

B. WORKING WITH OUTSIDE EXPERTS

Students receive additional and/or deeper knowledge from an out-of-school expert of a relevant field. In addition to a video interview, the expert may be involved in following teamwork and commenting on it.

You can look forward to...

- ... building collaboration with outside experts
- ... linking school activities to the broader society.
- ... referring to an outside expert instead of having to know everything about a topic yourself.
- ... showing the learners how their personal interests and school activities
- ... matter in society by linking the topics to a wider audience.

Your learners may learn...

- ... to contact professionals, present their case to them, and ask for collaboration.
- ... to discuss and negotiate with teachers and experts.
- ... to incorporate expert views into their project
- ... to cultivate critical thinking skills

Ideas for using technology

Finding experts

You can use professional sites such as LinkedIn to locate experts in the field of study. You can use social networking services that you already use to inquire after an expert on a topic.

Communicating with experts

The initial and the follow up contact with professionals can be conducted by way of a video call, chat, or email. This is often more feasible than meeting a professional in person. Skype is quite commonly used in academia and is business. Apple Facetime and Google Talk are other good options. An online

blog or wiki space with commenting functions can also be used. A slightly more distant, yet content rich way of connecting with experts can be established by using Twitter. This online service can be a good way to connect to, and follow everyday discussions of experts in the field of your interest, but who are located further away from your classroom.

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1. Preparation

Prepare possible topics and locate appropriate experts.

Plan the medium of interactions between students and experts. At least one video interview with an expert needs to be arranged.

People working in academia who often have a flexible schedule and find it motivating to pass their expert knowledge on to young learners.

2. Introduction

Present the activity to the learners and explain that they are required to interact with outside experts to complete this course.

Brainstorm about possible topics, experts, and reasons for using experts.

When the topics of inquiry are known, contact experts (or ask the learners to contact them) and inquire whether they are interested in participating.

Present example topics and possible experts to the learners to support their brainstorming process.

You can ask your learners whether they know of suitable experts: their parents or other relatives. Finding appropriate experts can be left as an exercise to advanced learners.

3. Activity

Together with the learners and the expert, agree on the involvement of the expert: video interview, giving feedback on student work, participating in assessment, etc. Decide on communication methods and protocols. Make a schedule of when the interactions happen.

Students prepare for the interview by coming up with questions they need answers for.

Monitor the learners' progress and keep in touch with the involved professionals.

Have the students practice with the chosen communication tools, so they know how to use them.

When teams interact with the experts, the learners may contact them independently and arrange a suitable time for the interview.

Learners may visit the expert at their work location to gather more information.

A video interview can happen as class or team activity.

4. Assessment

In case the expert followed the progression of the teamwork, their expert view on the learners' performance should be considered.

The expert may be involved in defining the assessment criteria.