

Resources for Learning More about Classroom Videoconferencing

Finding Classroom Partners

While the real value in videoconferencing comes from exposing students to ideas and perspectives from around the world that have been shaped by local customs, cultures, experiences and beliefs, the greatest challenge for teachers interested in giving their students opportunities to learn with—rather than just about—the world through videoconferencing has always been finding other classrooms and teachers looking to connect.

The following warehouses of digitally driven teachers may help you to do just that. Be prepared to be persistent, however. Like any digital resource, some of the contact information that you find in these warehouses may be out-of-date or inaccurate:

Name of Resource:	Connections you'd like to pursue: (Include teacher name, location, subject taught, and any contact information that you can collect.)
<p>Skype in Schools Wiki http://skypeinschools.pbworks.com/</p> <p>The Skype in Schools wiki may be the single best resource available for teachers interested in making connections with classrooms beyond their own schools. Not only can you find comprehensive directories listing the usernames, grade levels and content areas of teachers who are interested in using Skype with their students, you can also post “Want Ads” advertising particular projects that you are hoping to establish connections around.</p>	
<p>Skype other Classrooms http://snipurl.com/sfapo</p> <p>With thousands of followers, Sue Waters—who writes at The Edublogger—is a respected voice on the role that emerging technologies can play in today’s classrooms. In December of 2008, Sue compiled a list of classrooms interested in making connections through Skype that is sorted by country, continent and time zone. Including places like Ecuador and Algeria, Sue’s list may give your students the chance to collect interesting perspectives from places in the world that they’ve never heard of!</p>	
<p>The Best Way to Find Classes for Joint Online Projects http://snipurl.com/sfatm</p> <p>Widely recognized as the master of educational resources, Larry Ferlazzo—an ESL teacher from Sacramento, California—created this list in the spring of 2009, detailing the best ways to find classes for joint online projects. Larry includes a wide range of online resources, suggestions and strategies for taking the first steps towards starting joint online projects with classrooms around the world. While the sources that he references aren’t directly connected to using Skype in the classroom, all will be invaluable in thinking through the kinds of connections that are possible when working beyond the walls of your school.</p>	

Additional Sources for Studying Videoconferencing and Skype

Most teachers who are new to videoconferencing have a million questions—will guest experts really be willing to come into my classroom? Can I record the conversations that my students have in Skype? What kinds of things are other classes doing with videoconferences?

The following resources may just answer some of those kinds of questions for you:

<i>Name of Resource:</i>	<i>Thoughts and reactions:</i> <i>(What ideas in these resources caught your attention? Do they raise any additional questions? Present interesting new directions for your work?)</i>
<p><i>Videoconferencing Out on a Lim</i> http://vcoutonalim.org/</p> <p>Janine Lim could have the single most exciting job in the world: She coordinates videoconferencing experiences for 18 school districts in southwest Michigan. Luckily for you, she also writes extensively about her work on her blog—<i>Videoconferencing Out on a Lim</i>. Spend some time with Janine’s resource-rich site and you’ll find examples of projects that students across the K-12 continuum are engaged in, links to presentations about the power of videoconferencing in the classroom, connections to other bloggers who write extensively about videoconferencing, and research that supports the important role that videoconferencing can play in student achievement.</p>	
<p><i>Met Any Good Authors Lately?</i> http://snipurl.com/sfboh</p> <p>One of the best things about being a K12 classroom teacher is that everyone—sports stars, university professors, business experts, published authors—likes helping kids to learn a little bit more about their work, especially when helping is as easy as firing up a computer and connecting with classrooms via videoconference! This 2009 article from the <i>School Library Journal</i> details a set of authors at almost every grade level who are willing to conference with your kids for free. How’s that for a good deal?</p>	
<p><i>50 Awesome Ways to Use Skype in the Classroom</i> http://snipurl.com/sfc0q</p> <p>Often the biggest challenge for teachers new to videoconferencing is imagining projects that may fit into the work that they are already doing. This 2009 post from the <i>Teaching Degree Blog</i> should open your mind to what is possible with Skype! It includes an annotated description of 50 websites where teachers detail projects, share resources, provide tipsheets, and engage parents using Skype. An amazing digital destination for anyone just beginning to consider the potential that videoconferencing holds for their kids and classes.</p>	

