Title of Session: EuroLang - Back to School Projects
Moderator: Bee Dieu and Phil Benz
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PhilB: Bonsoir, David, welcome to Tapped In.
DavidEL: Merci PhilB. Vous parlez francais
PhilB: Bien sur!
BjB: Phil is in France, David
PhilB: David you wouldn't be here for tonight's Euro language Teachers Forum, would you?
BjB: I think we need to show David how to ID people
DavidEL: No. I just happened to log in.
PhilB: Ah - I wasn't sure if you were the Canadian computer science teacher who I had discussed working with before.
BjB: you're welcome to stay for the EuroLang discussion, David
BjB: participating in discussions here helps you learn about the Tapped In community
DavidEL: PhilB. Non. Ce n'?tais pas moi
PhilB: Yes, we'd love to have you. I have post-secondary students in computer science, who knows, perhaps we could do some joint discussions?
DavidEL: Absolutely.
PhilB: Well, if you're free, we're going to begin tonight's session in about ten minutes, and it'll last an hour. We'll be talking about Back to School projects...
PhilB: and one of mine is finding partner classes for my students and other students using the Viva virtual village.
DavidEL: That sounds interest[ing].
DavidEL: Thank you. I will stick around
PhilB: What brought you into Tapped In, David?
DavidEL: I was curious about the online community aspect
DavidEL: I am doing research in online collaborative learning.
PhilB: Well, this is certainly a prime place to come for that.
DavidEL: Is anyone here involved with distributed learning?
PhilB: I think Tapped In is one of the places where notions like "community of practice" were forged out of raw iron.
PhilB: What exactly do you mean by "distributed learning"?
DavidEL: Online learning
MaryVerGst2 joined the room.
PhilB: Well, my group is rather informal...
BjB: Hi, Mary
PhilB: Bonsoir, Mary, welcome to Tapped In.
DavidEL: I haven't yet had the opportunity to look around at the different parts of the site. You've now sparked my interest.
MaryVerGst2: Hi everyone
PhilB: But David, there are a number of teaching colleges who use TI as an important

tool in reaching their students.

DavidEL: Hello Mary.

BjB: Mary, are you here for the EuroLang discussion?

MaryVerGst2: Yes

DavidEL: So this site is used for student use as well

PhilB: David, the best way to get to know what Tapped In is all about is to look at the event calendar, select a couple conferences, and attend them.

DavidEL: Thanks. I'll try that.

PhilB: Yes, good to see you here, Mary.

PhilB: We'll get started in a few minutes.

PhilB: As usual, I've got the last minute shakes, hoping that some people will actually show up.

DavidEL: What is the EuroLang disscussion about?

PhilB is glad David and Mary are already here.

PhilB: Well our topics change from week to week, but...

PhilB: inevitably they tie into EdTech tools and techniques and...

PhilB: Classroom practices using technology.

DavidEL: For European languages in particular?

PhilB: I see a few others arriving now, we'll soon have a good group assembled.

PhilB: David, I chose to call it the "Euro Language Teachers Forum" because...

PhilB: because most sessions on Tapped In are at times that are not convenient for folks here in Europe.

PhilB: They end up being at like 2AM or later.

PhilB: OK for a night owl like me, but hard to convince other colleagues to attend.

DavidEL: What time is it in your part of the word currently?

PhilB: We're closing on ten PM here.

MaryVerGst2: I can understand that!

PhilB: Mary, you've been here before, right?

PhilB: I think I recall seeing your nick last week.

MaryVerGst2: Yes, but I am slow and only beginning to master it

PhilB: Mary, are you one of the people I spoke to at Cyberlangues in Bordeaux this summer?

PhilB: Don't worry about being slow. "Speaking" through your keyboard is always slow at first.

MicheleGst3 joined the room.

MaryVerGst2: No, I spoke to you in Paris at the Salon de l'Education

PhilB: Michele, good to see you here.

PhilB: Ah, super.

MicheleGst3: good evening everybody !

PhilB: Well, it's just past ten, I think we should begin.

PhilB: Tonight's session is about "Back To School Projects"...

PhilB: and my hope is that folks present will also talk a little about what you all are planning for the coming weeks and months.

PhilB: The idea being that if we talk about our projects, we might find some way to share them, and to have our students communicate.

PhilB: Before we get into the meat of the presentation though, we should do

introductions.

PhilB: Please, everyone, give a brief introduction of yourself now.

BjB: I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania and a helpdesk volunteer for Tapped In

PhilB teaches English and does teacher training in EdTech integration in Southern France.

DavidEL: I am a secondary school teacher of Computer Science. I am also working on my Ph.D. in distributed learning...third year.

MaryVerGst2: I teach English in France too, and also do some teacher training

MicheleGst3: I teach (in 2 colleges) in France too

PhilB: I've always felt that as long as the internet is just a big database of available documents, we're not really exploiting its full powers for learning.

PhilB: What we really need to be doing is empowering our students to reach out and exchange ideas with other kids their own age.

DavidEL: Yes. The true power of the Internet is in its potential as a collaborative communication tool

MaryVerGst2: absolutely

PhilB: And I think this communicative attitude goes way beyond language learning.

PhilB: When students connect up with other students and try to find the means to express their ideas, they become in some sense teachers themselves...

DavidEL: I find that the learning is also more authentic.

PhilB: Authenticity is an oft-cited buzzword, but in many ways I agree with you, David.

DavidEL: I feel that the closed container of the classroom leads to activities

MaryVerGst2: well, they are really communicating, not just pretending

DavidEL: that are out of context and meaningless

DavidEL: How do you mean pretending Mary?

DaniaJ joined the room.

PhilB: Excellent suggestions, David and Mary!

PhilB: Dania, welcome to Tapped In. We're just getting warmed up here...

PhilB: On projects for the new year, especially communication projects.

DavidEL: One way I try to engage my students is to involve them in global collaborative projects.

MaryVerGst2: in the classroom, they are speaking a foreign language to communicate with people who all understand the native language, in an artificial situation

DavidEL: This can be an excellent start to the year

PhilB: David, what levels do you teach? Secondary? Post-secondary?

DavidEL: I am currently teaching secondary but will likely move to post when I complete my doctorate.

PhilB: Yes, Mary, very true - and all too often projects like visiting websites or using search engines in the internet room don't go beyond the level of artificial communication.

PhilB: Super. Dania, we've all introduced ourselves, could you add a short introduction for the record?

DavidEL: Yes Mary. What a marvelous opportunity to engage in authentic use of the target language.

PhilB: Mary, Michele and I all teach English here in France, while David teaches computer science in Canada and BJ teaches Art in the US.

PhilB: *** So today I'm hoping that we can talk a little about the projects we are

planning to work on this year...

DaniaJ: Well I teach English as a first foreign language to freshmen students at university in Kuwait

PhilB: In hopes of finding common ground.

PhilB: Super, Dania - we've had participants from the Gulf here before, glad to see you here.

DavidEL: Do the language teachers here use the Internet and global collaborative projects in their practice?

DaniaJ: We don't have the same learning environments that you can ensure to your students because integrating technology into the curriculum is still in the beginning process

PhilB: Some of us do, David, statistically not many, but an increasing number.

MaryVerGst2: Yes, I am involved in the wkto project with two of my four classes

DavidEL: Is this because of Dania's point of not having accessible technology?

DavidEL: What is the wkto project Mary?

PhilB: I think it's more often a question of teacher training than access to the web as such.

MaryVerGst2: It stands for working together and involves students from several different countries.

PhilB: Mary, yes, could you tell us a little about WKTO?

PhilB . o O (*Now* I recall clearly who you are. <g>)

DavidEL: Is this foreign language curriculum in particular Mary?

DavidEL: rather for foreign language instruction .

MaryVerGst2: My class is divided into groups of 2 or 3. Each group goes into a "virtual class" with students from other countries

DavidEL: What sort of activities are they engaged in Mary?

PhilB: What are some of the topics you plan on discussing in coming weeks or months?

MaryVerGst2: they communicate via the electronic schoolbag and work on precise projects

MaryVerGst2: the theme this year is "sustainable development"

DavidEL: Are the exchanges via email, discussion boards or synchronous chat?

PhilB: Ahhh - quite a broad subject, lots of stuff to sink their teeth into there.

MaryVerGst2: one project, all in English as a foreign language, involves a questionnaire and collating results

BeeD joined the room.

BeeD: Hi there!

PhilB: Bee, good to see you here.

MaryVerGst2: the electronic schoolbag is a communication platform

PhilB: For those new to these forums, Bee is my partner in hosting these sessions.

PhilB: Mary, perhaps sometime soon, like mid October, you'd like to present your "sustainable development" project in more detail.

MaryVerGst2: only members of the virtual class can access the pages and write on them

MaryVerGst2: yes, sure, I'd like to hear more about Viva

DavidEL: What is the age range for students involved in these exchanges Mary?

PhilB: Mary, is there any way for outsiders to catch a glimpse of what your students are doing?

KateGst5 joined the room.

BeeD welcomes Kate

PhilB: Bonsoir, Kate, Welcome to Tapped In.

MaryVerGst2: ages from 15 to 18 and 18 to 20;

MaryVerGst2: type wkto into any search engine... and you get a glimpse

DavidEL: I am assisting teachers in my school district to move from face-to-face teaching to a new virtual school. Perhaps there is an opportunity here for some collaboration between our schools.

MaryVerGst2: http://wkto.free.fr

PhilB: Super, Mary! WKTO is a great project with a good track record of success. You've been at it, what 3 or 4 years now?

MaryVerGst2: fine, contact us

MaryVerGst2: 3 years and it is getting bigger with more languages

MaryVerGst2: But viva?

PhilB: I'd like to save my own projects for last - who else would like to suggest a few topics they plan on working with in the coming weeks and months?

BeeD: I have the Time Classroom Twinning which starts now end of September

BeeD: and the topic is Intercultural Dialogue

DavidEL: What is the Time Classroom Twinning BeeD?

PhilB: Bee, that has always seemed like a superb project as well. Can new teachers still get into it?

BeeD: Sure...we have not started yet

PhilB listens for Bee's explanation of the project

LaurenceB joined the room.

BeeD: I concoct a lesson

PhilB: Bonsoir, Laurence, welcome to Tapped In.

LaurenceB: hi everyone, sorry for being late

BeeD: and teachers from all over the world do it in the classroom

BeeD: and students post their comments on a forum

BeeD: You may have a look at last twinning at

PhilB: Yes, you had a similar topic last year, was it "This Is Your Time"?

BeeD: http://www.timeproject.org/activities/twinning2003/direct_twinning.html

BeeD: Exactly Phil...last term it was stereotypes

BeeD: I will be presenting a detailed schedule at Tapped In at the end of the month

PhilB: Bee, is that next week, or the week after?

BeeD: This year Time Project Day will be celebrated on November 20th, Universal Day of the Child

BeeD: On 28th Phil, if you have not planned anything for that day yet

PhilB: No, the day is yours.

BeeD: Any questions on the twinning?

LaurenceB: I'm interested BeeD, but I'll need someone to send the whole conversation from the beginning.

MaryVerGst2: I must have a look

BeeD: If you are interested, just drop me a line at bwjdieu@terra.com.br

LaurenceB: ok

DavidEL: These online projects look great Mary and **BeeD**. I am in the process of

assisting teachers in my school district move from face to face traditional classrooms to teaching online.

BeeD: It would be good to have a look at what was done beforehand

DavidEL: Some of you may be interested in viewing a collection of global collaborative projects that I've assembled for them.

PhilB: I'll take this opportunity to remind everyone that transcripts of tonight's discussion will be available at www.tappedin.org/transcripts and that you will also find there Bernard Garcin

DavidEL: Here comes a very long URL.

BeeD: Next week I will be presenting Blogging in the classroom David. Your teachers may be interested in it

DavidEL: http://learning.sd41.bc.ca/QuickPlace/teacher/Main.nsf/h_28CACB8C453C0A4988256CF800059EC4/979C529710B93B4388256D1C001004DC/?OpenDocument

DavidEL: How do you intend to use the Blog tool BeeD?

PhilB: David, have you and your students participated in those projects?

BeeD: I will answer this question next week David :-)

DavidEL: Currently my district role is to help teachers move to this environment. We are just starting out.

PhilB: (briefly on Blogs, since Bee will take the full hour next week to field questions on them)

DavidEL: So the answer is no. I haven't used these projects yet?

PhilB: OK, I get you.

BeeD: How old are your students David?

PhilB: David, like Mary and I, has students in Lycee/High School level.

DavidEL: My students are 16-19 but the teachers I am assisting have students of all ages.

DavidEL: My computer science class is also on line. http://ILearnITOnline.com

PhilB: David, do you have any specific topics you intend to get into this year?

PhilB: We language teachers thrive on topic-centered discussions. <g>

DavidEL: My class is a Java Programming course.

PhilB: yes, but surely there are *issues* in programming and online content that your students might want to discuss.

DavidEL: At the start of the year the concern is getting used to the syntax of the language.

PhilB: For example, last year we discussed copyright problems around Napster, and security problems connected with FBI projects to defeat hackers.

DavidEL: Later on we will be looking at different sorts of application development.

PhilB nods

DavidEL: The topics you have covered in your computer courses Phil would be a good match for our InformationTechnology curriculum

DavidEL: Unfortunately my CS course is strictly programming.

BeeD: An idea might be for them to build a site following instructions from another class who is doing English for instance...

DavidEL: Do you mean a Web site BeeD?

BeeD: yes...or some kind of application

BeeD: that could be used in a site or a blogger for instance

DavidEL: It's certainly something to keep in mind; however, their skill level would not allow them to do anything of that sort of sophistication.

BeeD: they could also teach others what they have learnt

PhilB: ***OK, I'm going to monopolize the last part of tonight's session presenting some of my project ideas, and the collaborative platform we use to implement them.

DavidEL: Yes. That would certainly be something we could do BeeD

PhilB: Sorry for cutting you two off.

BeeD listens attentively to what Phil has to say

PhilB: I'd like to present the new interface for Viva...

PhilB: the Virtual Interactive Village in the Ardeche...

PhilB: And a short list of proposed topics for student discussions.

LaurenceB: what a nice place!

PhilB: Bee and Michele are both intensive users of Viva from years past...

PhilB: And this year our team has done a complete overhaul of the Viva interface.

PhilB: So I'm going to ask you all to click on http://www.ardecol.ac-grenoble.fr/viva/index.htm

MaryVerGst2: I'd like to start

PhilB: Super! One of the nice things about Viva is that it is an open project. New classes and teachers can join (or leave) at any time without changing the fate of the project for other participants.

MaryVerGst2: a distinct advantage

PhilB: Please click on the right side of the Viva planet in the center, where it is marked "Lycee"

PhilB: After clicking you should all be here: http://www.ardecol.ac-grenoble.fr/viva/lycee/index.htm

PhilB: This is the new core of the Lycee/High School side of the Viva project.

LaurenceB: the new version looks nice

PhilB: We have cleaned out all of the old messages, and eliminated most of the old "buildings" or forums.

LaurenceB: do you intend to build them again?

DavidEL: This is a very student friendly interface Phil

PhilB: One of the most interesting aspects in the first year of Viva was the possibility for students to propose new "buildings" or forums for discussion...

BeeD: This is a very nice option...my students had a lot of fun designing the Copabacana district

PhilB: So we wanted to leave a lot of space for new projects, new spaces, new ideas. Students need to be empowered, to be given choice and decision over how the tools they are using are put together.

PhilB: Yes, that's why we had to purge the space of over 80% of the old forums.

PhilB: Some of them may spring into a new life, as new students have the same ideas as their predecessors. We'll see.

PhilB: Now, please click on the "Teachers Room".

MaryVerGst2: what language is used (or languages)?

LaurenceB: Do you plan to erase the old buildings every new academic year?

PhilB: After clicking you should be here: http://www.ardecol.ac-grenoble.fr/viva/tice/index.htm

PhilB: Please hold questions just a moment.

PhilB: I'm almost ready for you. <smile>

PhilB: Please click on "Working Together: What Projects"

PhilB: This is a short list of the projects I plan to cover in the coming months.

PhilB: All teachers in the Viva project have access to this teachers forum, and I can give you temporary access as well right now.

BeeD . o O (and I can check whether mine works :-))

MaryVerGst2: yes, please

PhilB: In past years, we kept Viva 100% with no passwords. But in the end, we were obliged to begin a password system, but all you have to do is request yours, and you and your students can begin participating directly.

[Ed. Note: For password information contact Phil Benz at philip.benz@wanadoo.fr]

DavidEL: This looks very good Phil.

PhilB: or else wait a few moments, I just want to answer a few short questions from before.

PhilB: Last year, we had a majority of messages in English,...

PhilB: A sizeable number in French...

PhilB: And one very dynamic teacher with her class participating in Spanish.

PhilB: We should like to expand the palette of languages this year, but that depends entirely on groups of students.

PhilB: Laurence asked about urban renewal. We had the same set of "buildings" over the first two full years of the Viva project, and now have just changed them. I can't say now whether we will change again for a new start for September 2004, perhaps, perhaps not.

PhilB: Obviously I can't really present what the Viva project is all about in just 15 minutes of feverish typing.

PhilB: But from the very first page you saw, the one with the planet in the center, you also had direct access to the archives of the last two years of discussions...

PhilB: and to an article presenting the project...

PhilB: And several other bits of information, like how to ask for your own password and join the project.

MaryVerGst2: with or without password?

MaryVerGst2: OK

PhilB: You can *read* everything without a password. You need a password to write your own ideas into the village.

LaurenceB: ok Phil, I answered your message...

DavidEL: I love the fact that you encourage students to participate in the design of the environment.

PhilB: Like I said, you can use mine temporarily to participate in the teachers room discussions.

PhilB: Yes, that has been one of the most positive and dynamic aspects of the environment.

PhilB: Bee's students designed a whole screenful of buildings, and drew them themselves!

PhilB: Super!

LaurenceB: How do you do that. I understand you have your own designer. Do you decide on the design thanks to drawings done and sent by the students?

PhilB: Well, our time tonight is up, I'll have to plan for a session in October to present Viva more fully. Questions?

DavidEL: I'm certain that this increases their engagement and sense of ownership.

DavidEL: That went by quickly.

PhilB: Laurence, Bee's students sent their drawings to our artist, and he adjusted them a bit to fit into the style of the rest of the interface.

BeeD: It is a wonderful project!

PhilB: yes.

MaryVerGst2: Thanks Phil, will be in touch

DavidEL: Thank you.

PhilB: While you're typing questions, I want to remind you...

PhilB: Next week Bee will be presenting Blogs... (right?)

BeeD: Next week I will be presenting Blogging in the Classroom together with Graham Stanley

PhilB: And the week after, the Time Twinning Project.

BeeD: Right!

MaryVerGst2: Great

MicheleGst3: thanks and good night

BeeD: Thank you all for joining us tonight

PhilB: And transcripts of tonight's session (complete with URLs for websites cited) will be available at...

LaurenceB: I hope to be more active in the viva project this year, but there's so much to do in the lab. Thank you Phil, BeeD, and the others, and take care from Laurence, Martinique

PhilB: (nuts, where was that transcript page?)

BjB: www.tappedin.org/transcripts

MaryVerGst2: good night everyone

PhilB: Laurence, it would be a *big* plus for us if you did join and participate.

DavidEL: I've created a Web site for teachers to setup their own online course. Perhaps I could present this on one of these meetings?

PhilB: Along with other teachers there in Martinique or even Guadeloupe.

BeeD waves ciao to everyone

PhilB: David, that sounds super!

BeeD: It does!!!

PhilB: Email me at Philip.Benz@wanadoo.fr for details, and so we can discuss dates.

BeeD: ciao...must go now

LaurenceB: Bye-bye

PhilB: Michele, I'm sorry we didn't have time to hear your projects, but I'm sure we'll see them in the teachers room on viva.

MicheleGst3: no problem I'll participate with Bee and Laurence

PhilB: Super!

DavidEL: That would be great. I think I've come away from today/tonight's meeting with lots of good resources and links.