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For the past couple years two fourth grade classes in North Carolina have been using videoconferencing to learn from each other about the regional characteristics of the areas where they live. One fourth grade class from Rural Hall Elementary School meets biweekly with a fourth grade class from Saluda Elementary School. Rural Hall, part of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School system, is located in the piedmont area of North Carolina, and it has a diverse mix of students representative of the county. Saluda Elementary School is a small K-8 school in Polk County located on a mountaintop in the Blue Ridge. It has only has one fourth grade class that is

paired with one fourth grade class from Rural Hall Elementary.

The videoconference connections address many social studies goals and broaden the experiences of all of the students involved in the project. The students present information about their communities including their weather charts, science fair projects, and writing assignments. The sessions provide public speaking opportunities for the students from both schools to talk, share their ideas and even discuss their test anxiety about the EOG. The students have discovered the pleasure in meeting and relating to other students in their state.

The use of technology has enhanced instruction and interaction for students, helping them to make meaning out of information and facts, not only to gain expert instruction, but also to make personal connections with others in the state. The sessions help the young students broaden their perspectives and think about the choices and beliefs they have about other children and people of the world.

