

Title of Session: Next Vista for Learning: Video Projects for Finishing the Semester

Moderator: Rushton Hurley

Title of File: 20080403nextvista

Date: April 3, 2008

Room: Next Vista for Learning Group

RushtonH: Hi Elizabeth!

ElizabethC: Hi!

RushtonH: Elizabeth, where are you now? I'm in Santa Clara, California, USA

ElizabethC: I'm in Connecticut. I teach high school chemistry.

RushtonH: Wonderful. Have you been to one of my Tapped In sessions before?

ElizabethC: Just one, last night.

RushtonH: Which one did you attend?

BJB2: Susan Bowers did a fantastic presentation on NASA for Science Resources, Rushton

ElizabethC: It was the Web 2.0 one.

RushtonH: Cool! Any particular tools you learned about for the first time?

BJB2: ahhh....Pam Berger's discussion. She had some great new toys for us!

BJB2 . o O (animoto)

ElizabethC: I learned about a great site that makes newspaper clippings. That one was my favorite.

RushtonH: BJ, one of the teachers in this area is big into Animoto. Have you heard of Kyle Brumbaugh?

RushtonH: Elizabeth, what is the site that does the newspaper clippings?

ElizabethC: <http://www.fodey.com/generators/newspaper/snippet.asp>

BJB2: no, Rushton, the name isn't familiar.

ElizabethC: I'm giving a talk to my faculty next week with ideas for integrating tech, so

I'm collecting all the ideas I can.

RushtonH: I took a quick look at the site, and it looks fun! I'll have some ideas for you for your teachers, so feel free to stay in touch with me if you need more info. My email address is: rh@nextvista.org

JeffC: speaking of news clippings... you should look at <http://snurl.com/berquist1>

ElizabethC: Thanks so much!

BJB2 groans

JeffC: BJB shuns her own publicity!

RushtonH: Gotta have me those shoes.

JeffC: I did tell a number of Walden students about this meeting, Rushton... hopefully a few will show.

ElizabethC: I'm a Walden student.

RushtonH: Elizabeth, as you may know, BJ and Jeff are Tapped In folk. Point being, if we end up with just the four of us today, then I'll do the presentation specifically around how it interests you.

RushtonH sniffs his shirt to make sure he isn't driving people away

ElizabethC: In my opinion, all the learning that takes place depends on the effort the student puts in.

ElizabethC: Don't get me wrong, I love the program. I'm getting a lot out of it. But it's because I'm putting a lot into it.

JeffC: Personally I'm the opposite... I'd rather give a ton of support and forget about grading.

ElizabethC: I am getting a Masters in Education with an emphasis on integrating technology in the curriculum.

ElizabethC: Jeff, I agree with you. Grading is what I like least about teaching!

JeffC: yup

RushtonH: Remind me in the e-mail and I'll send you a document with a ton of web-based free resources in it.

ElizabethC: Thanks. We have a 1:1 laptop program, but the teachers do not take advantage of it.

ElizabethC: I think they need some ideas.

RushtonH: You teach at a high school, yes? Is it a large school?

ElizabethC: It's a very small school. About 500 girls. It's a private Catholic school.

RushtonH: Got it. Does that give you the chance to have small classes and really focus on labs for their learning?

ElizabethC: It depends on the class. For intro chem, we have about 24 students, but I only have 13 in AP Chem.

JeffC: is the support you get for your laptops analogous to the support you get from Walden?

ElizabethC: We have one tech guy who spends most of his time fixing the kids laptops.

ElizabethC: I kind of feel it is my job to help the teachers integrate technology.

JeffC: right... and 0 regarding how to use them

ElizabethC: Our tech guy tends to bad-mouth computers, if you can believe it.

JeffC: you should work to get a period off a day to do that... I just spoke with Heather Burleson (also on Helpdesk here)... she's doing the same in Texas... and... will be getting a period off to do just that.

TeralynG joined the room.

ElizabethC: I wish I did. I teach a full load. Last year, I taught an extra period.

JeffC: I've been trying unsuccessfully to support our entire district with that... it's a universal problem... no support for tech/curriculum integration.

ElizabethC: I was supposed to teach less, in exchange for computer help, but that doesn't usually happen.

JeffC: or what I like to call "transcendence"... because... tech can help transform curriculum to a higher plane.

BJB2: Teralyn is new to Tapped In. This is her first discussion :-)

RushtonH: Hi Teralyn - welcome!

JeffC: Welcome Teralyn

ElizabethC: Hi Teralyn

TeralynG: Thank you!

RushtonH: BJ, would you like to give us the basics (detach, URLs, and the like)?

BJB2 nods

BJB2: if you're new to Tapped In go to the Actions menu in the top right of the chat and select DETACH

BJB2: that will make your chat easier to follow

BJB2: when Rushton shares a url, before you click on the hyperlink hold down your ctrl key or turn off pop up blockers

BJB2: ok, Rushton, you're good to go ;-)

RushtonH: Let's do some quick intros first.

RushtonH: My name is Rushton Hurley, and I live in Santa Clara, California.

BJB2: I'm in Pennsylvania and teach remedial communication

RushtonH: I teach Japanese language and run a small nonprofit called Next Vista for Learning.

ElizabethC: Rushton, I admire you. I could never learn a language, much less teach it. I teach chemistry.

RushtonH: The language of science - we both work to help kiddos see the world in new ways. Not so different, perhaps. 8^)

ElizabethC: Touche

JeffC: I'm in Oregon, on Helpdesk here, ex-English/ESL teacher... and class clown.

RushtonH: Teralyn and Elizabeth, please give a quick intro for yourselves, and then I'll launch into the program.

TeralynG: My name is Teralyn Gifford and I am a fifth grade sheltered bilingual teacher in Aurora, Illinois.

ElizabethC: I'm in Connecticut, and, as I said, I teach chemistry to high school girls.

RushtonH: Away we go!

RushtonH: First, are you two Mac or PC, or Linux or it doesn't matter or what?

TeralynG: PC

ElizabethC: I'm a big Mac person, but I have a PC.

JeffC: I'm PC (being from Berkeley) but have always aspired to being a Mac daddy.

RushtonH: Good deal.

RushtonH: If any of you are unfamiliar with Next Vista, I should mention that the organization is focused primarily on building a free, online library of videos by and for teachers and students everywhere.

RushtonH: Consequently, there will be a heavy video slant to the projects I describe today. The ideas carry over into other realms, but that's the frame of reference for me.

RushtonH: Video has the power to capture students' attention in ways that other tools normally do not - what keeps more teachers from taking advantage of this is a trio of tragic misperceptions:

RushtonH: 1) Video is hard. Wrong, wrong, wrong. It's very easy, though normally one needs a little help getting started.

RushtonH: 2) The teacher needs to know how to do video well to assign a video project. Wrong again. Doesn't hurt to know a thing or two, of course, but there is no need to be able to edit. Your real contribution is to help students plan the content, which is the most important (and, for the students, the hardest) part of making a good video.

RushtonH: 3) Teachers don't know about video tools. Not technically a misperception, that, but at the end of this session it won't apply to you anyway. Please forgive the lack of lexical accuracy here.

RushtonH: At any rate, there are a host of free tools one can use to create simple but cool video projects. If you have a Mac, then iMovie (or even Garage Band or iPhoto) is available for this.

RushtonH: On a PC (with XP or Vista), you have Windows Movie Maker (either in All Programs or Accessories), which is a perfectly good tool, though you can download an even easier program freely from Microsoft called Photo Story (free download at: <http://tinyurl.com/3ygxmw>)

RushtonH: Have either of you made a video using one of these programs before?

TeralynG: Photostory

ElizabethC: I've used iMovie and Windows Movie Maker.

TeralynG: Right now I'm trying to work with Adobe's Visual Communicator program...yikes!

RushtonH: Cool - I'll mention all of these as I go along.

RushtonH: Except Visual Communicator, though I'm a MAJOR fan of Premiere Elements.

RushtonH: Is that part of the Visual Communicator suite?

TeralynG: I'm not sure...I haven't made it very far yet.

RushtonH: One way to develop your talents with video is to try out tutorials, and there are plenty available out there.

RushtonH: For iMovie, go to: <http://www.apple.com/support/imovie/tutorial/>

RushtonH: For Photo Story, try: <http://www.jakesonline.org/photostory3.pdf>

RushtonH: For Movie Maker, you can go to: <http://tinyurl.com/3zcat>

RushtonH: Or: <http://www.atomiclearning.com/moviemaker2>

RushtonH: Or:
<http://www.windowsmoviemakers.net/Tutorials/HowToMovieMaker.aspx>

RushtonH: The basics of these programs are a bit beyond the scope of this session, though I'll save some time at the end in case either of you is curious.

RushtonH: As I go through, I'll describe the project, and then prompt for questions after putting the basic info out there for you. We'll do this for 25 or so minutes, and then do follow-up.

RushtonH: Is everyone with me so far? (this is your chance to type 'yes', 'no', 'somewhat', 'just get on with it', or 'I can't speak for everyone, sorry.')

ElizabethC: Yes.

TeralynG: I'm with you!

RushtonH: Thanks! Occasionally I'll toss out a prompt like that, and just toss anything back to let me know I haven't put you to sleep.

RushtonH: Project #1: Introducing Our Community

RushtonH: Imagine someone in another country learning about your community. What preconceptions might he or she have? What if your students could tell about and show images of their neighborhoods, what they learn in school, what they do on the weekends, and what they hope for the future?

RushtonH: I'd stress on this one that, like any of the projects, students do not have to be identifiable on the screen nor use their names for the project to be a good one.

RushtonH: There are examples of these on the <http://nextvista.org> website. Let's take a minute to watch one a Japanese student did at: <http://tinyurl.com/2q9gzo>

RushtonH: Please type something once you return so I know you're back.

JeffC: something

RushtonH chuckles

JeffC: hey Rushton... haven't I converted you to <http://snurl.com> yet?

RushtonH: You've definitely got me interested in it - I'm just in the TinyURL habit, I guess.

JeffC: <http://snurl.com/hario> [www_nextvista_org]

JeffC: same site... easier to remember, don'tchathink?

RushtonH: Definitely!

ElizabethC: I'm back. She did a good job!

JeffC: hehe (slowly I will draw Rushton over to the light side!)

TeralynG: I'm back too.

RushtonH: Teralyn, what did you think?

TeralynG: I thought it was great!

RushtonH: The piece your students do shouldn't necessarily focus on tourist places, of course. To really understand another community, it's better to know what's 'normal' to the people who live there. Where I grew up in southern Arkansas, for example, such

things as the Boys and Girls Club, church youth groups, fishing, school dances, and even autumn hayrides would be good things to highlight.

RushtonH: Note that these were made with still photos and voice recordings. You can learn to do that in less than an hour - really! Just try the Photo Story program; all you'll need is a microphone. If you don't have one in your machine already, you can buy a cheap one for a few dollars.

RushtonH: Is this something you can imagine your students doing?

ElizabethC: I did try to record a message, but I had to download a program to do it. What program do you use to record?

RushtonH: Do you mean the audio for the piece?

ElizabethC: Yes.

RushtonH: There are a number of options...

RushtonH: If you have the students using Movie Maker,

RushtonH: then you can do the recording right in the program.

RushtonH: There is a little microphone icon that I didn't know about for months before someone pointed it out to me.

TeralynG: I really like the community idea. Our school is in a rough area and I think it would be good to capture the great things we have to offer. I can also see us working a photostory for people that are new to our school. To show some of the important places of the building.

RushtonH: There is also a wonderful program called Audacity (free for both the PC and Mac) that will let you mix several tracks together.

ElizabethC: I've heard of that.

RushtonH: Teralyn, well said. Sometimes it's good for students to remember that there are lots of positives around them!

ElizabethC: Can you use still photos in Movie Maker? I have a digital camera, but not a video camera.

RushtonH: Yes!

RushtonH: Some of the best videos are made just using stills, I believe.

RushtonH: It simplifies a number of things, and allows you not to have to worry about lighting, audio recording levels connected to the video footage, and the like.

RushtonH: Sometimes teachers want to know what to do when there are students without computers at home. A good move is to allow students to work in pairs, and also give them the option of making a poster. That pretty much covers all bases!

ElizabethC: I can see my class making movies of chemistry demos.

RushtonH: Elizabeth, project number three is going to be all about that idea!

RushtonH: Let's do another one.

TeralynG: I agree. Many of my students don't have a working phone, but they will make trips to the library, their friend's house, or stay at school to work on their photostory projects!

RushtonH: Project #2: People Who Serve

RushtonH: Sometimes our students just need a reminder that there are people out there who help others for no other reason than they find joy and meaning in doing so.

RushtonH: Getting students to meet volunteers and interview them about what they do and why can really open their eyes to the power of service.

RushtonH: For this project, have students in small groups pick someone they know who volunteers at some organization in the community (library, elderly care facility, soup kitchen, etc.). Local service groups like Rotary, Soroptimist, Kiwanis, etc., can help them find such folks.

RushtonH: The best pieces would be more than just interviews - they would include pictures of the volunteer engaged in the activity. Be careful about getting people on camera who haven't agreed to be in a video that would be online, by the way!

RushtonH: A good finish to a piece like this is to have the students record their voices telling what they think of what they've seen as the viewer sees more pictures.

SusanR joined the room.

RushtonH: Hi Susan!

SusanR: Hi Rushton

RushtonH: Susan, Teralyn is in Illinois, Elizabeth is in Connecticut, Jeff is in Oregon, and BJ is in Pennsylvania. I'm in Santa Clara, California. Could you tell us where you are and what you teach?

SusanR: I am In Ottawa, Ontario I teach k to 8 on an occasional basis.

RushtonH: Elizabeth and Teralyn, what do you think of the service video idea?

RushtonH: Susan, welcome.

ElizabethC: That's a great idea, particularly for my Catholic school. We are all about service!

TeralynG: LOVE IT! That is one more way to highlight the positives in our community.

RushtonH: Good videos about service can be great writing prompts, or wonderful additions as part of community presentations about the school.

ElizabethC: We could do one to encourage volunteerism. Our sophomores have to do a certain number of hours of community service.

RushtonH: My nonprofit has actually worked with students on making videos that help others learn - a technology-fun service project!

RushtonH: Speaking of, let's do the third one I wrote up for you.

RushtonH: Project #3: Reviewing Concepts

RushtonH: Students can group up to look at concepts that are fundamental to what you covered this year. In deciding how to make a video out of a given topic, they get a good review and perhaps create for you something that can be used to introduce the topic to next year's classes.

RushtonH: Imagine a middle school math class working in groups on what fractions are, percentages, factoring and primes, and the like. How much easier would the class be for everyone if everyone were comfortable with those?

RushtonH: Last spring I met with a group of teachers to discuss exactly this idea, and we ended up making three videos to help students get better at understanding prime numbers. We showed these to students, and did testing before and after to see how they did. Turns out that lots of the kids really benefited from having some variety in how the concept gets presented (we did one with a traditional explanation, another using a number chart, and a third using music and stop-action techniques).

RushtonH: The info and videos are at: <http://vvproject.googlepages.com/>

RushtonH: Give it a quick look and let me know what you think (you might try watching one of the videos; watching them all would run us into our finish time).

RushtonH: Please let me know when you're back.

ElizabethC: These are great! They are all different styles, but they all teach the same concept.

RushtonH: The more variety we can bring to presentations of topics, the more likely the kids will get off to a good start on them. Confidence is key to saving time and helping them learn quickly, I feel.

ElizabethC: Did you show all three to the students?

TeralynG: I have done this using powerpoint, but not moviemaker. How much more difficult is moviemaker once someone is familiar with photostory?

RushtonH: We did, and different students seemed to click with different ones.

ElizabethC: Did you show all three in a row, or at different times?

RushtonH: We showed them all together as part of our testing of them. In all, about ten minutes.

RushtonH: Teralyn, Movie Maker is very easy to learn - try one of the tutorials above, and if that doesn't work for you, I'll find you more.

RushtonH: This kind of video is the basis of the Light Bulbs collection of <http://NextVista.org>, and if you haven't watched any of our (free) pieces, please go to our site and give them a look when you can.

RushtonH: This one is perhaps the most open-ended, so if you have ideas on what you might want students to cover, feel free to toss them out now with any questions.

TeralynG: I'm going to work on that!

RushtonH: What topics are the most important for your students to review in order to have learned the fundamentals of your subject?

ElizabethC: The idea I have been playing with is kind of a video portfolio of laboratory techniques.

TeralynG: That

RushtonH: That would be great - Next Vista would be happy to host them, if you wish.

TeralynG: That's a tough one since I have five subjects

ElizabethC: Can you tell us more about Next Vista?

RushtonH: Are there things that you've noticed seem to flummox kids more than anything else?

RushtonH: I certainly can!

RushtonH beams

RushtonH: 8^)

RushtonH: I started the nonprofit to build the library, and the idea is to encourage kids in the three areas I've discussed - getting to know the larger world, understanding the joys of service, and helping others better learn what they encounter in school.

RushtonH: We've been at it for about a year and a bit, and without any advertising, have had over 800,000 hits. I think the idea of free, screened, student-focused videos strikes a chord.

TeralynG: I can understand the attraction.

RushtonH: Contributing videos is easy, but there are some rules:

SusanR . o O (The "Introduction to the Elements of Art" is well done!)

RushtonH: First, the videos can't be longer than five minutes.

ElizabethC: It certainly strikes a chord with me! I will be sure to pass on the address to my faculty.

RushtonH: Second, they can't contain copyrighted material.

RushtonH: Third, they have to be okay for a young audience.

ElizabethC: What grade level do your videos aim at?

RushtonH: And fourth, they have to be factually accurate and cited, where appropriate.

RushtonH: The videos can be for almost any age level, but practically speaking, they're focused on 3rd grade through early college.

RushtonH: Anyone with a great insight to share is welcome to create or help plan a piece.

RushtonH: I believe that ultimately, students will provide the most creative videos in the collections.

ElizabethC: I think it would appeal to my students to know they were making a video for a wider audience than just their school.

TeralynG: I agree.

RushtonH: Expanding the audience is very important for getting students to think about quality in new ways.

RushtonH: Susan, thanks for the note about the art video(s), by the way. Those were done by a student at the high school where I teach.

RushtonH: I'd love to work with any of you interested in discussing possible projects.

ElizabethC: I'd be very interested. I'm currently thinking of some kind of project for my AP students after the test in May.

RushtonH: The next step is to get connected by e-mail. You can reach me at rh@nextvista.org. I'd be happy to send you something I mentioned to Elizabeth earlier, too - a document loaded with links to and descriptions of free resources for teachers and students.

SusanR: excellent series, Rushton..can appeal to younger students as well

TeralynG: I'd like to!

RushtonH: I'll let her know! Thanks.

RushtonH: For those of you who aren't on the Next Vista mailing list, please join at: <http://nextvista.org/newsletter/> and let us know what you think and what you'd like to see. The newsletter is only a once- or twice-a-month thing, and is info, not discussion, so it will never explode in your inbox. We certainly never share contact info with anyone.

RushtonH: Thanks again for coming! There won't be a May or June session, but I hope you will all join Tapped In for the Summer Festival. There were some really strong programs last year - please join if you have time!

TeralynG: Thanks for everything!

ElizabethC: Thanks for everything!

RushtonH: I should say, -I- won't do a May or June session - there will certainly be plenty at Tapped In.

JeffC: Thanks Rushton.

RushtonH: You are very welcome - I hope to hear from you!

SusanR: Thanks Rushton

RushtonH bows humbly

ElizabethC: Thanks. You'll be hearing from me, I am sure.

RushtonH: Give you Connecticut students and colleagues a west coast 'howdy' for me. (I was born in Texas.)

ElizabethC: I will do that.

ElizabethC: Good night.

RushtonH: Take care!