

**Title**

Collaborating on the Internet: Keypal Projects that Promote Cultural Awareness

**Targeted Audience**

This course is designed for in-service and pre-service teachers of grades 4-8.

**Facilitator**

See facilitator sheet

**Credit**

To be decided by university

**Course Description**

The Internet provides a way for students to participate in collaborative exchanges with their peers outside of the classroom, outside of the school, even outside of the country. This course is designed to help middle school educators use the keypal projects—the online equivalent of penpal projects—to give students opportunities to learn about and understand other cultures. Keypal projects allow students to explore culture, language, and geography in a fun and exciting way. Learners will design a collaborative keypal project for their own classrooms.

**Standards**

This course will help learners to meet NETS standards 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6.

This course will help learners' students to meet the NETS foundation standards 2, 4, and 6.

**Learning Outcomes**

After completion of this course, the learner will be able to:

- Discuss important features of keypal projects.
- Select a topic and articulate goals that are appropriate for a keypal project.
- Describe appropriate student keypal products and strategies for implementing your keypal project.
- Address language, culture, and safety issues in a keypal project.
- Use a variety of strategies to find a partner classroom for your keypal project.

**Process**

This course is divided into seven activities. Learners should work through each activity in order. When they have finished with all seven activities, they must complete a final project to pass the course.

Activity 1: Examine Existing Keypal Projects to Develop a List of Key Features

In this activity, you will examine existing keypal projects to develop a list of key features. This will help you understand keypal projects and help you identify features to include in your own collaborative keypal project.

View and reflect on one video

Read and explore

- LETSNet Collaboration on the World Wide Web  
Description and issues involved when using collaboration on the Web and links for possible collaborative Web projects
- Global School - Collaborative Learning Projects  
Allows teachers to collaborate with other educators and provides lesson plans, online field trips, and research resources.
- Global Lab Curriuclum  
A full-year introductory science course for grades 8-10 that uses science as inquiry to engage students in collaborative scientific investigations.
- KidLink KidProject  
A worldwide network promoting communication and curriculum exchange through e-mail forums.
- Sofweb Global Projects and Partners  
A database of collaborative online projects covering all learning areas and grades that vary in duration.
- Collaborative Internet Projects  
A comprehensive listing of Internet projects for K-12 classrooms.
- Global School - Collaborative Learning Projects  
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Submit a list of three or more key features of collaborative keypal projects. Note those features that will work particularly well for your curriculum and students.

Address **one** of the following questions based on the collaborative keypal projects you examined:

- In what ways are projects similar and different from each other?
- What are the overall strengths and/or weaknesses of the projects? Respond to at least one other person's posting with a question or idea.

### Activity 2: Develop a List of Goals for Doing a Collaborative Keypal Project

In this activity, you will identify and define the things you want students to accomplish by participating in a collaborative keypal project. This list will provide a starting point for development of your project.

View and reflect on one video

Explore the following Web sites

- Educational Telecomputing Projects: Interpersonal Exchanges by Judi Harris  
A description of keypal projects and activity structures for incorporating educational telecommuting in the classroom.
- Global School - Collaborative Projects  
Allows teachers to collaborate with other educators and provides lesson plans, online field trips, and research resources.
- NickNack's Telecollaborations - Click on "Sample Telecollaborations"  
Provides assistance in developing ideas for, or participating in, telecollaboration projects
- "Interpersonal Exchange" in Judi Harris's Telecomputing and Activity Structures (Click on "See Examples Please" and then "Keypals")  
Examples of Interpersonal Exchange activity structures for curriculum-based projects.

Submit your list of three or more of goals for students to achieve by participating in a collaborative keypal project. Each item should state specifically what you want students to accomplish.

Present a question or topic of interest that emerged as you developed your goals. Respond to at least one other person's question or topic. Review the issues and responses posted. Use this information to add to or revise your own list of project goals.

Activity 3: Select a Topic for Your Collaborative Keypal Project

In this activity, you will review your curriculum to generate potential topics for a collaborative keypal project of your own. After generating a list of potential topics, you will select one to develop for your keypal project.

Submit a list of four or more potential topics for your collaborative keypal project. Identify the topic you chose and briefly describe why you chose it.

Describe a challenge or problem you encountered in developing topics for your project, e.g., making it part of the curriculum or linking it to an international issue. Respond to at least one other person's challenge with suggestions, ideas, or advice.

Activity 4: Define the Final Student Product or Activity and Outline the Sequence of Activities

In this activity, you will describe the culminating product or activity that will demonstrate student learning in your keypal project and develop an outline of learning activities.

Explore the following Web sites:

- TIPS: "Telecommunications in the Classroom: Keys to Successful Telecomputing"  
Listing of guidelines and principles to follow for successful collaboration projects.
- NickNacks: Designing Your Projects- Click on "Design the Project Plan"  
Provides assistance in developing ideas for, or participating in, telecollaboration projects.

Submit a description of your culminating product or activity and an outline of your learning activities.

Share your culminating keypal product or activity. If you have questions about your culminating product or activity, ask for suggestions from your colleagues. Respond with feedback to at least one other learner's idea.

Activity 5: Develop Specific Steps and Strategies for Implementing Your Keypal Project

In this activity, you will elaborate on the outline of activities from Activity 4 and develop steps and strategies for implementing your keypal project. You will include provisions for classroom management and technology in your plan.

Explore the following Web sites:



- How to Design a Successful Project  
Guidelines and principles for developing a successful online collaborative project.
- Kathy Schrock's Guides  
A collection of rubrics for evaluating Internet projects.
- "Observations on Educational Electronic Networks"  
Description and comparison of network-based activities and general guidelines for a successful activity.
- "You've Got Mail: Ten Nifty Ways your Teachers Can Use E-mail to Extend Kids' Learning"  
Practical uses and activities for educational e-mail to encourage student connections between classroom activities and real life situations.
- Tips on Finding Keypals and Suggested Topics  
Listing of links for finding keypals, internet safety tips, and suggested keypal topics or activities.
- "Organizing Electronic Network-Based Instructional Interactions: Successful Strategies and Tactics"  
Description of strategies for successful, well-organized educational networking.
- "Keys to a Successful Project," from the Kidsphere LISTSERV  
Guidelines for organizing and advertising collaborative projects.
- NickNacks Teacher's Guide to International Collaboration on the Internet  
Suggestions for collaboration on the Internet including a question-and-answer section.
- "Telecommunications In The Classroom: Keys to Successful Telecomputing"  
Listing of guidelines and principles to follow for successful collaboration projects.
- Kidlink Tips  
Advice for fine-tuning Kidlink subscriptions.
- Kidlink Policies  
Rules and guidelines for using Kidlink activities.
- NickNacks Designing Tips  
Advice and ideas for designing a telecollaboration project and examples of current projects.
- One Computer Classroom: Tips and Ideas  
Listing of links, activities, and information on using technology in a one-computer classroom.

Submit the steps and strategies for each of the activities in your project plan. Be specific about what students will do and what they will produce to demonstrate learning. Be sure to address what technologies you will use, how you will assess students, and any relevant management issues.

If you need help or advice with any aspect of your project plan, post a message on the discussion board (if you don't need help or advice, then discuss what you think your biggest challenge with implementation will be). Be sure to address others' questions with any advice or suggestions you have.

#### Activity 6: Develop a Plan for Addressing Language, Culture, and Safety Issues in Your Unit

In this activity, you will address additional issues critical to implementation of your collaborative keypal project: language/cultural challenges and safety/netiquette issues.

Explore the following Web sites

- World Languages and Regional Information  
Links to Web sites containing information about various regions and differing languages.
- McGraw-Hill Multicultural Super Site  
Collection of information and original resources for educators, including lesson plans, a discussion Board, and links for additional information.
- Education World  
Complete online resource guide and search engine with lesson plans, research materials, articles and news stories, monthly site reviews, and employment listings.

- Disney Cybernetiquette Comix  
Entertaining and interactive Web site that teaches online awareness tips and promotes online safety for the family.
- Kidz Privacy  
Succinct list of safety issues to teach students; ideal for whole group discussion.
- PBS Kids TechKnow  
An interactive poll for children asking practical questions and displaying results after each vote.
- Yahoo!igans Rules for Online Safety  
A list of online safety tips for children and a listing of links to resources promoting safety of children.

Submit your adjusted collaborative keypal project plan.

Share a problem you encountered and/or a solution you developed in addressing management, technology, language/culture, or netiquette/safety issues.

### Activity 7: Create a Plan for Advertising Your Project to Partner Classrooms

In this activity, you will create a plan for advertising your collaborative keypal project with partner classrooms.

Explore the following Web sites

- Finding Partner Classrooms: Web 66  
A Web site registry with links to the home pages of registered schools around the world.
- "Getting Started on the Internet: Add YOUR Name to a LISTSERV – TODAY!"  
This is a helpful resource with descriptions for getting started on LISTSERVs, as well as numerous links to educational LISTSERVs—including some for keypals projects!
- Collaborative Project Sites  
Need help trying to find a collaborative project to participate in or another school to communicate with? This page has links to many sites that offer collaborative projects for all subjects and age groups as well as links to sites where you can find other online schools.
- Classroom Connect's Connected Teacher  
Searchable database of teachers, projects, etc.
- Intercultural E-mail Classroom Connections  
IECC is a free teaching.com service to help teachers link with partners in other cultures and countries for e-mail, classroom pen-pal, and other project exchanges.
- Keypals Club  
Connect classroom to classroom; student to student.
- Keypals Club International  
A place for students to meet others from around the globe. Chat, clubs, activities, and e-mail facilitate understanding others from other cultures.
- "Tips on Finding Keypals and Suggested Topics"  
Besides finding keypals, gives safety tips, topics/activities, and a guide to developing a timeline.

Submit your plan for finding a partner classroom to participate in your collaborative keypal project. Submit a copy of your ad and identify the sites where you will register it.

### **Final Project**

Review your previous submissions before you submit your final project. This will allow you to review the work you have done in order to complete your final project. You should make sure you are meeting all of the final project criteria. Review each section to ensure that all are complete and have been edited for

content and grammar. You may want to submit your project draft to a peer or colleague to assist with editing. When you are ready to submit your final project, compile the following sections:

- Project goals
- A description of the final product or culminating activity
- At least three learning activities students will complete to reach their goals
- A means for assessing student learning (culminating and supporting activities)
- A description of the type(s) of technology that will be used (e.g., e-mail, discussion forums, etc.)
- A list of resources
- Project timelines
- Provisions for addressing language and cultural issues
- A plan for advertising your project

## **Schedule**

This course is scheduled to take approximately 30 hours to complete readings, activities, video, assignments, reflections and a final project.

## **Requirements**

Learners are expected to:

- Complete all assignments
- Maintain an online journal
- Participate regularly in discussion boards

## **Evaluation**

Pass/fail upon satisfactory completion of assignments and discussion board participation

## **Materials (hardware, software, plug-ins)**

Technical Requirements:

- Word processor
- Internet service provider
- E-mail
- TeacherLine required plugins

## **Academic Dishonesty Policy**

To be inserted by university institution only