

Teachers: Meet Your Virtual Exchange Partner

Virtual exchange is an opportunity to bring a **global lens** to your classroom and instructional practice; through the experience, students develop the skills and mindsets needed for global citizenship. As you support your students on this journey, it is important to establish good communication between yourself and your partner teacher abroad. Working effectively with your partner teacher is critical to developing a project that will be fruitful for you and your students; and it is a good way to model the kind of relationship-building that they will be doing themselves.

Timeline: Ideally, a few weeks before the launch of STEAMuseum project.

Goal: To establish good communication with your partner teacher in support of the project.

In general, here are 7 keys to good communication. These have been drawn from the [How to Create a Virtual Exchange](#) free teacher professional development course by Qatar Foundation International.

The keys to good communication:

- 🔑 Initiate Communication*
- 🔑 Listen deeply to each other*
- 🔑 Get to know one another; share values*
- 🔑 Express curiosity about each other's culture*
- 🔑 Establish positive relationships that will endure*
- 🔑 Model good collaboration for your students*
- 🔑 Schedule frequent check-ins*

Part 1: Watch a Short Video About Teacher Communication in Virtual Exchange

This [short 3 minute video](#), produced by Qatar Foundation International, provides advice from virtual exchange teachers on communicating with partners abroad.

Part 2: Initiating Communication

Initiate communication via email. Your introductory conversations should focus on **three** areas: personal connection, your classroom, and your goals for virtual exchange. Sample prompts are provided below.

- Personal Connection
 - Introduce yourself by telling a little about who you are (e.g., your background, where you grew up, how long you have been teaching, hobbies, family, etc.)
 - Ask a question about your partner's culture and/or country.
 - What language do you prefer to communicate in? Would you like to continue to communicate over email? Google Hangout? Etc.
 - Exchange phone numbers and establish a connection via What's App. This is useful for quick exchanges about work-in-progress while in the classroom.
- Your Classroom
 - Share a little about your school and classroom.
 - How many students will be in the program? What is their language proficiency?
 - Why did you choose this particular class?
- Your Goals for Virtual Exchange
 - Why are you personally interested in incorporating virtual exchange?
 - What do you hope your students will learn from this experience in **content** (e.g. language skills, understanding particular topics)?
 - What do you hope your students will learn from this experience in **21st century skills** (e.g. teamwork, empathy, communication)?

Part 3: Learning the Video Production Process

Throughout the project, students will communicate with one another through the production of short 1-minute videos. Given the time difference between Chicago and Casablanca, short videos provide a quick way for youth to use digital media and technology as a vehicle for engaging with one another.

Please use the [STEAMuseum Video Rubric](#) to create a video to share with your partner teacher.

Prompt: What is your favorite food? Create a 60 second video that describes your favorite food and why you enjoy it. Is there a special significance of this food to you (e.g. holidays, special memories, etc.)?

Resources:

[How to Create Virtual Exchange](#): A free professional development course from Qatar Foundation International (QFI).

[Implementing Student-Produced Video Projects in Language Courses](#): Article on best practices and tips for language students to create video projects that enhance their learning in the classroom.