, you may wish to have a brief weather report or other introduction.

25-40 min. *Discussion.* Using the Literature Circle format, students lead a discussion of the book..

5 min. *Debrief and Conclusion.* After the discussion, teachers may wish to debrief and comment on the process and discussion. Students may wish to debrief on use of the videoconference technology as well.

Follow-up: Students may also enjoy creating and sharing a final project response to the book.

Inspiration for this template:

Through the Wardrobe: The Magic of Reading:
http://litcircle.notlong.com

Additional Resources:

http://litsite.alaska.edu/workbooks/circlereading.html
http://www.litcircles.org/

Press Conference Projects

Topic: Choose a topic related to public policy or current events. Set up a scenario for your students where they are representing a company or are a legislator giving a press conference on a new product, new policy, or a response to a current issue. The partner class plays the role of the press.

Time frame: You will need a few class periods prior to the connection to prepare and a 45-60 minute videoconference.

Preparation: The presenting class should prepare a press conference announcement and anticipate questions they may receive. The class playing the role of the press should research the topic and prepare as many interesting questions as possible. See the lesson plan for questions on page 32. Assign tasks and involve as many of your students as possible.

Agenda: 50 minutes *(adjustable based on class periods of participating classes)*

5 min. *Welcome and introductions.* Each class shares their location and brief information about their school. Share a few pictures of local interest. Lead teacher introduces the activity.

10-15 min. *Press Conference Announcement.* The presenting class shares their announcement. *Visuals:* Illustrations will enhance the presentation.

10-15 min. *Questions.* The press class asks their questions. The presenting class fields and answers the questions.

10 min. *Debrief and Conclusion.* After press conference simulation, teachers & students should debrief the experience together.

Inspiration from Persuasion Tasks:
http://webquest.sdsu.edu/taskonomy.html

Television Interview/Role Playing

Topic: This format can be used on current and controversial issues. It can also be used to interview and/or role play people from history or different perspectives on a subject.

Time frame: You will need a few class periods prior to the connection to prepare your presentation and a 45-60 minute videoconference.

Preparation: Negotiate with the partner class which roles will be played by each class. Decide which class will have a student as the television show host. A show host support team should work together to develop questions for the panelists. Depending on grade level, you may decide to script the interview. Classes may have all students prepare for the roles and then audition to select who will actually participate in the television show interview.

Agenda: 45 minutes *(Time can be adjusted based on grade levels and class period requirements.)*

5 min. *Welcome and introductions.* Each class shares their location and brief information about their school. Share a few pictures of local interest. Then the lead teacher should introduce the simulation.

15-30 min. *Interview.* The show host leads the interview, involving the panelists at both sides in the discussion. *Camera presets for the panel, the host, and the whole class will be helpful.*

10 min. *Debrief and Conclusion.* After the press conference simulation, teachers & students should debrief the experience together. If time is available, students may enjoy asking each other questions about their respective locations and schools.

Inspiration from this WebQuest:
www.lubbockisd.org/webquests/MeetImmigrants/

Mock Trials

Topic: Mock trials work well for high school law classes, middle school and high school history classes, and even elementary literature classes studying fairy tales (i.e. the trial of The Big Bad Wolf).

Time frame: You will need a few class periods prior to the connection to prepare your presentation and a 45-60 minute videoconference.

Preparation: The lead teacher should decide ahead of time if the participating class will be jury only or more involved. For example, one class may be the prosecution and the other class the defense. The trial arguments and statements should be prepared ahead of time.

Agenda: 45-60 minutes *(Time can be adjusted based on grade levels and class period requirements.)*

5 min. *Welcome and introductions.* Each class shares their location and brief information about their school.

Visuals: Use document camera or PowerPoint to share a few pictures of local interest.

30 min. Mock trial. Teachers should agree on the exact format ahead of time.

5 min. *Debrief and Conclusion.* After the mock trial, teachers may wish to debrief and comment on the process and content/curriculum discussed. If time is available, students may enjoy asking each other questions about their respective locations and schools.

Inspiration from this WebQuest:
http://projects.edtech.sandi.net/hoover/amistad/

Consensus Building

Topic: Choose an issue or subject that is controversial, has several perspectives and no easy answers. Students "come to the table" to decide public or company policy.

Time frame: A few class periods to prepare and a videoconference session.

Preparation: Negotiate with your partner teacher to decide which perspectives will be covered by each class. Three to four perspectives per class is ideal. Divide students into groups to research their assigned perspectives. Groups should select two spokespersons who will negotiate policy with the others. The rest of the team is the support staff providing facts, research and opinions to back up their perspective. Each team should prepare a possible policy or solution to the issue. Teachers should select a chairperson from each class to assist in the negotiations.

Agenda: 45-60 minutes *(Time can be adjusted based on grade levels and class period requirements.)*

5 min. *Welcome and introductions.* Each class shares their location and brief information about their school to break the ice and prepare for the discussion.

15 min. *Share Your Perspective.* Each representative briefly shares their position statement on the topic and their suggested solution.

25-40 min. *Discussion.* The co-chairpersons lead a discussion searching for common ground, compromise, and a potential solution for the issue.

5 min. *Debrief and Conclusion.* After the discussion, teachers may wish to debrief and comment on the process and content discussed.

Inspiration from Consensus Building Tasks
http://webquest.sdsu.edu/taskonomy.html

Topic: Choose a subject where students could play the role of a client and business, creating a product or solution to meet the needs of the client. One class plays the role of the client and the other class the role of the business. (If desired, the activity could then be reversed so both classes get to play both roles.)

Time frame: You will need a few class periods prior to the connection to prepare your presentation and a 45-60 minute videoconference.

Preparation: Teachers should negotiate ahead of time the constraints of the product/solution. Both classes should start by becoming familiar with the topic and possible needs/problems to be addressed by a product/solution. The client class should prepare a presentation of their need. The business class should prepare a presentation showing their ability to serve the needs of the client.

First VC: 30 minutes

5 min. *Welcome and introductions.* Each class shares their location and brief information about their school.

10 min. *Present the Problem.* The client class presents the need. The business class sells their company as the best way to provide a solution.

5-10 min. *Questions.* Classes ask questions to clarify.

Preparation: The business class prepares a product or solution. Clarification via email may be necessary.

Second VC: 30-50 minutes

5 min. *Welcome and introductions.*

15 min. The business class presents the solution/product.

10 min. The client class asks questions and indicates whether they would purchase the solution/product.

Inspiration: From Art to Part

http://collaborativevcs.pbwiki.com/Pat+Bearss

Any of the preceding templates can be enhanced and extended with Web 2.0 tools such as blogs, wikis, collaborative document sharing tools, and podcasts.

Blogs

- Students write responses to their reading on a shared blog and give feedback to each other via the comments. The culminating videoconference connects students together to discuss the book or with an author or specialist related to the book. See http://stovall.notlong.com for an example.
- Students collaboratively write a story using a blog or discussion tool for writing or sharing ideas before writing. The videoconference culminates in the presentation of the story. See http://blogvc.notlong.com for an example.

Collaborative Document Creation & Wikis

Collaborative document creation tools can be used to have students work in groups across sites to develop solutions, poetry, graphs, presentations, essays and more. The videoconference is used to set the stage for the collaborative work and to culminate when the task is completed.

- Thumbstacks.com (presentations)
- Docs.google.com (word processing and spreadsheets)
- Gliffy.com (brainstorming)
- PBWiki.com (word processing plus web pages)
- Wikispaces (word processing plus web pages)

Podcast

- Classes exchange podcasts on a topic and then videoconference to discuss.
- Or classes create podcasts reporting on their VC.

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IP VCR Adapted Projects

What is an IP VCR? The major videoconference vendors have products that allow recording of H323 videoconferences (i.e. the Codian IP VCR, the Polycom RSS, and the TANDBERG Content Server).

The IP VCR content recorder can be used to overcome time zone differences or even simple class scheduling problems.

Test!
Both classes will need to make sure they can connect, record, and view content on the IP VCR.

Challenges
The challenge to students will be that when they are presenting, they will see themselves. This can be very distracting. However if students are prepared properly, they should be able to handle it.

Example: Adapting an Exchange Project

Time frame: A traditional one class period videoconference will take some time over two or three class periods. Include preparation time in your planning too.

Preparation: Both classes prepare their introduction and presentation as usual.

Day 1: Both classes record their introduction and presentation.

Day 2: Partner classes watch the presentation by the other class. Then they generate and record a list of 10-15 questions for the other class.

Day 3: Both classes listen to the questions and then prepare and record the answers. Record a thank you & goodbye too.

Adapt other projects using this same pattern.

Topic: Pick a topic where students from various locations could share something unique and different. Cultures, environment, perspectives, artwork, and poetry are all possibilities. For example, third graders studying regions may collect video postcards from each region. Or government classes may collect video postcards advocating a perspective or presidential candidate.

Time frame: A couple weeks to advertise and a couple weeks to collect video postcards. Time to prepare your own video postcard and to view the video postcards from the other classes.

Preparation: Define the parameters of the postcard. The more specific you are, the better quality learning for all students involved. What components are required in each postcard? Be sure to require a short introduction/map activity to share the location of the participating classes. Set a short time limit for the postcards (2-3 minutes). Prepare and record welcome and instructions. Record your own sample response to the question/topic.

Listening to Postcards: Each participating class should also have direction in what to learn from each postcard. You may have a compare/contrast chart or questions for students to answer based on their listening. This scaffolding will increase the learning from viewing the postcards.

Conclusion: Thank the participating classes with a final postcard culminating the learning and thanking them for the participation.

Inspiration from Virtual Postcards & Virtual Testimonials for Megaconference Jr. http://www.megaconferencejr.org/

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Time Zones
It's crucial that both sites take responsibility for checking time zones and communicating time and date appointments in both time zones. These tools are excellent:

- http://www.timeanddate.com/ - Great for comparing times to select a convenient time for both locations.
- http://www.qlock.com/ - Install on your desktop and add clocks for all your partner countries.

Country Calling Codes

- http://www.countrycallingcodes.com/ - Useful for determining dialing strings for ISDN or phone calls.

Test Calls & Times
Be willing to do test calls at odd times (evening for example). Both sites need to be willing to connect outside of school hours to make the connection work. Be considerate and thoughtful of your partner school.

Getting to Know You
When doing introductions, have your students (or small groups) introduce themselves and share the following:

- I learned .... about your country.
- I didn't know that...
- If I were to come visit, I want to see...

Your partner class will be thrilled that your students took time to learn about them ahead of time.

Extend The Learning
Use collaborative tools to extend the learning beyond one videoconference. Usually due to time zones, one videoconference is all that's feasible. But online tools can enhance the collaboration and broaden students' learning. http://www.classroom-connection.org/index.html

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Email Ad should include:

- Project "title" or brief description line
- Project detailed description. Describe what you planned, i.e., agenda, outcomes, etc.
- Project time frame. Include dates and times or a range of dates & times you could connect. If you want to connect during a specific class period, give the exact time and time zone you are in.
- How to sign up
- Project registration deadline
- Number of classes that can participate (i.e. will you take the first person who responds? or can more than one school participate?)
- Type of connection (i.e. is it open only to ISDN/H.320 schools or only IP/H.323 schools?). You may need to talk to your technology coordinator to find out what kind of connection you have. You don't necessarily need to understand what it means, but sharing this information will save you headaches when trying to connect with your partner class.

Listservs to Advertise

1. **Local.** Check with your consortium to see other districts in your area have videoconference capability and if there is a listserv you can use to advertise to fellow teachers.
2. **Collaboration Collage.** The oldest and most well known K-12 VC listserv . www.kn.sbc.com/wired/vidconf/ed1vidconf.html
3. **K12 IVC Listserv**. http://neirtec.terc.edu/k12vc/forward/listserv.cfm
4. **CILC Collaboration Center**

http://www.cilc.org/collaboration_center.aspx

Preparing Questions for Projects

Often in a project there is time for students to ask each other questions. While questions like, "What time is your recess? What is your favorite subject?" are interesting questions, you may want to delve deeper to take advantage of learning how people live in a different area. Talk with your students about what you might want to learn from the partner class. Consider where they live, how it might be different, and what questions could help you learn more about them. Encourage students to think of questions related to the other class' presentation as well.

- **Show examples**. As the teacher, you should also write some questions and show them to the students so that they can see how it should be done.
- **Place the students in pairs** and encourage them to select their best four questions. Each pair should select only four questions that will be presented to the class.
- **Conduct a round robin elimination** process. When your students have selected their best four questions, ask each group to read their questions to the class. Eliminate duplicate questions among the groups.
- **Revise the questions.** When the elimination process is completed, each student should have at least one unique question to ask in the interview. It is okay if the question has been rewritten to include aspects of duplicates that were eliminated.

4. **For additional information** on preparing questions, please visit http://www.remc11.k12.mi.us/dl/QsLessonPlan.htm

Presentation Tips: The Facility

So, you have made the commitment to have your students make a presentation to students at a distant site. Now comes the question, what can I do to make this a success for my students? The following are some tips you might want to consider.

Know Your Facility

Distance Learning Classrooms and Video Conferencing Centers vary in their presentation capabilities. Many provide document cameras, scan converters for computer based presentations, multiple microphones, and student and instructor cameras. Others don't. It is important to find out what presentation capabilities you have available before you begin preparing materials for your presentation. A visit to the facility and a conversation with the person from your district responsible for the facility can eliminate many potential problems on the day of your presentation.

Prepare Your Materials With Your Facility In Mind

Or another way to put it is to maximize your facility's presentation capability. PowerPoint presentations work well in videoconferencing. If you stay within the normal defaults of the PowerPoint software as to font size and background color selections the students at the distant site will have no problem seeing your presentation visuals.

If you are using a document camera or preparing artwork to be shown in some other manner there are some rules you need to follow for maximum effect.

Aspect Ratio

Television is a horizontal medium. As such, vertical visuals do not work as well. Currently the aspect ratio for television is 4 units by 3 units of measurement. This ratio can be 4 inches by 3 inches, or 4 feet by 3 feet. But it is always horizontal. If you develop artwork, design the materials within the aspect ratio.

Color Choices

Television doesn't like the color red. It tends to make the signal bloom. Stay away from it as a background color choice when developing artwork. Television likes contrast. Black lettering on a royal blue background is a prescription for failure. Black lettering on a light blue background or royal blue lettering on a yellow background work well for television. Make sure the contrast choice between foreground and background is wide in your color scheme.

Document Cameras

If you are using a document camera to present artwork for your presentation use 8 1/2 by 11 paper or construction paper. Follow the aspect ratio and color choices guidelines discussed earlier. Then number your artwork pages in the order that they will be presented. Place the stack of artwork under the document camera. Then, during the presentation remove the top piece of artwork and so on until the stack is depleted.

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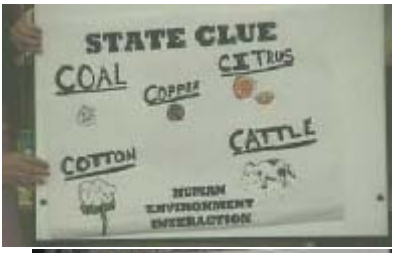
Presentation Tips: Posters

Posters are one of the most difficult visuals to show effectively in a videoconference. In presentations where the other class is taking notes, clear posters are crucial. Even in presentations where the partner class is listening, it's still very frustrating when the posters aren't clear.



In the first poster, the header is large and the five items to write down are also very clear.

The second poster also has very large and clear text.

The contrast isn't clear enough or the text large enough to come through on the third poster. Placing a poster on an easel as shown keeps the poster still and is therefore easier for the other class to see it.

Bottom line: Large text, strong contrast with no light colors for lettering, and very large pictures or drawings. **Huge thick lines** for drawing & writing are best. Test your poster by holding it up across the room to see if you can still read it. Have students read their part off of the back of the poster instead of the front. This makes it easier to hold the poster still (if not using an easel).

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Presentation Tips: Student Jobs

Include as many students during a videoconference as possible. Here is a suggested list of jobs to assign students.

1. ***Art Crew*** - Design backdrop and paint.
2. ***Directors*** - Usually one girl and one boy.
3. ***Stage Hands*** - Move props.
4. ***Lighting and Sound Crew*** - Turn on and off lights/adjust microphone.
5. ***Narrators*** - Usually good readers who are not shy speak well in front of the camera.
6. ***Actors*** – And presenters.
7. ***Costume and Make-up*** - Help put together costumes and help with make-up.
8. ***Writers*** - Help write and edit script. Help with timing and what scenes can be deleted or added.
9. ***Cue Card Holders*** - Hold up cards with lines on them for anyone who might get stuck - hold up scene or act cards during a transition.
10. ***Question and Answer Team*** - These students will answer and ask questions to the other class at the end of the conference.
11. ***Judges*** - These students watch the performance by both schools and write down any changes that might improve the conference for the next time - we must always learn from our mistakes.
12. ***Take Down Crew*** - Cleans up after conference.

This list was presented by Kim Pearce, Gatesville Intermediate School, Language Arts 6th grade teacher, at the 123 Jazzing Up Your Curriculum Workshop Summer 2006. Used by permission.

Organize Your Students

Many times teachers choose to have their students present in small groups of three or four students. If this is your choice it is important to have them organized. Your first consideration is seating within the facility. If your students are presenting in small groups have them sit together in that group on the day of the presentation. This eliminates much time spent gathering the students from all over the room. Make certain that the students know the order of presentation so that they are ready when their turn arises. If each group is using artwork have one student responsible for it.

Testing, Testing, One, Two, Three

Audio is the biggest problem we face in videoconferencing especially with younger elementary students. If you are using a facility with only one microphone get your students as close to that microphone as is practical for your presentation. If you are using a Distance Learning Classroom that has ceiling mounted microphones place your students under one of them and have them speak in a loud voice.

Rehearse, Rehearse, and Rehearse

Do some test runs in your classroom. Make certain each student knows his or her role in the presentation and when they are on. Time the presentation to see if it fits within the time frame allotted. If it doesn't, think of ways you can edit the presentation.

Finally, Take Pride in your Students

You have them well prepared. Now go nail your presentation. And have fun!

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Evaluation Strategies

It is important to evaluate the project afterwards to improve for next time and to determine student learning.

Evaluation with Students
Discuss the following questions after the videoconference.

- What did we learn from the other school (content, process, and culture)?
- What did we do well in the videoconference?
- What can we improve next time?
- What did we learn about videoconferencing from the partner school?

Content Evaluation

- Evaluate the students' understanding of the content in traditional ways (tests, quizzes, etc.)
- Discuss with students how content knowledge was used in the videoconference and how their understanding was refined or extended.

Presentation Evaluation

- Use rubrics from http://rubistar.4teachers.org/ or other sources to evaluate the students' presentations.
- Discuss what worked well with students in presenting via videoconferencing and what could be improved.

Teacher Reflection
Consider the following questions.

- How did the videoconference enhance or extend the students' understanding of the topic?
- Was the videoconference technology transparent or did it interfere with the learning?
- What could make the interaction more effective?

Planning Your Own Project

Topic:

Dates/times: *You will find it much easier to find partners for projects if you decide the date & time and advertise that.*

Learner Outcomes: *What do you expect your learners to accomplish?*

Methods and Activities: *How will you convey the topic (lecture, discussion, hands-on activity)?*

Materials: *What audio/visual aids, handouts, etc. will you use?*

Time: *About how much time will each part take?*

Students Will Do:

Teachers Will Do:

Agenda: *See sample agendas in this booklet.*

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