



Introduction

The Asia Education Foundation (AEF) has partnered the Australia-Indonesia Institute (All) to manage the implementation of the Australia-Indonesia BRIDGE (Building Relationships through Intercultural Dialogue and Growing Engagement) Project. The BRIDGE Project will occur over three years (from 2008-2010) and will involve 90 Australian and 90 Indonesian educators from 40 Australian and 40 Indonesian schools. The BRIDGE Project has received funds from The Myer Foundation and AusAID to support Australia-Indonesia school partnerships.

Each selected school will be allocated a partner through the BRIDGE Project.

In Australia these schools will generally represent students from the Middle Years of Schooling (Years 5 – 9). These students will be aged 10 – 16 years of age.

In Indonesia, these will generally be Senior High School students (Years 10 –12). These students will be aged 15 - 18 years of age.

Managing the partnership

There are a variety of ways that you can manage friendships with another school. Using 'snail mail', students can choose to write letters, send photographs or even exchange taped greetings to each other. Or you and your students can communicate using the Internet and the BRIDGE website and the many online communication tools it offers through Wikispaces.

It is up to you to determine how you would like to communicate with your partner school and you may find that a mixture of technology and non-technology-based activities and communication types might work well for you both.

As the classroom teacher, you will be pivotal in establishing and nurturing a positive and productive long distance relationship with your partner school colleague and students. You will be the BRIDGE Project catalyst. However, this does not and should not mean that you will be overburdened by the tasks or overwhelmed by the Project's demands.

The extent of work and time commitment is up to you and there are many different strategies you can use to share the responsibility and the workload with your students and with your partner colleague.

This booklet is designed to help you get the most you can out of your BRIDGE partnership by providing you with useful, practical advice.

Objectives of the BRIDGE Project:

- To increase Indonesian teachers' and students' knowledge and understanding of contemporary Australia.
- To increase Australian teachers' and students' knowledge and understanding of Indonesia, particularly the role of Islam in contemporary Indonesian society.
- To support foreign language acquisition in Indonesian and Australian schools.

The benefits

Developing a friendship with a partner school in another country will help your students to grasp their place as a global citizen and to develop a deepened understanding of another culture in an authentic, relevant and very personal way. The discussions that will emerge within your classroom will be filled with excited questions, new knowledge, revised knowledge and a keen desire to seek more answers.

Students who have been involved in international cross-cultural exchanges are stimulated by the relationships they develop and view the experience as positive and worthwhile.

Establishing friendships with students in another country is highly engaging and, at times, confronting. Your students will be enthusiastic ambassadors and may even continue the relationship with their buddy student beyond the time frame of the BRIDGE Project.

To use ICT or not?

The BRIDGE Project and the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) can open up any learning experience to the global community, dissipate the classroom walls and extend the audience for student production and communication beyond that of the teacher and the student's immediate peers. It can also help you and your students to refine and develop new ICT skills.

The Internet can be used as a resource, a vehicle for interactivity and an avenue of collaboration and communication.

In the spirit of cooperation and cultural exchange, your role as the teacher may shift from being the traditional knowledge-bearer to a co-learner with your students.

Much better at taking risks and questioning what can be done, your students will push the boundaries, assist in planning and implementation and develop competencies in negotiation, effective communication, problem solving and teamwork.

Good luck!

Features of an effective collaborative activity:

What does a good collaboration look like? How can we establish, nurture and maintain an effective partnering relationship?

Collaborating with another school

Shared understanding, ownership of and commitment to collaborative activities are key elements in a successful partnering relationship.

This means that you and your partner school will both work hard to gain an understanding of each school's context, so that any activities you will plan together take into account each school's language abilities, timelines, school schedules, confidence with and access to technology. Working this out as soon as you can is a good idea.

Constructive collaborations aren't forced and people don't feel compelled or imposed upon.

Instead, in positive collaborations, partners feel motivated, supported by each other, excited and stimulated by the new opportunities that emerge. By having a shared understanding, you will be able to meet your collaborative activity's expectations and reap the benefits this partnership will bring. If either partner ever feels burdened, unsure or overwhelmed by the activity, then immediate steps need to be taken to address the situation and provide the support necessary to get you both on track.

Find some common ground – subjects, interests, student ages, sport, music – and work from there.

How can we establish, nurture and maintain an effective partnership?

Be receptive to new ideas and approaches from your partner school. Understanding each other is key and be prepared for anything. Effective partnerships are flexible, responsive and proactive. They can only happen when people have equal commitment and enthusiasm.

Schools are busy places and sometimes unforeseen circumstances can get in the way of collaborative activities. So expect some roadblocks to occur at some stage. The better prepared you both are for this, the more regularly you communicate with each other and the more open that communication is, the greater your chances of overcoming any problems.

Planning is essential.

And, if things aren't working out, ask someone for help. Contact the BRIDGE Project managers at bridge@asialink.unimelb.edu.au for their advice and support.

Start by being as open as you can with each other

During the first training session when teachers from both partnered schools meet face to face in Melbourne, it's important to spend time discussing:

Your schooling contexts

Discuss each other's schooling context.

- What size is your school?
- Where is it located?
- What age are your students?
- What sorts of things do your students like doing?
- What are your classrooms like?
- What access do you have to school resources and technologies?
- What do you both teach?
- What are your teaching backgrounds?

Your hopes and dreams

Share your hopes and dreams.

- What would you like to achieve from being involved in this BRIDGE partnership?
- What would you like to learn, as a teacher?
- What would you like your students to learn?
- What would you like to do?
- What is your vision for this partnership? (Think big, this is the time for blue sky thinking!)
- What do you like doing? What are your hobbies, passions and interests? How can you share these with each other and incorporate this into your partnership work?

Communicating with each other

Clearly list your expectations of each other and make a commitment to meeting those expectations:

1. Regularity and methods

How often do you want to communicate with each other (weekly, fortnightly, monthly)?

What methods will you use to communicate with each other (snail mail, email, telephone, blogs, wikis, online chat, Skype etc)?

Do you hope to have some time when your students can communicate synchronously (at the same time) either by telephone, the web or video link?

When you first spend time together, it's a great opportunity to decide on the best method of communication and contact with your partner school. As the teachers who are facilitating the collaborative activities, negotiate with each other the best means of communication available to you. This will, of course, be influenced by what is available to you at school and at home in terms of technology and bandwidth. Balancing traditional methods of communication ("snail mail" or telephone) with online methods (email, wikispaces, websites etc) will help you both to feel more comfortable about what is expected of you and how you will deliver it.

How might you mix these methods?

For instance, you might start with *All About Us* hard copy packs sent via mail to your partner school which include photos of your students, hand written letters, artwork, souvenirs from the local area, school diaries, school magazines etc. Then, you might buddy up your students and get them to email each other. This might be followed by a joint writing task. (You will find more ideas in the *Getting Started* collaboration activities.)

2. Shared expectations

Are you on the same page? From the outset, if you're both clear on what you expect from each other, then your plan of action will work.

Talk about:

- How much time each week you will be able to allocate to the collaboration activities (an hour? More?) and
- When you might timetable this (will it be the beginning of the week or the end of the week?).

3. What will we do together?

What sorts of activities would you like to do together?

There are many online collaborative activity ideas available to use through the BRIDGE website. Spend some time looking at these and working out together which ones most suit you.

4. Timeline and planning

Can you develop a notional timeline term by term / semester by semester that incorporates each school's holidays, religious celebrations (etc) and still manages to focus on relationship

building and collaborative activities?

The most successful collaboration activities are the ones where planning has occurred.

5. **Build in reflection time**

Always spend some time, teacher to teacher, reflecting on how the relationship is going.

Remember, the major focus is the development of the relationship between your two schools.

Take regular health checks on the relationship:

- Are your students enjoying the activities and getting to know each other?
- Are you both, as teachers, finding the professional relationship you're developing both stimulating and beneficial?
- Are there any concerns you might have? If there are, talk about them as soon as you can and negotiate ways around any blockers.

You can also use the *Getting Started Checklist* in the *Getting Started* collaborative activity to help here.

Some things to think about and actions to take

You'll need to keep reviewing and managing these expectations throughout the life of your partnership.

The types of communications you have with each other will inevitably be influenced by access to technology, time zone, language, and school year dates.

Knowing both parties semester breaks plays a big part in supporting an effective a school partnership.

The *10 Steps* below will help you to keep in mind the focus of the BRIDGE Project.

Refer to the *Getting Started* collaborative activity to help with initial activity ideas with your partner school.

The many collaborative activities available through the BRIDGE Project will help you sustain the relationship and focus on fun activities with your students.

What you need to know about the types of resources available

What sorts of collaboration activities are there? What resources are available to help you?

The focus of the BRIDGE Project, as you know, is on establishing and nurturing a positive relationship with your partner school.

There are many resources available to help you do this:

1. The BRIDGE website

<http://www.bridge.edu.au>

Resources, ideas, advice, tools and collaborative activities are available on the website.

You can also use your own Wikispace to communicate and collaborate online with your partner school.

2. The Collaborative Activities

You will find a rich set of collaborative ideas that have been developed to stimulate and support the growing relationship with your partner school.

There are two types of online collaborative activities available to you:

▪ Short-collaborations

These collaborations involve sets of exciting activities that span between 4 – 8 weeks. Each collaborative activity has a particular focus, such as *Getting Started*. Every collaborative activity also has a set of products or outcomes which you can work towards with your partner school.

You will be working on several different collaborative activities over the life of the BRIDGE Project.

It is up to both you and your partner school colleagues to select the collaborative activities that interest and suit you.

It's also useful to remember that these activities can be altered and customised to your own contexts if you would like to do so.

▪ Longer online collaborative activity

The Building BRIDGEs Anthology is the major collaborative activity that extends for the entire life of the BRIDGE Project. The aim of the Anthology is to develop a rich resource of student writing and artwork from both Indonesia and Australia, published in a hard copy book.

Every BRIDGE school is expected to contribute student writing to the Anthology at some stage of your partnership.

Every school will receive a copy of the final anthology which will be published in late 2010.

3. Other resources

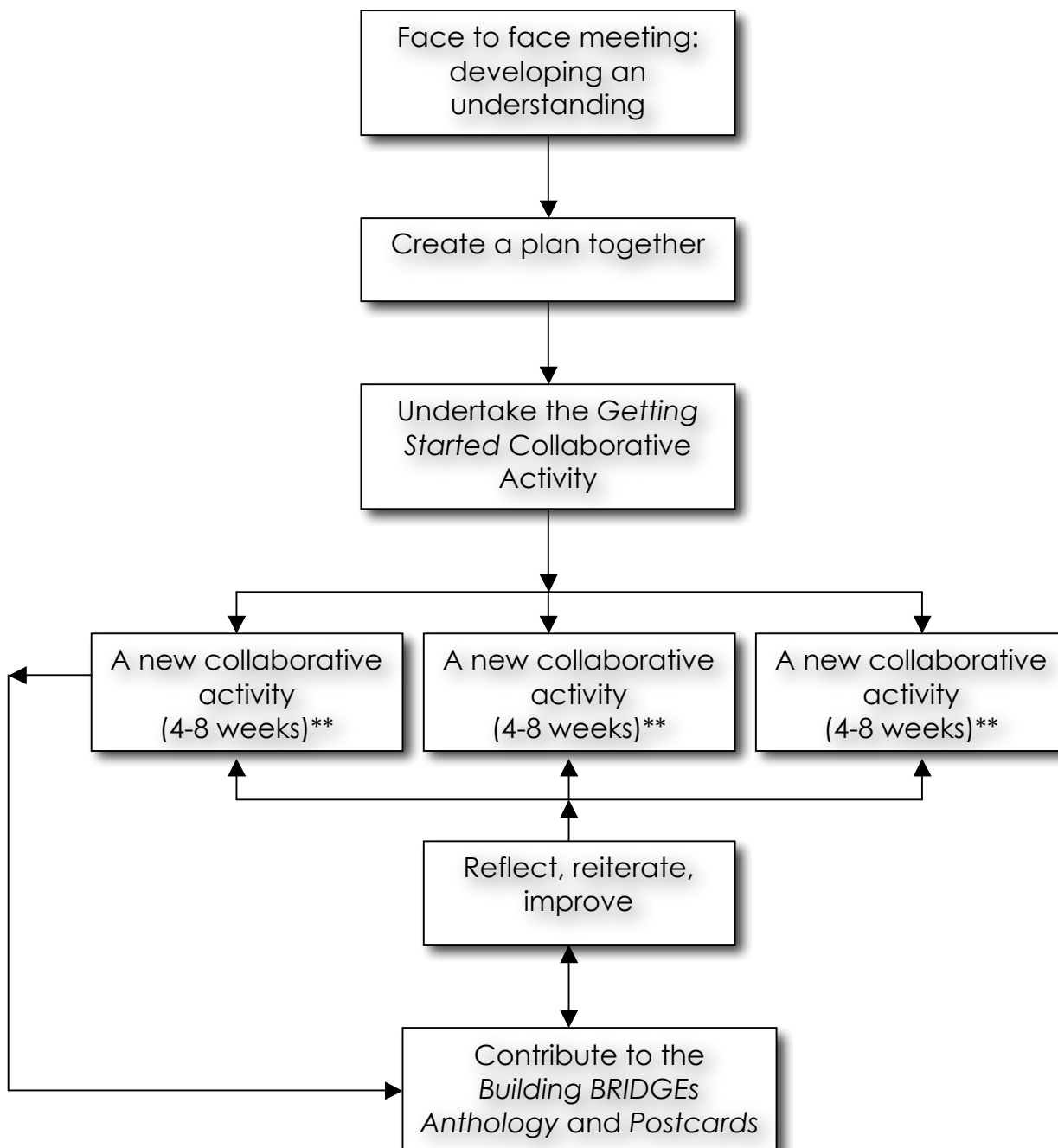
<http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au> – This website provides schools and teachers with a range of services to engage young Australians with Asia through studies of Asia and include curriculum resources, professional learning programs, study tours and conferences in Asia and electronic links.

What you need to do first

What do I need to do first? Then what?

The first step, of course, is meeting and developing a shared understanding with your BRIDGE partner school. Some hints for this process are outlined in previous pages.

The diagram below suggests the process you might follow from the first meeting and on, as your collaborative activities progress. Use the *10 Steps* following and the various collaborative activities on the BRIDGE website to help you.



** the number of collaborative activities you can work on will depend on your timeline / activity schedule

The 10 steps:

Practical hints for working on the BRIDGE Project

1. The focus is on the relationship

The focus is on developing a constructive relationship with your partner school. Always remember this and use this to evaluate all activities you plan and complete together.

2. A team approach helps

Develop a team approach at your school. You will be able to gain interest and buy-in if you inform your school community and parents of what you're doing.

3. Publicise and celebrate your work with the wider school community.

4. Establish a Student Management Team (SMT)

Utilise the skills of your students and explore the possibility of establishing a Student Management Team (SMT). An SMT is a group of students whom you can trust and who will thrive given the opportunity to lead the collaborative activities within your class or school. These students can assume responsibility for carriage of the collaborative activities: they can help to schedule and lead activities as well as share communication with your partner school. You can give them tasks such as collecting and collating content, editing writing, establishing a blog or wiki on the wikispace etc.

Use your SMT to generate new, imaginative ideas for what to do next and to communicate with the SMT in your partner school.

You'll be surprised (and impressed!) with what your students can do if you give them the chance!

5. Make expectations and sanctions clear

Early on, discuss appropriate behaviours and expectations throughout the life of the BRIDGE Project with your students. Develop an Acceptable Use Policy (if you don't already have one in place at school) and talk about Etiquette, Netiquette and cultural sensitivities. (You'll find more useful information on this in the *Getting Started* collaborative activity.)

6. Schedule your involvement

Set aside time each week for your collaborative activity work and have a plan of what you'll be doing. Make sure the plan has been developed in partnership with your BRIDGE partner school. Set timelines and deadlines and stick to them.

7. Reflect and improve

Reflect, reiterate and improve. Education is all about ongoing improvement and flexibility. Build this into your approach to including of the BRIDGE Project in your classroom.

8. Have an artefact of your work

Develop a product (or set of products) as an artefact of your partnership – what will you work towards together and what evidence/products will you have at the end to show for your work?

9. Use a range of technologies

Use a range of technologies and old fashioned communication methods to keep the relationship going. Mix it up and stay interested.

10. Ask for help

Seek help when you're not sure.

Keeping it going: sustaining the relationship

The level of involvement and interaction is completely up to you and will be defined by the class time you are able to allocate to the task and your access (and your partner colleague's access) to technology.

It is up to both of you to effectively facilitate and sustain the relationship.

Long distance relationships can be very rewarding but they are not always easy. Sometimes the expectation of one partner does not coincide with the other.

It is vital that you work hard to keep communication channels between your colleague and yourself open, vigorous and sustained.

Dos and Don'ts

Do

- Be flexible, creative and responsive;
- Negotiate and agree with your partner colleague on the relationship's scope, boundaries, expected commitments and tasks at the outset;
- Set up a Student Management Team (SMT) to share the workload;
- Communicate clearly, openly and regularly with your partner colleague in the early planning stages of your involvement;
- Think outside the box and try to use a variety of media and technologies in your communications if you have access to these;
- Try to theme and plan ahead so that the relationship can be sustained for the life of the BRIDGE Project (and beyond);
- Ensure your students have a clear understanding of netiquette/etiquette, their ethical responsibilities and safety issues when communicating long distance;
- Draw upon all the resources in your classroom, your school, from the BRIDGE website and beyond, to help you in your work.
- Understand the holiday breaks, term dates and time zone of your partner school and how this may impact on your planning and collaborative activities.

Don't

- Expect to do everything yourself;
- Expect it all to happen immediately – small steps is a good way to start and as the relationship develops you will start to see patterns emerging and begin to be able to plan new things.

Websites and Links

Safety and ethical use

Netalert – Cybersafe Schools

http://www.netalert.gov.au/programs/cybersafe_schools.html

NetAlert CyberSafe Schools is an Internet safety program designed to help teachers empower students on safe use of the Internet.

The Core Rules of Netiquette by Virginia Shea:

www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html

The Core Rules of Netiquette are excerpted from the book **Netiquette** by Virginia Shea.

Other online collaborative activities

Global Classroom Project

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/teacher/Global/default.htm>

DEECD's Global Classroom Project has actively linked Victorian schools with schools around the globe in exciting curriculum-based projects for many years. During this time, thousands of schools from Australia and around the world have participated in the range of online collaborative activities the Global Classroom has to offer.

iEARN – the International Education and Resource Network

www.iearn.org

The world's largest non-profit global network that enables teachers and youth to use the Internet and other technologies to collaborate on projects that enhance learning and make a difference in the world.

Oz Projects

<http://ozprojects.edna.edu.au>

This Australian site celebrates online curriculum projects and the world of unique learning opportunities.