

Knowledge and Experience With Developing Partnerships

I have been involved with collaborations and developing partnerships for many years; in fact, I would not have been able to accomplish any of my goals throughout my educational career without them. I believe that such collaborations need to be built upon and a shared vision and a shared sense of values and beliefs. I believe that we should establish collaborations and partnerships that:

- Are consistent with the ethics and core values of all partners
- Are based on the clearly defined expectations of all partners
- Are based on shared or aligned objectives that support the goals of the partner organizations
- Allocate resources to complement and not replace other programs
- Measure and evaluate partnership performance to make informed decisions that ensure continuous improvement
- Enhance the quality and relevance of our programs and projects
- Mutually benefit all partners
- Treat fairly and equitably all those served by the partnership
- Provide opportunities for all partners to meet their shared social responsibilities
- Acknowledge and celebrate each partner's contributions through appropriate forms of recognition
- That will allow them to share in the success of the organization
- Are developed and structured in consultation with all partners
- Recognize and respect each partner's expertise
- Identify clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all partners

In 1994 I had the honour of introducing the Internet to Rankin Inlet elders at a local education council meeting. The elders watched an online tour of the Louvre Museum that my students and I presented to them. The elders, many of whom had been born on the land in skin tents and igloos, had never seen a computer or the Internet before, yet they immediately understood the importance of the new technology to the next generation and approved my push for Internet access for Leo Ussak Elementary School and our community at a time when phone bills were soaring and school budgets were being cut back.

With an enormous amount of hard work, along with a start-up grant from Industry Canada and the Northwest Territories Department of Information Networks, our small community, I worked with community partners to raise over \$100,000 to equip a Community Access Centre that is called "Igalaaq" which means window in Inuktitut. Igalaaq is located in the computer lab of the elementary school and was the first Community Access Centre in the Canadian Arctic. With over 30 volunteers being part of the Access Centre team, Igalaaq is now used by anyone in the community on evenings or weekends regardless of technical experience or financial resources. During our first year of operation alone, Igalaaq had more than 3,000 visits, all without theft, vandalism or disturbance to the computer lab or the school facility. Today, more than 1000 people in Rankin Inlet have established e-mail accounts through Igalaaq. This represents about 50% of Rankin Inlet's entire population.

Students and the broader community now have access to state of the art information technology tools. People are using ICTs to record and share information about Inuit culture and modern Arctic life with the rest of the world. The community receives feedback from the world that their culture is something to be valued and cherished. Student attendance has improved. Student interest in learning has increased. Student attendance has improved. All students from grades three to grade six have their own e-mail accounts. Students from grades three to six are producing their own web pages. Students are volunteering and some have been hired to work at Igalaaq for wages. Every student from Kindergarten to grade six has regular classes in Information Technology. Students are given an introduction to object-oriented programming with MicroWorlds LOGO. All students are introduced to simple robotics with LEGO/DACTA Control Lab system hardware and software. Students are creating multimedia projects with Hyperstudio. All students have access to the Internet in every classroom throughout the school. As a result of the success of this project, I have been asked to present this story at major conferences across Canada and around the world.

Together we created the very first Web site of any school in the Canadian Arctic; indeed, the school's Web site was showcased to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and First Ladies Aline Chrétien and Hillary Clinton. The Iglaaq Access Centre and the Leo Ussak Elementary School have been recognized by national and international organizations, from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the Discovery Channel to NetGuide, Yahoo Internet Life and National Geographic magazines. IN 1997 our community collaborations were formally recognized with the Royal Bank National Partners in Education Award presented by the Conference Board of Canada.

What began as a school-community initiative has now blossomed into a program that has received numerous awards and international attention from the media and educators from around the world. In a remote Inuit community, where many of its elder citizens were born in igloos and skin tents, the latest technology is now accessible to all.

While at Banded Peak School in Bragg Creek, Alberta in 1998, I collaborated with the local Bethany Care and Big Hill senior's lodges, Cochrane Sight and Sound, Canada's National International Year of Older Persons Committee, Canada's SchoolNet, and Microsoft Canada to conceive of and pilot the Generations CanConnect project.

In April of 2000, I created the project, www.bullying.org. www.bullying.org is a multiple award-winning Web site that was created to help people with the issues of bullying within a safe, positive international community. www.bullying.org is a supportive community where people can learn that they are NOT alone in being bullied and teased, that being bullied and teased is NOT their fault and that they CAN do something positive about it. People can contribute their personal stories, poems, images, oral stories (audio files), music and even animations and movies. www.bullying.org also has a "Helpful Resources" section that features a huge listing of articles, books, legislation and policies, research and multimedia resources.. www.bullying.org also has the world's first and largest online-moderated support groups for adults and youth. The Web site receives over 750,000 visitors and contributors from around the world each month and is listed as the number one "bullying" referenced Web site in the world. www.bullying.org has been chosen for the ChildNet International Award which goes to project that make the Internet a better place for youth, as well as being a finalist in the Stockholm Challenge Award which has been called the Nobel Prize of the IT (Information Technology) world. Media across Canada and around the world have featured the www.bullying.org project.

This project has been successful due to a collaboration with many partners such as Canada's Family Channel, BBI Internet, Interact Enterprises Inc., the Calgary Stampeders, the Toronto Argonauts, Sony Music Canada, EMI Music Publishing, Much Music, the NorthWest regional Education Laboratory, the Don't Laugh at Me Foundation, Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul and Mary, Juno award-winning Singer/Songwriter Susan Aglukark, the RCMP, CBC Television's The National, the CTV National News, The Cable and Wireless ChildNet program, the Alberta Community Crime Prevention Association, the Calgary Action Committee Against Violence, Dr. Wendy Craig, Dr, Debra Peplar, iEARN –the International Education and Resource Network, singer-songwriter Karen Taylor-Good, singer-songwriter Ray Griff, singer-songwriter Bob Blue, singer-songwriter Janis Ian, singer Riley Inge, singer-songwriter Terry Tufts, the Canadian Hockey Association, the Canadian Football League, the Concerned Children's Advertisers, filmmaker Thomas Brown, and many others.

I have also been collaborating with the Faculty of Education at the University of Calgary to create the iEARN-Canada Centre for Global Learning.

Since 2000 I have been collaborating with 60 NIS member-schools across Canada in support of their innovative NIS projects. This has included meetings, contacts and supporting communication with politicians, local school Board officials, local, regional and national media, NGOs, and corporate interests. Some of these contacts have included LEGO Canada and LEGO USA, Kurzweil Software, Logo Computer Systems Inc. (LCSI), Steinberg Software and ezedia.