

Global Community Management Guide

The screenshot displays the epals website interface. At the top left is the logo "epals BY CRICKET MEDIA". To its right are navigation links: "FIND CONNECTIONS", "EXPLORE EXPERIENCES", "SIGN UP", and "LOG IN". The main banner features a world map composed of numerous small user avatars. Below the map, the text reads "WELCOME to the new Global Community". On the right side, a sidebar contains the text "CONNECT, COMMUNICATE AND COLLABORATE with educators around the world" and three buttons: "BETA START COLLABORATING", "EXPLORE CHALLENGES", and "MEET OUR AMBASSADORS". A "HIDE" button with a close icon is located at the bottom right of the sidebar.



by Cricket Media

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WELCOME TO THE ePALS GLOBAL COMMUNITY!

Get ready to **CONNECT, COMMUNICATE** and **COLLABORATE** with educators and students from around the world! The ePals Global Community is an online collaborative space that allows students to practice a wide range of curriculum standards and 21st Century Skills by choosing and working through a wealth of engaging, informative project “Experiences.”

1. JOINING THE COMMUNITY

1.1 SIGN-UP OR LOG IN

Access the ePals Global Community using this web address: <http://www.epals.com>

- **To create an account**, select the Sign-Up Button in the top right of the Global Community homepage banner. On the Sign-Up page, enter your email, desired user name and password, and click “**Sign Up.**”
- **To log into an existing account**, select the **Log In** button in the top-right of the Global Community homepage banner. On the Log-In Screen, enter your user name and password and click “**Log In.**”

1.2 COMPLETE YOUR PROFILE

When you sign up for the Global Community, a profile is created for you. Update your profile to introduce yourself and your classroom to other Global Community teachers. Your profile tile –a picture or avatar that contains your first name and last initial--will appear in Find Connections search results, and you can connect with other users.

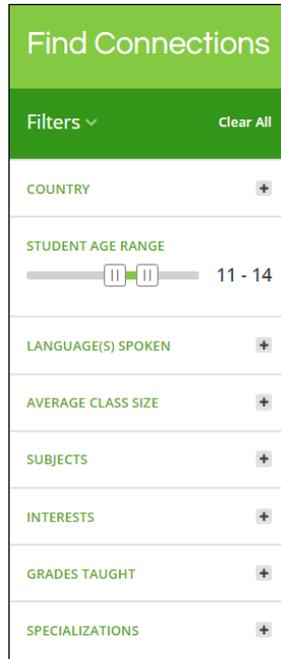
1. Select your avatar image  in the top-right of the Global Community homepage banner. On the Profile Screen, click on **Edit Profile** and enter information for each required * field.
2. At the bottom of the Profile Screen, click on the box next to **INCLUDE ME IN SEARCH RESULTS**. Your profile will then appear in any Find Connections search results.
3. Click **Save and Submit** when you are ready to submit your profile for approval. You will receive a notification in your email when your profile is approved.

1.3 MAKE CONNECTIONS

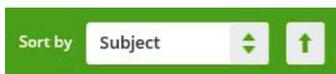
Once your profile is approved, your profile tile will appear in Find Connections search results, and you can connect with other Global Community teachers.

1. To get to the Find Connections page, click on **FIND CONNECTIONS** in the top-right of the Global Community homepage banner.

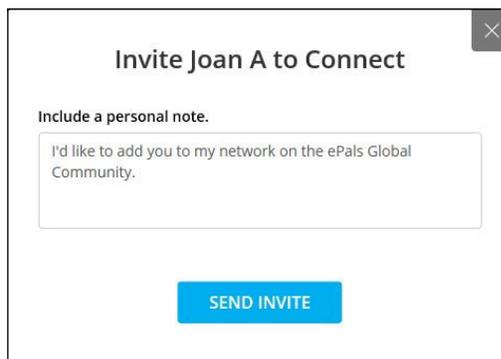
- On the **FIND CONNECTIONS** screen, set the search filters that will enable you to find teachers you are most interested in meeting and collaborating with. A results list on the right side of the screen will automatically update as you change each setting.



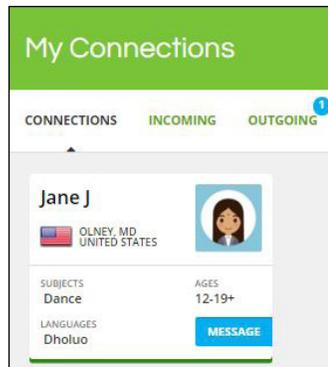
- You can also search profiles using the keyword search bar . Simply enter they appropriate key words (e.g. country or grade,) and click on the search icon .
- Once your results appear, you can sort them to make review easier. Select the sorting feature you would like to use by choosing an option in the dropdown menu.



- To connect with a teacher, click on the **CONNECT** button on their profile tile. Enter a personalized invitation in the message box, and click **SEND INVITE**.



6. When a teacher accepts your invitation, you are officially connected. Your respective profiles will now appear in the **MY CONNECTIONS** area. You can then start communicating directly with them using the Messaging tools.



1.4 SEND AND RECEIVE MESSAGES

Once your invitation has been accepted, start communicating!

To send a message via My Connections:

- Click on your avatar image  in the top-right corner of the Global Community homepage banner.
- Click on **CONNECTIONS** in the green My Profile banner and then click on CONNECTIONS in the white banner.
- Click on the  button located on the profile tile of the connection you wish to message.

To send a message via My Messages:

- Click on your avatar image  in the top-right corner of the Global Community homepage banner.
- Click on **MESSAGES** in the green My Profile banner.
- Click on the  icon in the top-left corner of **MY CONNECTIONS**.

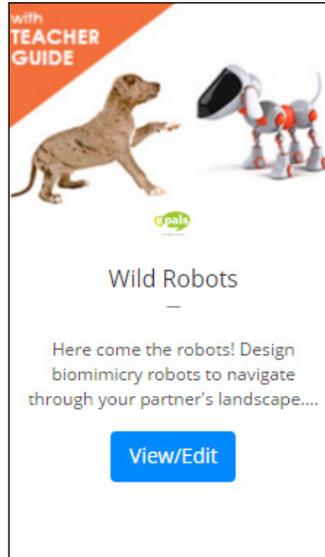
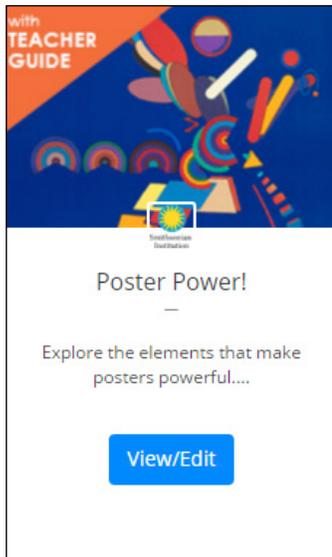
To receive a message:

- Click on your avatar image  in the top-right corner of the Global Community homepage banner.
- Click on **MESSAGES** in the green My Profile banner.
- Click on **MESSAGES** on the left side of the screen to review read and unread messages.

2. EXPLORING THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY “EXPERIENCES”

2.1 WHAT IS A GLOBAL COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE?

Experiences are engaging, informative collaborative exchanges between two or more “partner classrooms” in different cities or countries. Experiences cover a wide range of topics, from cultural traditions and language practice to important global issues such as poverty.



2.2 TYPES OF EXPERIENCES

The Global Community offers three types of Experiences:

- **Cultural Exchange:** Students learn about aspects of each other’s culture.
- **Language Practice:** Students practice a second language in authentic contexts.
- **Subject-based:** Students learn core curriculum content (Science, Math, Reading, Writing, Social Studies, Language Learning, English Language Arts, Art, Technology, Physical Education & Health, Music, Theatre & Speech, Business, Dance, History, and Career Skills) through fascinating topics such as Robot Design, Culinary Traditions, and Global Poverty.

You will also be able to choose from two levels of experiences:

- **“Light” Experiences**—simpler Experiences that can be completed in a relatively short amount of time
- **Extended Experiences:** Experiences that require a longer time frame and include more challenging content. These Experiences are accompanied by a comprehensive Teacher Guide.

2.3 PARTS OF AN EXPERIENCE

Experiences are made up of several components, which may include any of the following:

- **Introduction:** Classes introduce themselves to their ePals by posting a video or text message.
- **First Thoughts:** Students are introduced to the topic and goals of the Experience and begin exploring key concepts.
- **Discussions and Activities:** Students are given opportunities to explore the Experience topic through a wide range of discussions and activities. Activities are individual Discussion posts that are displayed on the general Discussion Board. The following activities, for example, are part of the Experience “Wild Robots.”



- **Posts and Responses:** Several times during each Experience, students post ideas or projects they have been working on as part of the Experience. They also reply to posts submitted by their partner class to offer comments or ask further questions.

Note: Within an Experience, teachers and students click on [ADD COMMENT](#) within each Discussion Post/Activity to post. They click on [REPLY](#) to respond to comments.

The following types of attachments may be added to any **COMMENT** or **REPLY**:

- o **Text:** Use the Formatting Bar within the Messaging Tool to format text.
- o **Video:** Convert your video file to mp4 format before uploading.
- o **Power Point:** Convert your PPT file to mp4 format before uploading.
- o **Images:** Upload any image file type.

To upload a file, drag it into the Message box or click on [select files from your computer](#) to choose a file.

- **Culminating Project:** Students may complete a final project to demonstrate their mastery of the topic.
- **Final Thoughts:** At the end of each Experience, students reflect on what they learned through their Experience and post these reflections for their partner class to read and respond to.

2.4 INSTRUCTIONAL BENEFITS

Experiences cover a wide-range of instructional objectives.

- **Standards:** Experiences are a creative way to teach and provide practice for important curriculum goals.
- **Authentic Communication:** Experiences provide a platform for authentic learning, where students apply standards in meaningful, real-life contexts.
- **21st Century Skills:** Students expand their digital literacy and global citizenship by developing:
 - o Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
 - o Collaboration and Leadership
 - o Initiative and Entrepreneurialism
 - o Effective Oral and Written Communication
 - o Curiosity and Imagination

3. SETTING UP AN EXPERIENCE

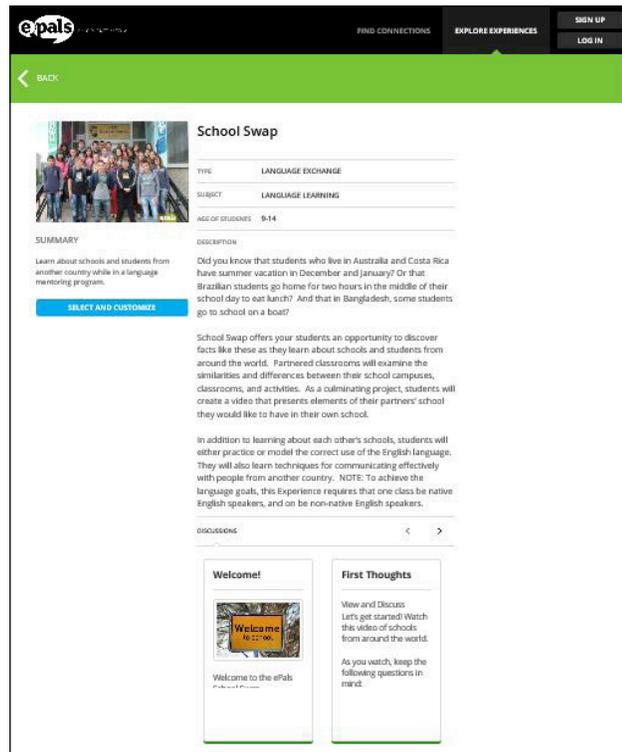
3.1 PREVIEWING AND CHOOSING AN EXPERIENCE

To find an Experience:

1. Click on **EXPLORE EXPERIENCES** on the Global Community homepage.



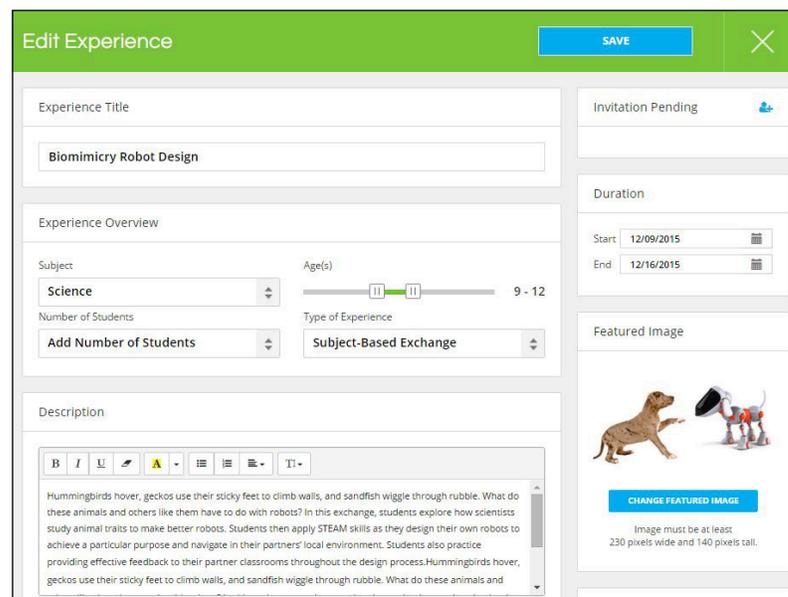
- Click on the tile of the Experience you are interested in to see a **PREVIEW**.



3.2 CUSTOMIZING YOUR EXPERIENCE

When you find an Experience you like, you're ready to start customizing it for your classroom!

- Click on the **SELECT AND CUSTOMIZE** button in the Experience Preview to begin customizing the Experience. This will take you to the **EDIT EXPERIENCE** screen.

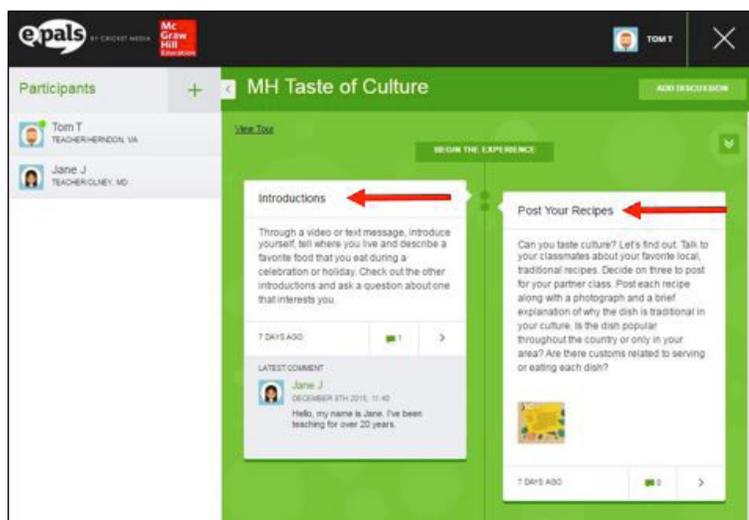


2. On the **EDIT EXPERIENCE** screen, you can customize any part of your Experience, including the title, description, excerpt, featured image, duration, discussion posts, project resources, and security settings. (See Sections 4.1 and 7.1 for more detail) :
3. Save your Experience and invite partner teachers.
 - When you have finished customizing your Experience, click on the **NEXT** button to save your Experience and navigate to the **CREATE EXPERIENCE** screen. On this screen, you will have the option to invite partner teachers to participate in as well as add students to your Experience. (For more information, see Sections 4.1 and 4.2)

3.3 USING THE TOOLS

Familiarize yourself with the following tools, which you can use to facilitate your Experience.

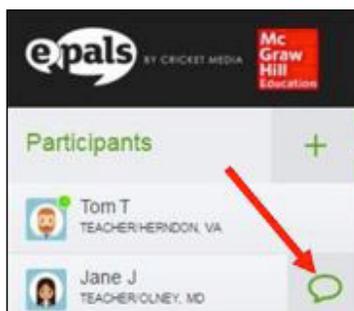
- **Discussion Board:** The Discussion Board screen contains all of the discussions and activities for the project. They appear in the order in which you and your students would complete them. Click on any Discussion Post/Activity title on the Discussion Board to view all comments and replies within a particular Discussion thread.



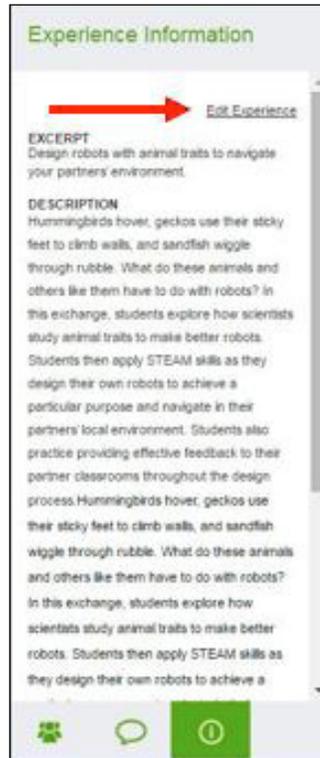
- **Participant Drawer:** The Participant Drawer appears at the lower left-hand corner of the Screen. After you launch an Experience, click on the  icon to see who is participating.



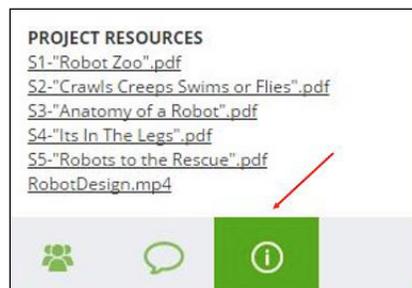
- **Private Messaging:** To see messages that have been sent to you by another teacher or one of your students, click on the **CHAT DRAWER**  icon next to the **PARTICIPANT DRAWER** icon. You may also view private messages by navigating to the **PARTICIPANT DRAWER** and clicking on the chat icon that appears next to the name of another teacher or any of your students.



- **Information Drawer:** Click on the **EXPERIENCE INFORMATION DRAWER**  icon to see the Experience Description, Project Resources and more. To change the details of your Experience, click on the **EDIT EXPERIENCE** to see link at the top of the **EXPERIENCE INFORMATION DRAWER**.



- **Project Resources:** To view the **PROJECT RESOURCES** for your Experience, scroll to the bottom of the **EXPERIENCE INFORMATION DRAWER** and click on each resource to view and download it.



Project resources vary by Experience, but may include the following:

- o **Handouts:** Some Experiences include Handouts as instructional resources for students to use. Handouts will also be made available to students where needed as embedded attachments within Discussion Posts/Activities.

- o **Teacher Guide:** Extended Experiences include comprehensive Teacher Guides which provide step-by-step guidance and instructional strategies for progressing through the Experience.

TEACHER'S GUIDE
Wild Robots
ePals by Cricket Media

Experience Overview

TITLE: Wild Robots

AGE RANGE: Ages 9-12

SUBJECTS: STEM: Science, Technology, English, Art, and Math

EXCHANGE TYPE: Subject Based, Cultural

DESCRIPTION: Hummingbirds hover, geckos use their sticky feet to climb walls, and zanyfish wiggle through rubble. What do these animals and others like them have to do with robots? In this exchange, students explore how scientists study animal traits to make better robots. Students then apply STEM skills as they design their own robots to achieve a particular purpose and navigate in their partners' local environment. Students also practice providing effective feedback to their partner classrooms throughout the design process.

OBJECTIVES: Students will...

- identify and describe physical features of two environments.
- synthesize information from multiple sources.
- select animal features that assist with mobility in selected terrain.
- apply biomimicry concepts in a robot design.
- create diagrams in planning robot models.
- ask questions and offer constructive feedback to extend learning and conversation.
- learn and develop strategies for effective communication with a global audience.

Instructional Outline and Pacing Guide

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION: 1 session

TIME/THOUGHTS: Allow one full session for students to complete each of the following activities, plus additional time as needed for them to respond to the work of their partner classes.

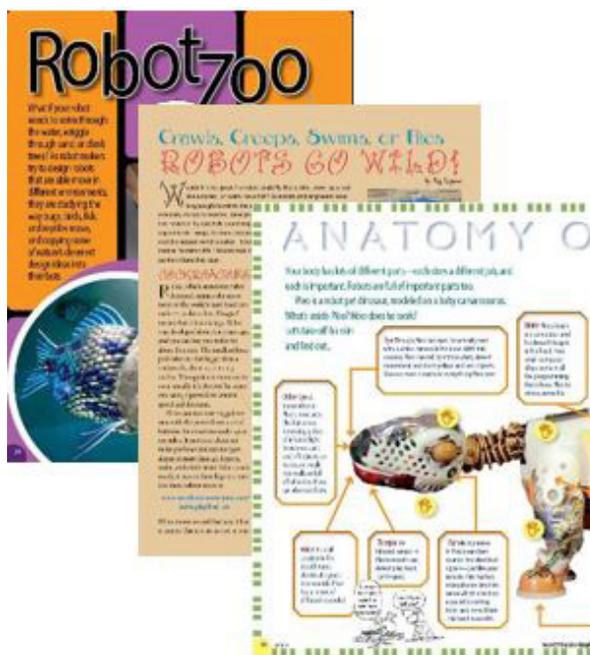
ACTIVITY 1: Pick a Place

ACTIVITY 2: Search for Ideas

ACTIVITY 3: Design It!

ePals by Cricket Media: WILD ROBOTS

- o **Selections from Cricket Media Magazines:** Some Experiences contain articles or other selections from Cricket Media Magazines. Students interact with this media to support learning goals.



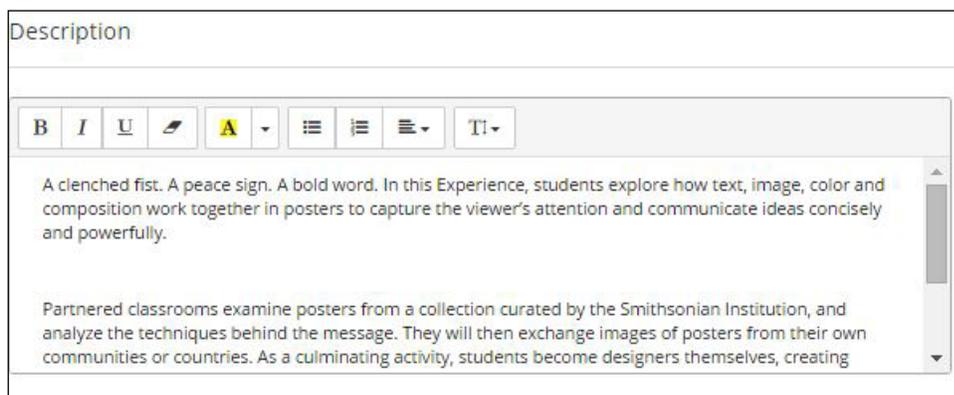
- o **Videos:** Some Experiences may include an introductory video that helps students engage with the topic.

SETTING UP AN EXPERIENCE

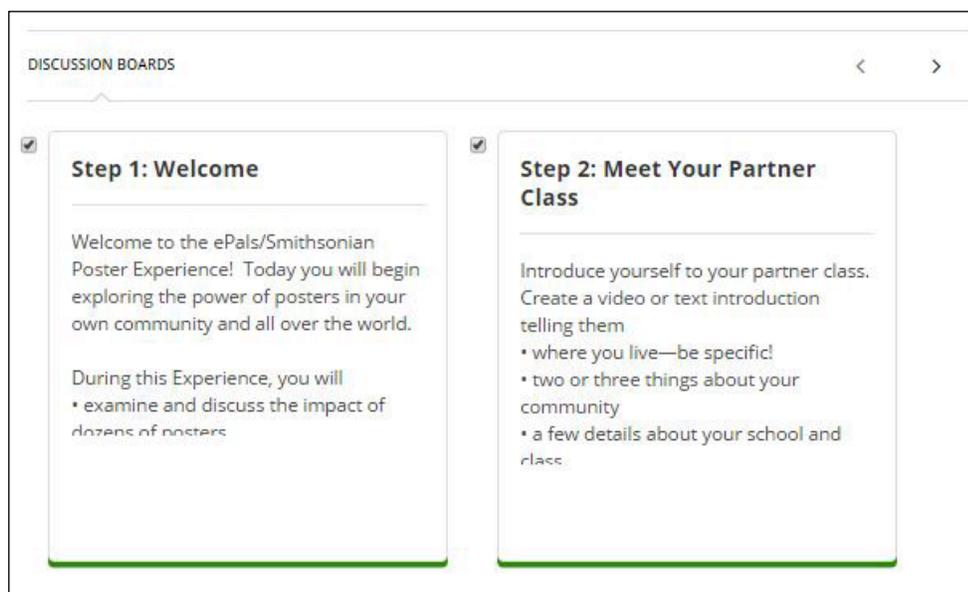
4.1 HOST TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

Sometimes you will be invited to join an Experience by another teacher from the Global Community. At other times, you will be the host and invite others to join your own customized Experience. As a host, you will have the following responsibilities:

- **Customize Experience Description:** Accept or modify the learning goal, objectives, and main activities outlined in the **EXPERIENCE DESCRIPTION**.

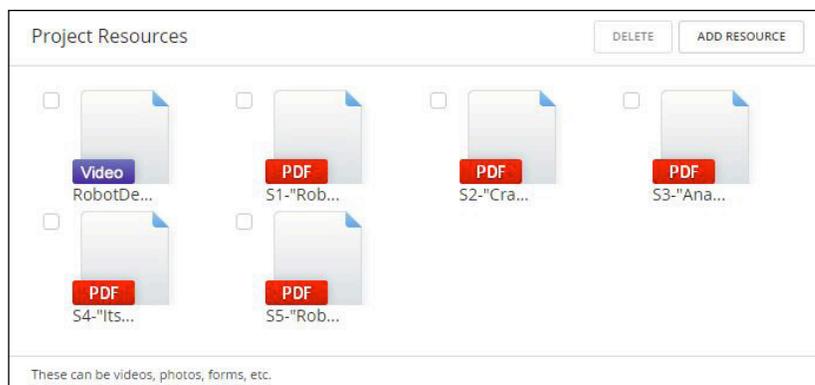


- **Select Discussion Posts/Activities:** Select which pre-populated Discussion Posts/Activities are visible to participating teachers and students by clicking on the check box next to each one.



NOTE: To customize the content of Discussion Posts, the Experience must first be activated. An Experience becomes active once another teacher accepts your invitation. (For more information, see Section 4.1, Customize Discussion Posts)

- **Manage Project Resources:** Select which pre-populated project resources are available to download for participating teachers by clicking on the checkbox next to each one, and upload any additional resources as necessary by clicking on the **ADD RESOURCE** button.



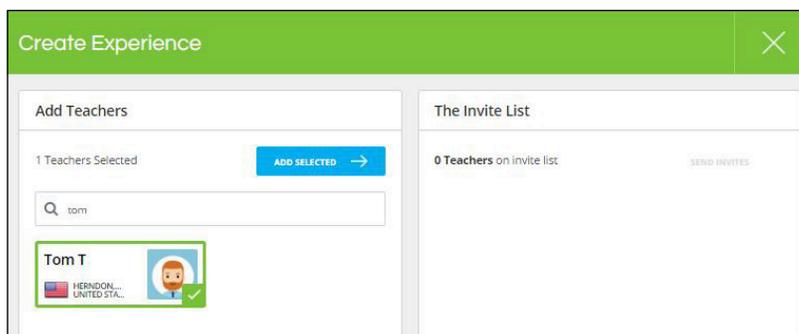
NOTE: You may upload any Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Adobe PDF, or image file. You may also upload any video or Microsoft PowerPoint presentation that has first been converted to an “.mp4” file.

- **Choose a Duration:** Use the Calendar Tool to set a Start and End date for the Experience.

- **Choose a Moderation Setting:** Decide whether or not teacher participants moderate student comments and replies before they post to an individual Discussion Post/Activity thread. Click the checkbox next to “Moderate Student Comments” to prevent student comments and replies from automatically posting to the Discussion Board. Turning on moderation allows teachers review student posts and decide whether the message needs editing before posting or can be approved as-is.

- **Edit Experience Information:** Once you have customized your Experience, edit the **TITLE**, **FEATURE IMAGE**, and **EXCERPT** to match your new version.
 - o **Title:** Edit the title by deleting or adding text as necessary.
 - o **Featured Image:** Change the feature image other educators see on your Experience tile by clicking on the **CHANGE FEATURED IMAGE** button. Crop the image as necessary.
 - o **Excerpt:** Edit the short description other educators see on your Experience Tile by deleting or adding text as necessary.

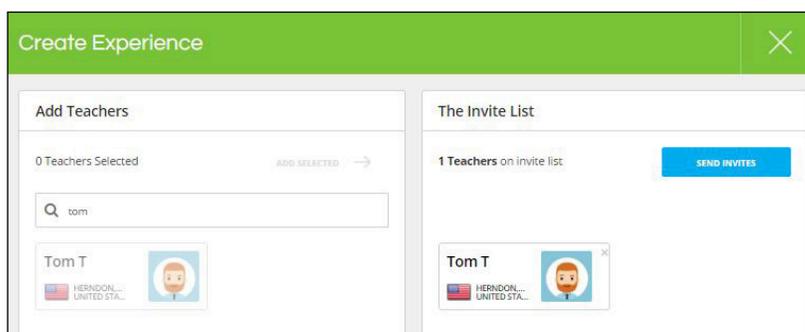
- **Invite Partner Teachers:** Invite other teachers to participate in your customized Experience.
 1. After you have customized all necessary fields on the **EDIT EXPERIENCE** screen, click on the **NEXT** button to save your Experience and navigate to the **CREATE EXPERIENCE** screen.
 2. On the **CREATE EXPERIENCE** screen, click in the Search box and type the first name of the connection you wish to invite to your Experience.



Note: As you type, a profile tile for all connections with those letters in their first name will appear.

Example: Typing “Ro” will cause a profile tile to appear for people with the name Rob, Robert, Roger, etc.

3. Once you see the profile tile of the connection you want to invite appear below the Search box, click on it to highlight/select it. Then, click on the **ADD SELECTED** button. The selected connection will now appear on **THE INVITE LIST** on the right side of the **CREATE EXPERIENCE** screen.



4. Click on the **SEND INVITES** button to send the invitation to your partner teacher.

- **Customize Discussion Posts:** Once your invitation has been accepted, your experience will become activated. The status of your Experience in My Experiences will switch from displaying as **PENDING** to **AVAILABLE**. At this point, the initiator of the Experience may customize Discussion Posts. There are two options: Add Discussion and Edit Discussion.

To Add a Discussion

1. Click on the Experience tile within **MY EXPERIENCES**.
2. Click on the **ADD DISCUSSION** button in the upper-right corner of your Experience.
3. Enter the title in the “Discussion Title” area and any text, images, or other files into the “Message” area.
4. Click on **POST DISCUSSION** at the bottom of the screen. This will take you back out to the main Experience screen.
5. Repeat process as necessary.

To Edit a Discussion

1. Click on the Experience tile within **MY EXPERIENCES**.
2. Click on the title or the  icon in the lower-right corner of the Discussion Post.
3. Edit the title in the “Discussion Title” area and any text, images, or other files in the “Message” area as necessary.
4. Click on **POST DISCUSSION** at the bottom of the screen. This will take you back out to the main Experience screen.
5. Repeat process as necessary.

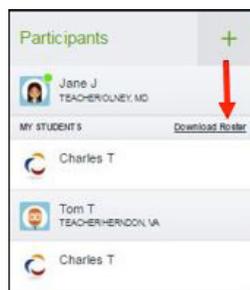
4.2 SHARED TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

All teacher participants should complete the following steps:

- **Add Your Students:** Once an experience is active, you may add students to your Experience.
 1. Select the  icon at the top-right of the **PARTICIPANT DRAWER**. This will take you to the **ADD PARTICIPANT** screen.
 2. Click in the Search box and type the first name of the student you want to add.
 - a. **If your student already has an account**, you will see their profile tile below the Search box. Click on it to highlight/select it. Next, click on the **ADD SELECTED**  button. The selected student will now appear on **THE INVITE LIST** on the right side of the **CREATE EXPERIENCE** screen. Last, click on the **SEND INVITES** button to add your student to your Experience.

- b. **If your student does not have an account**, click on the [Create New Account](#) button that appears at the bottom of the **ADD PARTICIPANT** screen. Next, enter the required information (i.e. First and Last Name, Date of Birth, Country, Username, and Password) and click the [CREATE ACCOUNT](#) button. Record the password for the student account you created. The student will now automatically appear on **THE INVITE LIST** on the right side of the **ADD PARTICIPANT** screen. Last, click on the [SEND INVITES](#) button to add your student to your Experience.

- **Download Student Roster:** Keep a record of login and password information for student accounts by downloading your student roster in the **PARTICIPANTS DRAWER**.



Note: Student password information is not retrievable after it has been entered on the **ADD PARTICIPANT** screen. Be sure to keep a record of student passwords as you create them.

- **Determine Computer Access:** Plan for necessary computer access and adjust instructional methods accordingly (this will impact grouping decisions and how material is shared).

4.3 DECISIONS TO MAKE WITH YOUR PARTNER TEACHER

As you are setting up your Experience, make the following decisions with your partner teacher:

- **Choose a Language:** Decide which language should be used by all teachers and students for various steps or activities in the project. This is particularly important in Language Practice experiences.
- **Decide How to Group Students:** Decide whether students will participate as individuals, with partners, in small groups, or as a whole class. This will impact how materials are posted. (For more information, see Section 5.1).
- **Determine the Pacing of Activities:** Agree on the amount of time you will give students to complete each activity in its entirety.
- **Choose Additional Activities (optional):** Decide whether you want to add additional Activities that enhance student learning.

Managing the Global Community Classroom

5.1 GROUPING OPTIONS

In every Experience, students will collaborate with one another through discussion posts. Because Experiences are dependent on posting/sharing and because there may be variations in computer accessibility, you'll want to consider which of the following options works best for a particular Experience or part of an Experience. For Experiences that have Teacher Guides, recommendations are made within the guides.

- **Individual:** Choose this option when each student has access to a computer—for example, in a computer lab or in classes where all students have tablets. Pair students from different partner classes.
- **Partners:** Choose this option when most students have access to a computer. Form pairs of students in each class. Match pairs from one class with pairs from the partner class. Have students in each pair take turns posting or responding.
- **Small Groups:** Choose this option when you have a limited number of computers, or the Experience relies heavily on small group discussion. Form groups of three or more students in each class. Match groups from one class with groups from the partner class. Have individuals within the group take turns posting or responding.

Note: If students are working as partners or in small groups, instruct them to identify the partner group in the other classroom by using the name of that group's representative.

- **Whole Class:** Choose this option when your class has access to only a few computers. Read (and project if possible) the Experience Discussion Board so that the whole class can see it. Create a class post or response by inviting students to make suggestions about what should be included. Compose the text yourself, or ask students to take turns doing so, and then post it for the students.

5.2 SHARING RESOURCES WITHIN A CLASSROOM

In your Experience, you will often be given Project Resources to share with your students. There are several methods of providing access to these resources within your classroom. Choose the one that best suits your purpose or corresponds to equipment availability.

- **Projection:** To increase the size of images or handouts, or to focus class attention during whole-class discussion, use a projector connected to your computer and a screen to display visual or text media.
- **Read Online:** Have students directly access reading selections or other text or visual media directly within Discussion Posts by logging into the Experience from school, home, or a library.
- **On own device:** Download and share resources with students, who can then view them on their personal devices (e.g. smartphone, tablet, laptop).
- **Print Out:** Make copies of reading selections or other text media and distribute to students as handouts.
- **Teacher Read (text media only):** Login to view or download text media and read it aloud to students. Have students take notes while you are reading. Allow sufficient time for students to record notes or ask questions.