

expertise. Many parents are developing Internet skills at their places of work and can also become valued mentors for you and your teaching colleagues.

### **START BY GETTING INVOLVED IN AN EXISTING PROJECT.**

Experienced teachers will advise that you and your classroom start by getting involved in an existing project online, rather than trying to start a project of your own. Participating in other projects is a great way to meet potential partners and learn about the many different projects initiated by teachers and students throughout the world. It can be a great way to develop ideas for how to integrate collaborative projects into your classroom without having to take on the role of facilitating the involvement of other classes right away. As you begin participating in other projects, you will soon find that you have global colleagues and peers to turn to should you wish to coordinate a project of your own in the future. In this way, your classroom truly becomes a global community member that can draw on the breadth of a network as your classroom develops throughout the year. And you will certainly develop ideas about how you would want to structure a project as a facilitator after experiencing at least one yourself.

### **BUILD COLLABORATIONS AMONG SEVERAL SCHOOLS.**

Having more than two schools involved in a project ensures greater student participation and greater viability. If one of two schools is unable to continue participation, the project folds, whereas with more schools involved, the project can continue even if one school drops out.

### **START WITH A TOPIC THAT YOUR STUDENTS KNOW WELL.**

It isn't always necessary to generate a new curricular topic in order to do online international collaboration. There are many common topics among classrooms around the world that can be the focus of local-to-global collaborations. A

valuable place to start is to have your students communicate with global peers on topics they already know well so that the content is something they are familiar with and are eager to share. Children can write best when they are writing about that which they know well. Provide plenty of in-class learning experiences around the curricular topic your class has chosen to share online so that all your students can be included as participants in the global conversations. Your students will be better able to contribute meaningful content in their online collaborations if they are communicating from classroom learning that is rich in content and experience.



*iEARN students from around the world come together to learn about each other, and plan for upcoming project collaborations.*

### **CLEARLY ARTICULATE GOALS, TIMELINES AND EXPECTATIONS.**

Designing projects with clearly articulated goals, timelines and commitments from participating schools helps everyone prepare and plan for the project, generates valuable learning experiences, and allows the project participants to produce and share valued student products of the work.

### **ENCOURAGE ONGOING DIALOGUES.**

When communicating online, have your students include not only the topic content they are sharing but also questions of inquiry to their global peers that

invite ongoing dialogues. It is important to mentor students in appropriate content for global communication that generates positive interactions. Likewise, as they receive communication from global peers, it is important to respond with an affirmative appreciation for what they are learning from one another. The purpose of local-to-global communication is to build dialogues of understanding.

### **BUILD A COMMUNITY OF TEACHERS.**

A key to successful project work is developing effective relationships with other educators. Many teachers have found that as they build a community of

teachers with whom they can collaborate, they continue to do projects with these same teachers. You and your global teaching peers can develop an ongoing collaborative community of teaching and learning together. As you gain new students each year, you and your online colleagues can repeat the projects you have been doing together in previous years and continue to build your local-to-global collaborative curricular teaching and learning expertise. As we build communities of teachers and students who collaborate globally to learn within real-world contexts and issues of importance, we have the greatest hope of making this world a better and more positively sustainable place now and in the future.