

Title of Session: Next Vista for Learning: Get Your Grant Pens Ready - Building a Team of Schools to Take Learning to the Next Vista

Moderator: Rushton Hurley

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Room: Next Vista Group

BJB2: Welcome to tonight's Next Vista for Learning. The topic is Get Your Grant Pens Ready!

BJB2: we usually start all Tapped In discussions with introductions...are you ready, Rushton?

RushtonH: Yep. Let's give them the full name, too.

BJB2 hopes Rushton has some information to share about the conference he attended

FredK: I am a literacy tutor in SE Oklahoma

RushtonH: Conferences? Definitely....

FredK: Hi David

DavidWe: I'm David Weksler. I'm a HelpDesk volunteer and I lead a math education and technology discussion here. I'm in New Jersey, close to New York City

RushtonH: I've been to five in the last two months, and boy are my arms tired.

BJB2: Get Your Grant Pens Ready - Building a Team of Schools to Take Learning to the Next Vista

BJB2 . o O (full title)

RushtonH: That's it!

TerriG: I teach occupational therapy at a community college in Laredo, TX

BJB2: I teach remedial communication in Pennsylvania

RushtonH: I teach Japanese and video production in Santa Clara, California

EduardoHM: I am a teacher assistant at an elementary school in Mission, TX

RushtonH: I am also a native Texan, so this is a Lone Star-heavy group!

TerriG: great!

BJB2 would like to have Eduardo as her assistant! Eduardo participates in a lot of Tapped In discussions!

RushtonH: I think almost everyone here is on my mailing list. Eduardo, did we get you into the last round of mailings?

RushtonH: Terri, how did you find out about this session?

TerriG: I checked that calendar

RushtonH: A good Tapped In citizen - cool.

EduardoHM: Yes, I think so, I have been receiving emails

RushtonH: Good deal. How many of you are connected formally or informally to a particular school or district?

TerriG: to a community college

RushtonH: That'll work.

RushtonH: Terri, could you tell us a bit about the college where you work?

FredK: I have the literacy council

TerriG: like what?

RushtonH: (number of students, special programs, that kind of thing)

RushtonH: Also, Eduardo, is your school a K-5? About how many students/

TerriG: we have approx 8,000 students. Most students require remediation

RushtonH: To what degree is technology a part of the campus?

TerriG: They have trouble with entrance exams (college entrance)

TerriG: a big part!

RushtonH: Are many of your students native Spanish speakers?

EduardoHM: No, is a PK-6 school, we have an enrollment of about 600 to 700 kids

TerriG: yes

RushtonH: Big elementary, Eduardo!

RushtonH: Terri, having a bilingual group will be good for what we'll talk about today.

TerriG: ok

RushtonH: Fred, would you say that matches well with the group you work with?

FredK: We are just getting into ESL (English as a second language

RushtonH: Understood. The Council is still a possible partner for the grant I'll describe.

FredK: This has been red neck country

RushtonH: Down home folks have insights to share! 8^)

RushtonH: I did much of my growing up in small town southern Arkansas, actually.

RushtonH: Not a load of us that went on to teach Japanese, but it happens.

RushtonH: Everyone ready to start?

TerriG: sure

EduardoHM: yes

FredK: yes

RushtonH: So you know, from time to time I'll ask for a response to see how we're moving along; that way if I lose almost everyone to reruns or similar, I can better focus on the one or two I didn't put to sleep!

RushtonH: I'm guessing most of you are familiar with NextVista.org, but I'll do a quick review to fill in any gaps you may have.

RushtonH: Next Vista is a young public charity focused on building a free, online library of video resources. It has three collections:

RushtonH: The first is Light Bulbs, which gathers academic presentations. These are introductions to topics by students and teachers. We believe they are another avenue for exploring a wide variety of topics, useful for students having difficulty, teachers looking for ideas, and parents wanting to help their children with their studies.

RushtonH: The second is Global Views, which we want to fill with descriptions of life and activities in schools and communities around the world. We think that if you are learning about some other part of the world and have the chance to see a person from that place introduce it, the study will become more alive for you.

RushtonH: The third is Seeing Service, with profiles of those who in a big or small way make life better for others. One goal is to inspire young people to see the joy and meaning that comes from giving of one's time to improve one's community.

RushtonH: Have all of you seen the site before? (please type yes or no)

TerriG: no

FredK: yes

EduardoHM: no

RushtonH: Those who haven't, please give it (<http://www.nextvista.org>) a quick look, though in the interest of time please wait until after the session to watch any of the videos. I'll start up again in a minute or two.

FredK: same

RushtonH: The underlying goal of this session is to find people who can help their schools become part of the team that will go after substantial grant funding in early 2008. A good start is to summarize one perspective on optimizing chances for being funded.

RushtonH: I believe that it is far easier to pursue funding for an effort that is already in motion, producing results, and prepared to expand than it is to simply suggest we have a noble idea. That is to say, I want schools that will be a part of the grant effort to show that they are able to make good things happen with what they have, and that if they had more resources they would be able to great things.

RushtonH: Does that make sense? (please type yes or no)

TerriG: yes

EduardoHM: yes

FredK: yes

RushtonH: I have several goals for the preparations for and any secured funding from the grant.

RushtonH: The first is to gather good content for the collections. Not a complex one, that.

RushtonH: The second is to get more feedback on use of the site and its content. The more people share their thoughts on what they see, the better we'll be able to make the resource.

RushtonH: The third is to develop a set of 'power participants' (we'll find a better name for them). These would be the schools where one or (ideally) more teachers have developed a good pattern for creating videos of good quality and in good quantity. Tangentially, I hope to help those teachers gather support from local sources for their efforts.

RushtonH: The fourth is to begin doing some research on the effectiveness of short, focused videos on student learning.

RushtonH: How does that sound so far? (questions, a simple "okay", etc.)

TerriG: ok

EduardoHM: Ok

FredK: ok

RushtonH: It may be obvious at this point that we're looking to start building a team of schools right away, but that only some of them will actually be a part of the grant effort next spring. We don't have a set number of schools in mind, but do need to know we have solid, reliable partners. What do we consider "solid" and "reliable"?

RushtonH: One element is HIGHLY reliable communication. Some folks are much better than others about making sure they respond to e-mail messages promptly and with the information needed. Being bad about that won't necessarily keep you out of heaven, but it likely would keep you out of this grant effort. Having multiple people at your site involved can make this much easier, I should point out.

RushtonH: An obvious one is the production of content, where the more quality and quantity, the better. If you're new to video work, that certainly doesn't exclude you, especially if you understand that simple, well-planned videos are much more the idea than highly polished ones that take a long time to create.

RushtonH: Another good component is showing that the content you and your school create is being used effectively. Are students giving you good feedback? Is the content part of interesting efforts to reach more students? Is the content showing that your school is developing good connections to the larger community?

RushtonH: And finally (speaking of the larger community), it would be very helpful to show that your site and district administrations, as well as community partners, are supporting what you are doing. We're here to help on that front, by the way.

RushtonH: Any questions on that front? (questions, "no", or "preach on, my brother")

TerriG: no, not yet

EduardoHM: Not yet

FredK: not yet

RushtonH: The basic idea for the grant itself is to do several things along the lines I've described:

RushtonH: First, we want to get resources to participating schools creating content. This includes camera equipment, media, and even computers.

RushtonH: Second, we want to find ways to fund getting teachers together for discussions and training. This might mean bringing teachers to the California Bay Area or elsewhere.

RushtonH: Third, we would want to fund teachers' ability to present at conferences. I've been to five around the country in the last two months (and a bit) myself, and its great to be a part of the energy and ideas that happen at a good gathering.

RushtonH: Fourth, we want to do some research on how students and teachers are using Next Vista's videos.

RushtonH: Finally, we would like to run an educational film festival of sorts, perhaps one to which we could bring students and teachers who have created and shared exceptional pieces. Ideally, this would include both a real world and an online program.

RushtonH: Any ideas on things I should add to this list? (ideas, wishlists, not-too-unreasonable requests)

TerriG: looks good so far

EduardoHM: so far it looks good

FredK: Material for homeschoolers?

RushtonH: Good point, Fred.

RushtonH: Anything we'll create would be useful for homeschoolers, and if there is a call in a particular homeschooling community for something specific (4th grade math, high school government, etc), that would allow a stronger focus.

RushtonH: Terri, what kind of content do you think would most benefit the students at your college?

RushtonH: Eduardo, same to you about your elementary school.

EduardoHM: I would say science

TerriG: content - hmmm--I teach occupational therapy so something related to the medical field

RushtonH: Science for elementary school - upper grades or lower?

EduardoHM: and reading and math

FredK: Health literacy?

RushtonH: For medical, what would be some basic concepts that in short video form could be good for your students?

EduardoHM: from 3rd to 6th

RushtonH: got it

TerriG: or reading comprehension - i see that many of our students have trouble with this

EduardoHM: yes

BJB2: how about manners? responsible social behavior?

BJB2: . o O (ethics?)

TerriG: concepts related to rehabilitation, cultural issues

RushtonH: Good content, and welcome in the libraries, though perhaps a difficult sell as part of the grant.

TerriG: yes, bj

RushtonH: (the social behavior, that is)

BJB2: social skills maybe would be better

RushtonH: One way to look at these questions is to ask what students would have fun making.

BJB2: like saying please and thank you. Kids just don't get the simple stuff modeled anywhere anymore

RushtonH: Showing social faux pas can be quite funny in a good video.

BJB2: funny is good

DavidWe stops using his sleeve and uses his napkin

RushtonH laughs

RushtonH: Coming back to Terri's situation (though it might apply more broadly), it can be affirming for ESL students to make videos both in English and their native languages - even if the content is simple math.

TerriG: that's true

FredK . o O (good thought)

RushtonH: Have any of you worked with grants before? If so, please describe how.

EduardoHM: I agree

TerriG: nope

FredK: slightly

EduardoHM: No, I haven't

RushtonH: I'll describe the steps we'll take on this effort, and we can discuss mechanics in more detail if you wish.

RushtonH: We'll work with participating schools to make sure they understand our four rules.

TerriG: ok

EduardoHM: ok

FredK: ok

RushtonH: (Videos should: 1) be five minutes or shorter, 2) not contain copyrighted content, 3) be appropriate for young audiences, even if they are for college-level content, and 4) be factually accurate - no conspiracy theory, flat earth pieces, please; rolled into this last one would be proper citation where appropriate)

RushtonH: We'll work with you to begin developing content as quickly as possible.

BJB2: <http://www.cpsb.org/abshire/handout.pdf>

RushtonH: Nice resource, BJ!

RushtonH: We'll encourage you to build a team of interested folks at your school.

TerriG: that's great!

BJB2: it's one of the resources in the Grreat Grants group room

RushtonH: We'll keep tabs on how some quantifiable measures (number of videos, number of people at your site participating, evidence of community and site support).

RushtonH: We'll make decisions this fall on which schools will be part of this particular grant effort. The sooner you get started, the more likely your school is to be part of the team.

RushtonH: So, I've been e-blabbing at length. What ideas do you have? How can NextVista.org help you make this happen?

TerriG: probably with the resources available as a start

FredK: Like equipment?

RushtonH: That makes sense. Our collections are young, but there is a load of lower-level math stuff.

RushtonH: Equipment, too - what do you have, what do you want, what questions do you have about what you'd need?

FredK: An old digital camera, or a monster video camera

TerriG: wow, technology changes so fast - it's hard to keep up

RushtonH: The key pieces are a digital camera and a microphone. You can do an amazing amount with just that.

RushtonH: Getting comfortable with a simple video editor (Windows Movie Maker or iMovie) is best done without anything expensive, I believe.

FredK: Even memory has changed

DavidWe: Rushton, do we have any tutorials (video-based) to help people get started?

RushtonH: The more memory you have, the better.

DavidWe wonders if that would be helpful

RushtonH: There are a load of tutorials out there - I'll find some links and be right back.

DavidWe . o O (more memory is ALWAYS better)

EduardoHM: I agree

RushtonH: www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/moviemaker/getstarted/default.mspx

RushtonH: www.atomiclearning.com/moviemaker2

RushtonH: www.windowsmoviemakers.net/Tutorials/HowToMovieMaker.aspx

RushtonH: And iMovie comes with one on the Mac.

RushtonH: These are all free, and I'd certainly encourage you to give them a try.

TerriG: gee, thanks

FredK: I need to experiment with the camera

EduardoHM: Great, thanks

FredK: good resources

RushtonH: One good way to get going is to imagine something personal, and how you'd go about it. For example, if you have a half dozen good pictures of your dog or cat and a favorite song, you could put the two together to make a nice piece.

RushtonH: Similarly, you could use pictures of your school or town to do a nice introduction.

RushtonH: The most important part is planning what to say.

BJB2 . o O (the Art of Storytelling group room has some examples and websites for ideas also)

RushtonH: You might also give this example a look:
<http://www.nextvista.org/rhvideos/PASlideshow5.wmv>

RushtonH: It's about an organization I respect immensely.

RushtonH: That's just some stills and a voice recording. Stuff you can learn in ten minutes.

RushtonH: What might you do with your students?

TerriG: not sure, but maybe provide an introduction to occupational therapy for the community

RushtonH: Very cool - that could be used for outreach, PR, and getting the students involved would be fun.

TerriG: yes, and probably getting a version in Spanish

RushtonH: Exactamente.

DavidWe smiles

BJB2 checks the clock on the wall

FredK . o O (tutor/instructor training is another possibility)

RushtonH: Eduardo, do you know Juan Escamilla?

BJB2: the next Next Vista discussion will be on May 3

EduardoHM: no

RushtonH: He's in Mission, and has visited one of my Tapped In sessions before.

RushtonH: Well folks, let's wrap up.

TerriG: ok, thanks

EduardoHM: Ok

RushtonH: Thanks for coming, and I'd like to make sure I get other info to you in the future. Terri and Eduardo, please either write out your e-mail address or send me something at rh@nextvista.org

BJB2: Juan is a member of Tapped In. His username is JuanE

BJB2 . o O (makes it easy to contact him)

FredK: Thanks Rushton, talk with you later

BJB2: Thanks, Rushton, for leading the discussion

EduardoHM: thanks for all the information.

BJB2 . o O (huge project you have started!)

RushtonH: You are very welcome - thanks for dropping by! If I can be of any help, don't hesitate to contact me at the e-mail address above.

TerriG: ok, bye

RushtonH: If you haven't done so, please take a look at the freely-accessible videos on Next Vista's site (<http://nextvista.org>), and sign up for the newsletter, too (<http://nextvista.org/newsletter/>).

FredK: bye

EduardoHM: OK, bye

RushtonH: Watch out for those parentheses, and drive safely.