

Open Your Classroom to the WORLD

Craig Roland

One of the most exciting and powerful ways to use the Internet in your classroom is to participate in a student art exchange or collaborative art project with a school in another country. Such exchanges typically require students in each location to creatively respond to a common theme or issue and share the resulting work with the other school, via snail mail, e-mail, or on the Web. Combining this activity with e-mail conversations between participants offers the potential for students to interact and gain insight into the culture, interests, and life experiences of their peers in other countries. While arranging

Art Link (www.vsarts.org/x1484.xml), sponsored by VSA arts and Creative Connections, invites students from grades three through twelve to share their culture, heritage, and communities through visual art with an overseas partner art class. Instructions for joining the Art Link exchange, which is arranged to take place in the fall of each year, are posted on the VSA arts Web site. Student work from this project is displayed online at Creative Connections (www.creativeconnections.org) and at an annual art exhibition in Washington, DC. VSA arts offers fee waivers for a limited number of applicants. Classrooms not receiving a

waiver must pay an enrollment fee. The International Education and Resource Network, or iEARN, is a nonprofit organization made up of over 20,000 schools in more than 115 countries that encourages teachers and young people to use the Internet and other new technologies to collaborate on projects that both enhance learning and make a difference in the world. Their Web site (www.iearn.org) lists numerous art-related projects and exchanges, all initiated and designed by teachers and students. Teachers or their schools must join iEARN (for an annual fee) in order to take full advantage of the services and resources available on the site.

Another site worth checking out is Intercultural E-mail Classroom Connections (IECC), sponsored by

iEARN International Education and Resource Network

Started in 1995, iEARN is the world's largest nonprofit global network that enables teachers and young people to use the Internet and other new technologies to collaborate on projects that both enhance learning and make a difference in the world.

Featured Projects and Programs:

- Machinists Project:** Based on a picture book called *Machinist and children's art in wartime*. They Still Draw Pictures, participants research what kind of work have taken place after Hiroshima/Nagasaki, and learn about a little bird still crying somewhere in the world. They learn what work they can do for this little bird. They will make creative picture books to present for those little birds in the world.
- EGYPT2007:** iEARN-Egypt announces 18th Annual iEARN International Conference and 11th Youth Summit July 21 - 26, 2007 in Cairo! Connecting Cultures... Respecting Differences. A global dialogue for development and sustainability. Stay tuned for details.
- Adobe Youth Voices:** iEARN is proud to announce Adobe Youth Voices, a new global initiative empowering youth to create with purpose. [Visit us.](http://www.youthvoices.com)

Click here for more information about the 2007 projects under the theme of *EGYPT*.

Some spaces still left - register now for next session of Online Professional Development Course. iEARN courses run October 09th - December 10th. Each course brings together educators from around the world to develop strategies for integrating online collaborative projects and international exchange into their curricula. Register and learn more!

Language Resource Page

English	Arabic	French
Spanish	Chinese	Portuguese
Italian	Japanese	German
Polish	Russian	Swedish
Greek	Ukrainian	Other

www.iearn.org

Teaching.com. IECC is a free online service designed to assist educators at all levels in arranging intercultural e-mail exchanges between schools in different countries. Their site (www.iecc.org) includes brief descriptions of curriculum projects

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proposed by teachers all over the world. While many of the projects focus on the language arts, I found several

that involved the exchange of student artwork. To view the listing of projects, or to post one of your own, you need to first register on the site for a username and password.

Lastly, ePALs (www.epals.com) is the world's largest online classroom community with over 6.5 million students and educators from 191 countries involved in pen-pal exchanges and cross-cultural learning projects. You can browse or search the huge database of projects underway on the site. Free registration is required to post a project of your own and to take full advantage of all the site has to offer.

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ePALs International Education and Resource Network

Welcome!

ePALs is a nonprofit organization made up of over 20,000 schools in more than 115 countries that encourages teachers and young people to use the Internet and other new technologies to collaborate on projects that both enhance learning and make a difference in the world.

Featured Projects and Programs:

- Global Network:** Based on a picture book called *Machinist and children's art in wartime*. They Still Draw Pictures, participants research what kind of work have taken place after Hiroshima/Nagasaki, and learn about a little bird still crying somewhere in the world. They learn what work they can do for this little bird. They will make creative picture books to present for those little birds in the world.
- Safe Blogs:** A safe technology address from ePALs.
- e-Mentoring:** ePALs eMentoring™ is a patented technology and multiple small e-mail web-based language translation, designed for schools and districts. This easy-to-use safe e-mail, discussion boards, the sharing and online social network.

www.epals.com

an international art exchange may take some work, it is well worth the effort. Fortunately, there are a number of organizations whose mission is to match teachers seeking partner classrooms for international and cross-cultural exchanges.