

Classroom Collaboration with Skype

Collaboration projects using Skype

1. Educational applications

- a. Talk with your group about how you might use Skype with your students.
 - i. Connecting with an expert
 - ii. Connecting with another teacher or classroom - debates, reader theater
 - iii. Connecting with a student who can't be in class
 - iv. Connecting with parents

2. Connecting with Skype

- a. Set up account, interface basics, profiles
 - i. Privacy settings
 - ii. Skype status and safety issues, e.g. Don't select "Skype Me"
Invisible allows someone to try to contact you but doesn't show that you are online.
 - iii. **SkypeMe issues...** SkypeMe mode allows everyone else on Skype know that you are available and interested in talking or chatting. This includes people who you do not know or you have not authorized but who can find you by searching the Skype directory. Skype Me mode disables your privacy settings and allows anyone to contact you, whether you've authorized them or not. Your privacy settings are restored as soon as you leave Skype Me mode.
- b. Skype audio settings - when audio doesn't work.
- c. Find one other user's name and add them as a contact.
- d. Make a call to that contact.
- e. Buttons - receive call, hang up, mute, and put call on hold.

Skype Project I - Add a contact and talk with another person over Skype.

3. Searching and Sharing contacts

- a. Searching for others contacts if you have their user name or their city.
- b. Contacts from your contact list can be shared with others.

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4. Profile and Preference settings

- a. File → Edit my Profile...
- b. Discuss concerns about students putting too much information in their profile or using their photos if connecting to someone outside of school.
 - i. Photo - if you have a photo you may drag into your MY Profile photo. You can also select one of the default photos.
 - ii. Other privacy settings in profiles - your e-mail is kept private, but those who know it will be able to search for your Skype name using your e-mail address.
 - iii. Students should not enter their birth date or gender.

5. Chat

- a. Send a chat first to ask if someone is available to talk.
- b. Can bookmark chats for ease of returning to chat to continue - sort of like an open forum.
- c. You can have multiple chats going on at the same time.
- d. Web addresses entered into the chat become active. Try drag and drop.
- e. Chat reviewed later or printed (Mac.)

Skype Project II - Start a chat with one other person about a topic of your choice.

6. Share files

- a. Share a digital photo or other file with someone by dragging the file into the chat window. The receiver has to be willing to accept the file and allow the exchange.

Skype Project III - While in a chat, exchange a file.

7. Conference calls

- a. Set up a conference call with at least 3 different people. One person must initiate the call. Ideas you may want to discuss:
 - Ways to use Skype to connect classrooms
 - Your favorite web resource
- b. Consider muting your microphone unless you are talking.

Skype Project IV - Have one person initiate a conference call with at least two others. The person initiating the call gets to select the topic to discuss.

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- c. Skype allows you to conference with up to 9 other people.
- 8. Conference chat - one person in the group will start a chat with the others. This is useful to support a conference call.

Skype Project V - Start a group chat to go along with your conference call.

9. Skype video

- a. Discuss educational uses of video in a Skype connection.
- b. Skype video - settings
- c. Logitech cameras or built-in video on new laptops. If using a Mac, Photo Booth must be closed before activating video.
- d. When to use or not use video. Video in conference calls will not work.

Skype Project VI - call someone and share both audio and video. May need to share computers.

10. Recording Skype Calls for podcasts

- a. Special software makes recording Skype calls easily. Pamela or PrettyMay for Windows or Call Recorder for Mac.

11. Skypecast

- a. A large, hosted conference calls, scheduled to begin and end at a certain time and usually have a certain topic of discussion.
 - i. <https://skypecasts.skype.com/skypecasts/home>
 - ii. www.edutechie.com/2006/11/skypecasts-academic-potential/
- b. You may create a public chat

12. Resources

- a. Vicki Davis shares how Skype is being introduced to her students. Nice 13 minute video: <http://coolcatteacher.blogspot.com/2006/10/using-skype-in-classroom-or-just.html>
- b. Wesley Fryer shares how Skype may be used in the classroom http://www.wtvi.com/TEKS/05_06_articles/skype-in-the-classroom.html

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13. Equipment and approximate price:

- a. Logitech Premium 350 USB headset (\$32)
- b. Plantronics DSP 400 headset (\$41)
- c. Polycomm Communicator C100S for table top discussions (\$100 - \$120)
- d. Pamela www.pamela-systems.com (\$25)
- e. Pretty May <http://prettymay.net> (\$25)
- f. Call Recorder (Mac) www.ecamm.com/mac/callrecorder/ (\$15)

Skype hands-on activities:

- 1) Find a partner and get their Skype name. Add them to your contacts.
- 2) Start a discussion in chat with your partner about the newest technology tool or resource you have recently learned about and how it can be used to support learning. Add a link to a website referenced in your chat.
- 3) Start a group chat with three others and share about what you discussed in the previous chat. See if the chat can be saved and printed. It must be started by one person and that person adds others to their chat.
- 4) Talk with your partner using Skype audio. Decide who will initiate the call. If possible, try it both with and without a headset.
- 5) Add video if you have a camera.
- 6) In a chat or call, send a file to the person you are chatting or talking with. Try both sending and receiving a file.
- 7) Create a conference call with three other people. It must be started by one person and that person will add others to the call.
- 8) Add your digital photo to your Skype profile.

ePals hands-on activities:

- 1) Explore the ePals project section and learn about one project that interests you.
- 2) Explore the search for classroom section of ePals and find a classroom which you might be able to connect with that has indicated that they support Chat, Audio/Voice software, or Video software. Make a note of the contact's name.

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Connecting with other classrooms

- 1) Go to www.epals.com and create a free teacher account.
 - a) Select "Join Us" then "ePals Global Community" to create a free account,
 - b) Explore the ePals Projects section (no membership required to explore.) See if you can find a project of interest. For additional project ideas explore "The Archives" link on the bottom of the project section. Save any .pdf of interest for later viewing.
- 2) Explore the e-pals discussion areas.
- 3) Brainstorm with your group some of the projects you could do, classroom to classroom. These projects might involve classroom to classroom interaction or student to student interaction. Talk with your group about how the collaborative tools you learned about today could be used to support your project.
- 4) Click Find Classrooms on the right side to search for a classroom to make a classroom to classroom connection with. Click on More Options on the bottom to see the option to search for only schools with Chat, Audio/Voice software, or Video software. You may want to restrict your search to schools with a description keyword or by geographically area. Be sure to search by participant age or you may have your middle school students talking with adults wanting to learn English. Be aware of time differences if you are interested in a synchronous exchange.
- 5) Send an e-mail to the teacher at one or more of the classrooms introducing you and suggesting further discussion about collaboration. You may want to provide your Skype name and ask if they use Skype. Don't be surprised if it results in a conversation with someone from another part of the world.
- 6) Other sites for classroom to classroom global projects.
 - a) Global SchoolNet Foundation www.globalschoolnet.org
 - b) Click on iPoPP or enter www.globalschoolnet.org/ghs/pr to search for projects.
 - c) Taking It Global - www.takingitglobal.org
Look under the Take Action Projects section.

Getting Skype

- 1) Skype can be downloaded for free from www.skype.com (Windows or Mac)
 - a) Skype user guides and privacy setting information:
<http://www.skype.com/help/guides/>