

Barb's Tips to Create Your Online e-Pal Exchange

- ✗ **Find** a college with students studying to become teachers.
- ✗ **Match up** their interests with your students'.
- ✗ **Contact parents** and get them involved in the project. Ask parents to write/comment on blogs to create a school-to-home connection.
- ✗ **Set up** a responsible Email Monitor to track messages. (All emails are monitored.)
- ✗ **Involve** school administrators and IT personnel to safely unblock firewall restrictions.
- ✗ **Make** the learning experience real! You can create authentic lessons for students to learn about their e-pal's hometown, interests and hobbies.
- ✗ **Experiment** with blogs and wikis. Mrs. Wollak designed a virtual author's blog so her students would enjoy and practice their writing to share experiences. Each week an assistant posts questions about current events. She tells her students, "You are now published authors!"
- ✗ **Never** post a photo without permission and never use a child's full name.
- ✗ **Ask** college students to post comments on blogs, along with email correspondence.
- ✗ **Use** assistive technology writing tools, like Co:Writer, to break through typical learning barriers such as poor spelling, lack of vocabulary or grammar usage.
- ✗ **Create** a video email (Eyejot) for visual stimulation. Free at www.eyejot.com
- ✗ **Set up** a Twitter account to help students write brief messages using 140 characters.



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