

Title of Session: Next Vista for Learning - Videos Intro to Communities Project

Moderator: Rushton Hurley

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RushtonH: Hi Barb!

BarbS: Hi Rushton

RushtonH: Where are you connecting from?

BarbS: Maryland, and you?

RushtonH: I'm in Santa Clara, California (SF Bay Area).

RushtonH: Do you get to DC a lot?

RushtonH: One of my favorite restaurants in the world is there.

BarbS: not too often... which one?

RushtonH: Georgia Brown's, near the White House. "Southern Food"

BarbS: ahh... east coast to west coast.. how's the weather out there?

RushtonH: Clear and hot today (mid-90s). Global warming, no doubt.

BarbS: hmmm.. not sure I've been there.. I just returned to Maryland last year after being out in CO for 5 years so am catching up on eating seafood..

BarbS: are the fires still raging?

BarbS: we hit the 90s today too.. but should be going back to 80s with all the hurricanes
..

RushtonH: I think the fires are mostly handled, but once the season starts, it just seems to keep going.

BJB2: Guess we should get started, Rushton, so you have time to cover all the great stuff you have.

BJB2: It appears you have already done introductions...

RushtonH: No problem! Barb, you've got us to yourself!

BarbS: ok.. just curious about the topic..

RushtonH: Do you teach?

BarbS: yes... Middle school..

RushtonH: Which subject(s)

RushtonH: ?

BarbS: computer ed..

RushtonH: Do you have classes that meet regularly, or do you support other teachers' efforts with technology in a lab? (Or something else?)

BarbS: in a district that is a little backwards with tech.. everything is locked out, but somehow Ti has managed to survive. classes that meet regularly..

BarbS: another teacher does the supporting other teachers

RushtonH: What is blocked that you'd like to be using?

BarbS: the chat room for one... blogs, wikis.. lots of web sites..

RushtonH: How about Google Docs? You could recreate much of that with it.

BarbS: Alan November just did a presentation to our administrators, and was locked out of half of his presentation..

RushtonH: Nothing like using a howitzer when a slingshot will do.

BarbS: haven't tried that in the system yet.. will have to

BarbS: can get PB wiki and I'm just starting to play with its potentials..

RushtonH: Though it's not part of this presentation, I'm a Google Certified Teacher, and I'd be happy to help you get some things going if you like. PBwiki is a good one, and you should also take a look at Google Sites (sites.google.com). It's Google's wiki app, and is fairly new.

BarbS: the chat room here is locked in the lab... but the classroom isn't.. so I'm hoping to find ways to at least get the kids to do discussion boards..

RushtonH: Makes sense.

RushtonH: I'll start with a bit of background on Next Vista for Learning, the nonprofit I started a couple of years ago.

RushtonH: I started Next Vista out of the belief that we can do much more to more successfully address a core problem in education: the problem of what happens when a student sits in class, but doesn't understand what's being presented. They need somewhere to turn where there isn't a need to say, "I don't get it." Somewhere where interesting insights are a click away, and can be watched as many times as needed. I believe that students' confidence will rise if they know they are able to watch one or more short videos on any given topic, all of which are available without cost or registration.

RushtonH: I envision four common uses of the library:

BarbS: sounds good..

RushtonH: 1) students wanting another avenue for presentation of topics

RushtonH: 2) teachers looking for ideas on how to present topics

RushtonH: 3) teachers wanting to present topics using video (varies what happens in the classroom, which is useful)

RushtonH: 4) parents wanting to review material they are helping their children learn

RushtonH: That largely describes the Light Bulbs collection, but can also apply to the the other two: Seeing Service and Global Views.

RushtonH: The Seeing Service collection highlights those who do good and interesting things for others, with the goal of conveying the joy and meaning that can come through service.

RushtonH: The Global Views collection will allow people, especially young people, to introduce their communities to the rest of the world, through describing their neighborhood, what they learn in school, what they do on the weekend, and what they hope for the future - that kind of thing.

RushtonH: The Seeing Service and Global Views collections are the ones that will house the pieces we do as part of the Video Introductions to Communities project. There are some good examples of each on the site, at which we'll try taking a quick look.

RushtonH: BJ, do you want to do a quick description of how the links will work?

BJB2: Barb has been a member of TI for a long time, Rushton :-)

RushtonH: Cool.

BJB2: but a reminder to hold down the ctrl key to override pop up blockers

RushtonH: The Global Views video is one done by students in Lagos, Nigeria last year as part of this project. You can see it (either through the flash feed in the main window, or by clicking on the "Download" link on the right) at:

<http://www.nextvista.org/2007/12/08/lagos-nigeria/>

BarbS: yep...

RushtonH: Let me know once you're back.

BarbS: back

RushtonH: What did you think?

BarbS: nicely done (by students I suppose?)

RushtonH: Indeed - the teacher there is a real go-getter.

RushtonH: The goal with a piece like this is to let students tell something about their community, of course. One thing to watch out for is that it shouldn't become a touristy piece; instead, we want your students to explore what is special to them about their communities. A little later I'll address how you might approach that discussion with your students.

RushtonH: Let's watch another video, and this one will help give you the idea of how the volunteer profile works. This one is about a woman who decided to start an orphanage following the tsunami of 2004. See it at: <http://www.nextvista.org/2007/09/08/hope-in-aceh/>

RushtonH: Again, ping me when you're back in chat. (AC/DC album, I believe that was.)

BarbS: back

RushtonH: Wacha think?

BarbS: that was nicely done as well....

RushtonH: Obviously starting an orphanage is a big deal. These videos don't have to tell about someone who has taken on so expansive a project; a good piece about someone who serves food to poor people would be great.

RushtonH: Before we go into the details of the project, I'd also like to introduce iEARN (<http://iearn.org>). Schools (or individual teachers) that are part of iEARN will also take

part in the final phase of the project, which includes using their forums to discuss the videos.

BarbS: ah...

RushtonH: If you don't belong to iEARN, you can still do the project, and we can arrange for some connections among schools that want to trade e-mail messages, but I don't have the bandwidth to monitor the discussions - sorry!

RushtonH: Joining iEARN is something worth considering. There are loads of teachers from around the world taking part in all sorts of interesting projects, and they have conferences related to education and international exchange that the participants love. I ran a workshop a few months ago in Bahrain for students and teachers there who are part of iEARN, and I was really impressed with how interested the students and teachers were in technology and exchange activities. Great stuff!

BarbS: I know about iEARN... I've touted their projects at several training sessions to teachers

RushtonH: Cool - they're a good crowd, for sure.

RushtonH: Have you done anything with them?

BarbS: I've never participated with them myself.. always wanted to but had limited resources at first, then haven't been in the classroom myself until recently returning

BarbS: was in higher ed and admin positions, as well as teaching online.

RushtonH: ePals is another good program that works similarly, though with them, there's no cost.

BarbS: but I'd share their projects along with Kidlinks ... yes..

RushtonH: Welcome back to the classroom, by the way! I made that return myself in the last few years.

BarbS: yes... it feels good to be back...

RushtonH: On to the project!

RushtonH: The principal product of this project is one or more videos from each participating school. The videos address one of two themes. Note that it is okay for a school to have one or more groups doing the first theme and one or more groups doing the second. The more, the merrier!

RushtonH: The first (Introducing the Community) asks students to make a short video

that helps others get to know their community - its special places, what its people like to do, what its students hope for, etc. Here are the framing questions for the discussion that should kick off such a project:

RushtonH: What are the places that show something special about who we are?

RushtonH: How do we see our futures?

RushtonH: What are the challenges young people face in our community?

RushtonH: What ways do we build friendships and have fun?

RushtonH: Get students to grapple with those questions, and then have them decide what kinds of pictures or footage they would use to be the visual complements to their answers.

RushtonH: Any questions on that idea? There will be time for more later, of course.

BarbS: This might be a really good final project for my 8th graders. the challenge is that I only have them for 38 days, and they move on...

RushtonH: That might work well with the time frame, actually. I'll jump on those details in just a minute.

RushtonH: The second (Volunteer Profile) asks students to tell about someone who helps others as a volunteer. What is that he or she does and why is it important, both to that person and the people who are helped? Here are the framing questions for the discussion that should begin this project:

RushtonH: What does the person you are describing do for the community?

BarbS: I'd have to re-juggle the other things I had planned... what is the time frame

RushtonH: There are four dates in the project's timeline:

RushtonH: By Sept. 15, participants should send school and student information to Rushton Hurley at rh@nextvista.org (there are six questions on the project website).

RushtonH: By Oct. 15, participants should finalize their script(s) and storyboard(s).

RushtonH: By Nov 15, participants should submit completed videos to project library using YouSendIt.com (a free service for sending large files).

RushtonH: Between Nov. 15th and Dec. 15th, participants may share impressions of each others' videos.

RushtonH: There are five rules for the videos:

RushtonH: First, it must be less than five minutes long.

RushtonH: Second, it must contain no copyrighted content. Strictly speaking, it should contain only copyright-friendly content. There are sites such as <http://morguefile.com> and <http://search.creativecommons.org> which only yield copyright-friendly material in their searches. For music, I recommend using <http://podsafeaudio.com> or <http://jamendo.com> and I recommend NOT using <http://freeplaymusic.com>.

RushtonH: Third, we prefer that students not be identifiable in the video. If they are, one suggestion is that they not use their real names. We'll need permission slips from any student (and his or her parents/guardians) who appears in the piece. Those are available from me via e-mail.

RushtonH: Fourth, videos should be in .mov, .wmv, .avi, or .mpg formats.

RushtonH: Fifth, the script for all audio should be typed in an .rtf document so that those with hearing difficulties will be able to enjoy what you create. You may also add subtitles to meet this rule, though make sure they are big enough that when they are streamed, one can still read them.

RushtonH: How do those times and rules strike you?

BarbS: Challenging... I have to rethink ... I only have this group of kids until mid-October, and new group from then until xmas...

RushtonH: The project itself can be done over three to four weeks, and there is certainly no problem with finishing a piece early.

BarbS: so what I might have to do is to have them work on the topic in their time with me, and then choose the best videos..

BarbS: to submit out of the groups..

BarbS: what grade level are most of the participants so far?

RushtonH: That's a good approach.

RushtonH: They range from late elementary to high school.

RushtonH: I should also get the questions in front of you for the volunteer profile option.

RushtonH: What does the person you are describing do for the community?

RushtonH: How does what he or she does make life better for others?

RushtonH: What joy and/or meaning do these efforts bring him or her?

RushtonH: As with the first one, students should come up with several different people they know. Students who don't know the volunteer can ask the questions, getting the ones who do know the volunteer to fill in the information one would need. Follow by coming up with questions for the volunteer, such as, "How did you get started doing this?"

RushtonH: Do you gravitate toward one or the other?

BarbS: I'm not sure yet.. I may want to do both with different groups of kids...

RushtonH: Feel free to see what they think and go from there.

BarbS: or maybe one with 7th graders and one with 8th graders..

RushtonH: That'll work, too.

RushtonH: The main page for the project is at <http://whsnihongo.googlepages.com/learn>

RushtonH: Have you done any video projects before?

BarbS: I have to look at the unit plans I turned into the principal and see if they can be adapted... but I have them using photo story and windows movie maker in that curriculum, so I'd love to have a real topic for them to concentrate on.

BarbS: not video... did several projects with Kidlink ..

RushtonH: Some quick pieces of advice:

RushtonH: Have students work in teams. It's okay for a class of thirty, for example, to be broken into three to six teams, each of which is making a video, at least for older groups. Doing it this way tends to spread the creativity around and provide incentive for doing their best. We'll make all of them available to be seen, with the best ones being added to the NextVista.org library.

RushtonH: Start the planning early, and keep them focused on coming up with a good plan, or storyboard. A storyboard normally includes three major elements: notes or a drawing of what one sees, all text or speech that will be a part of the scene, and any notes on how to shoot it (slowly focus in on the person's face, fade out at the end of this scene, etc.). If you know how, a great approach to this is to use the presentation component of Google Docs for this purpose. There is also an example of a storyboard at:

BarbS: that's what I was figuring on doing..

RushtonH: <http://www2.hawaii.edu/~ricky/etec/storybrd.pdf>

RushtonH: Help students learn to tactfully critique each others' work. When done properly, it means much higher quality for the videos.

RushtonH: What can I do to help?

BarbS: yes I have a good template for video planning from the online class I taught last year with Insight schools...

RushtonH: You're in good shape.

BarbS: can you email me the links?

BarbS: for the questions, etc. ?

RushtonH: Definitely. I'll send the template for this session - reading it will be a bit deja-vu like, but not necessarily unpleasant.

RushtonH smiles

BarbS: I can also check with my other tech teacher who does the integration with other teachers, and see if it fits in with any other classes..

BJB2 . o O (all the links from this discussion will be in your transcript, Barb)

BarbS: I need to look at it in more detail..

RushtonH: Wonderful. This is the kind of thing that can be used for good school PR.

BarbS: thanks bJ

RushtonH: Good deal. Make sure your mail filter will accept something from rh@nextvista.org and I'll get you this info and a host of other resources as well.

RushtonH: Anything you'd like to discuss about the project while we're here?

BarbS: Not right now... I need to think this through... do you know where other participants are located?

RushtonH: Texas, Florida, California, New Hampshire, Uganda, Norway, and Bahrain, if everyone comes through!

BarbS: and then are there times to meet the other participants?

BarbS: and I suspect sharing the videos on the site at the end, right?

RushtonH: We'll work that out as soon as we know exactly who is in process.

RushtonH: Definitely sharing the videos!

BarbS: ok.. keep me in the loop, and I'll look at my curriculum to see if I can fit one or both into it.. I suspect I can..

RushtonH: Barb, you'll hear from me over the next few days, and we'll start planning in whatever detail you're comfortable with.

BarbS: as long as I'm teaching tech skills...

RushtonH: BJ, thanks - it's good to 'see' you again!

BarbS: and the PR piece will be good as well..

BJB2 hugs...same time next month, Rushton?

BarbS: ok.. me too BJ ...

RushtonH: Cool. We'll discuss it! Thanks again for coming!

BJB2 . o O (October 2)

RushtonH: Same time next month is good for me.

BarbS: ok... is next month for participants or new folks?

BJB2: Thanks, Barb, for joining the discussion

BarbS: thank you BJ for beeping it out.. I had seen it and then almost forgot with the time difference..

BJB2: everyone is always welcome, Barb, to all the discussions...Rushton always has interesting stuff to share

RushtonH: I doubt I'll cover this project, actually. Next Vista covers a lot of ground, so plan on seeing a lot of the discussion happen via e-mail.

RushtonH: My plan for next month (at this point) is to do a piece on how to make a video using digital pictures and a cheap microphone.

BJB2: and we'd like to hear how your projects are coming too, Barb

BarbS: ok... sounds good to me.. tytl..

RushtonH: Bye!

BarbS: will do..

BarbS: bye

BJB2 hugs Rushton goodnight. Thanks!

RushtonH: Talk to you soon, hermana!