A generation of American children will remember a series of books designed to introduce important events of history: We Were There at the Boston Tea Party, We Were There with Caesar’s Legions, We Were There with Florence Nightingale in the Crimea. Such books let us imagine that we could move through time, and experience firsthand what was otherwise beyond our reach. Technology still hasn’t cracked time, but space is another matter.

With an ever increasing array of “collaborative technologies,” we can leap thousands of miles and not only see what is worlds away, but feel and share the experience. We are there when children in Bloomington and in Sweden sing folk songs together. Student teachers getting ready to undertake their assignments abroad are there in their future classrooms; they magically enter those distant classrooms and get their first experience of the world they will soon enter by means of a laptop and a piece of software called Skype™.

The newest tools that let you see, hear, and share activities that are a world away are becoming less intrusive and more portable. While such conversations may be virtual, they are also palpable and lend new worlds of possibility to the course that undertakes international study and communication.

Indiana University’s commitment to technological excellence has meant that the tools of collaborative technology have been available for some time on IU campuses. As the following examples show, faculty members are finding ever more creative ways to use them.

BRINGING INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS TO THE LECTURE HALL
Recently, Boulous Sarru conducted a live video presentation from the ancient town of Zouk Mosbeh. “The bloody warfare between the Palestinians and the Israelis, erupting less than 200 miles away from this place, seems, in one context, too close to home, and, in another, a gruesome tale of distant lands,” said Sarru. “Both approximations are true of the entire Middle East, the arena of war and the haven of peace since time in memoriam. And Lebanon is at the heart and the periphery of war and peace.”

Afterwards, he took questions from his IUPUI audience, who attended the lecture at the Global Crossroads. A laboratory in the Education and Social Work Building, Global Crossroads is a resource for the entire campus in providing international links in real time for lectures and special course meetings.

BRINGING STUDENTS TOGETHER
Hilary Kahn co-taught Global Dialogues, a 3 credit, 300-level anthropology course, with Dr. Olga Leontovich at Volgograd State Pedagogical University in Russia. The course brought together 14 IUPUI Liberal Arts students with 21 Volgograd State students in American Studies using communication technology to link in real-time to Volgograd. In addition to interactive discussions of readings, the course included group projects that students completed together over e-mail outside of class. The students examined global issues and critically considered international interaction and intercultural communication. The course met twice weekly, once per week in English with Dr. Leontovich’s class, and once alone for discussion, further lectures, and analysis.

“My students developed really close relationships with their Russian counterparts,” said Kahn. “Before this, the only opportunity that would approach this deeper level of learning was study abroad. Now we are truly bringing the world into the classroom and sending the classroom into the world.”

BRINGING INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS TO THE STUDENTS
For her new master’s-level course entitled NGO Management in Comparative Perspective, Ann Marie Thomson felt it was important to include the participation of experts and practitioners in the field. After consulting with Deb Hutton for guidance with the required equipment, she recruited authors of the course textbooks to participate in the course via videoconferencing technology.

“Each expert met with us for an entire class,” said Thomson. “The access to expert knowledge and the opportunity to interact with the authors added significantly to the content of the course by clarifying the ideas in the readings and challenging the students, and me, to go beyond ordinary discourse. Without exception, the students agreed that having outside speakers present was a highlight of the course,” she added.

Experts who met with the class of 25 students included David
Lewis, professor of social policy at the London School of Economics; Michael Edwards, director of the Governance and Civil Society Program at the Ford Foundation; and Ian Smillie, an international development consultant and expert on Asian NGOs.

**BRINGING MUSICIANS TOGETHER**
IU’s Jacobs School of Music recently formalized an affiliation with the School of Communications and Arts at the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil. The agreement provides for short-term residencies by faculty and graduate students, as well as collaborative research, recording, publications, and professional conference development. Mary Goetze arranged an “E-Ceremony” to celebrate the launch of the new partnership. During the ceremony, colleagues and students from each institution met and exchanged musical performances via interactive video.

IUPUI hosted the Interactive Video for International Education last fall. Participants explored the potential of the medium to globalize students’ perspectives of their disciplines. One of the enthusiastic participants was Dr. Joanna Medawar Nachef, who directs choral activities for El Camino College in Beirut, Lebanon.

**BRINGING CLASSROOMS TO TEACHERS**
In spring 2007, a group of the outgoing cultural immersions student teachers were sent to their international teaching assignments with specially equipped laptops and a mission, thanks to a grant from the Longview Foundation. The teachers were to use the minimalist hardware and Skype™ software to connect their classrooms abroad with IU classes at home. The intent was to give students in E300 Elementary Education for a Pluralistic Society and M300 Teaching in a Pluralistic Society the chance to sit in their Bloomington classroom and observe what was happening in classrooms overseas, classrooms very like ones in which the students planned to teach.

Things didn’t work quite as expected. The students of one young teacher assigned to an elementary school in Grantown-on-Spey, Scotland, were home from school long before the time the U.S. classes were meeting, and the Scottish school’s Internet connection was not quite powerful enough for seamless transmission. The teacher did find a stronger connection at her residence, and from there, in sessions some weeks apart, fielded questions from the classes back home. Observers at this end not only shared the experience of settling down in a new educational world, they watched the young teacher grow more confident in the process.

A young teacher in Avila, Spain, had some of the same problems as her counterpart in Scotland, and ended up connecting from her dorm room to the high school teacher who supervised her student teaching. That teacher was so impressed with the opportunity that she set up her own links with other teachers who had gone abroad.

In keeping with the original objective, ways to deal with time differences and Internet links are being explored to make the classroom-to-classroom connection happen. All those involved in the linkages so far are excited. The young teachers

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appreciate the chance to share their experiences with an interested audience; that audience sees the chance to learn and prepare for their own international assignments. The experiment has proved that the technology now available is easy enough to use and the necessary equipment sufficiently unobtrusive that linkages which just a few years ago would have been considered a big deal and a major event can happen almost routinely. Teachers are seeking—and finding—ways to use the ability to talk with colleagues and see the action at a distance as a basic teaching tool.

BRINGING STUDENTS TO THE COLLEGE FAIR
The IU Bloomington Office of Admissions reaches out to potential international students through interactive video “college fairs” and real-time online Web chats.

Destination Indiana, a consortium of Indiana universities including IU, coordinates Live Video College Fairs to enable member institutions to connect with students around the world. Coordinated with the Education USA center in each country, the most recent fair used audio and video conferencing to promote schools to students in five countries in the Middle East, including Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Libya, and Kuwait. Each university has 10 to 15 minutes to present followed by 25 to 30 minutes for questions and answers.

IU Admissions staff and enrolled students also participate in Internet chat sessions with admitted and prospective students overseas to encourage them to make the final decision to study at IU. In the most recent chat session, 170 of 2,000 students attended an online chat session during which 5 IU staff members and 4 domestic and international students were on hand to answer real-time “chat room” questions.

Joanna Medawar Nachef, director of choral activities at El Camino College in Beirut, Lebanon, leads the discussion for a videoconference that was part of the IUPUI training grant, Interactive Video for International Education. The conference also included representatives from East Carolina University and the University of Nebraska—Lincoln.

Boulous Sarrou, Professor of English and American Studies, and Dean, Faculty of Humanities, Notre Dame University, Lebanon

Hilary Kahn, Associate Director for the Center for the Study of Global Change, former Professor of Anthropology and International Affairs at IUPUI

Ann Marie Thomson, Adjunct Assistant Professor, School of Public and Environmental Affairs, IU Bloomington

Deborah Hutton, Director of Outreach at the Center for the Study of Global Change

Center for Social Studies and International Education
http://www.indiana.edu/~ssdc

East Asian Studies Center
http://www.indiana.edu/~easc

Center for the Study of Global Change
http://www.indiana.edu/~global

Longview Foundation
http://www.longviewfdn.org

Cultural Immersions Project Overseas Projects