

**Title of Session:** Frazel Features - So Much to Celebrate!

**Moderator:** Midge Frazel

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Room: Frazel Features Group

**MidgeF:** Google set up a flu tracking site and it is pretty weird.

**MidgeF:** <http://www.google.org/flutrends/>

**BJB2:** yikes...so the worst is yet to come?

**MidgeF:** always

**MidgeF:** there many more deaths in Dec and Jan than any other months

**MidgeF:** and not just from flu (I have had pneumonia twice in Feb and March)

**BJB2:** did you get your flu shot?

**MidgeF:** I always do

**MidgeF:** I get strep pneumonia

**JeffC** joined the room.

**MidgeF:** <http://www.google.org/flutrends/>

**MidgeF:** Just in case you want to see where the flu "hits" are

**JeffC:** looks like it's best to stay out of the south and Maine during December and February!

**IreneR** joined the room.

**MidgeF:** Yes, it is pretty interesting to see it

**JeffC** waves to Irene.

**IreneR:** Waving

**MidgeF:** Hi, Irene we were just chatting about Google Flu

**JeffC:** I invited Irene to join... even if she can't stay... so she can forward a transcript of

your session to Carmelita's class.

**MidgeF:** <http://www.google.org/flutrends/>

**MidgeF:** Come see the "caged" species midge native of Rhode Island

**MidgeF:** Irene thinks I am a crazy person

**BJB2:** That was a mini tour, Midge ;-) I can go on for hours :-)

**IreneR:** smiling

**MidgeF:** And to think I had to learn all that without help

**BJB2** hopes we're not scaring Irene away....let's start with introductions, Midge

**IreneR:** the tour was short but good for me in those couple of minutes

**MidgeF:** OK, I really should type up an Intro

**MidgeF:** Irene tell us about yourself and that class

**BJB2:** I'm in Pennsylvania and am a retired teacher as well as on Tapped In helpdesk

**IreneR:** I am currently working on my master special education in Kingsville, Tx

**MidgeF:** I'm in Bridgewater, MA. I am an author, hold a Master's in ed tech and am a genealogist

**MidgeF:** Lots of people lately from Texas

**BJB2** . o O ( Irene, you missed a Special Ed discussion yesterday! )

**IreneR:** yes I know and I really wanted to participate

**MidgeF:** I was working on a Vet's Day genealogy blog post

**IreneR:** I have to be online for a microcomputer class and had to turn in a paper

**BJB2:** next month...and Midge is about to give you a wonderful bunch of resources

**MidgeF:** and finishing my Christmas shopping to avoid the flu

**MidgeF:** OK this was the description of the session

**MidgeF:** With the restrictions of standards-based learning, state-mandated testing, and

the state of the economy, how is it possible to create interesting lessons and activities in the classroom to keep students engaged in these months full of holidays swirling around your students. In this session we will cover Web sites of interest to teachers in the fall and winter months.

**MidgeF:** I don't know how teachers teach, take classes and still have any energy for holidays

**MidgeF:** As I examine my Web site, I notice that many of those who visit my page are looking for classroom ideas that revolve around the celebrations of life. There a lot of discussion about the changing face and values of our youth. Do children grow up faster in hard times? What has happened to carefree childhood days of play and fun with friends?

**BJB2:** good question, Midge!

**MidgeF:** My site visits this week have increased like every year.

**JeffC:** well... I for one... lost most of my marbles.

**BJB2** nods solemnly to Jeff

**MidgeF:** Things on the Web are mostly free

**MidgeF:** even Jeff's marbles

**MidgeF:** All of this may not be something you think about in your day-to-day teaching but could it explain why so many students are not motivated and feel disconnected from what you are teaching?

**MidgeF:** More and more I read about this in blogs and discussion boards

**MidgeF:** A teacher told me that the time change has wiped out their kids. They yawn in class

**BJB2** wonders if it's the subject being taught or the teaching itself?

**MidgeF:** I think that kids aren't interested in what is being taught.

**BJB2** agrees...and/or in HOW it's being taught?

**MidgeF:** And maybe never were?

**BJB2:** different times, Midge

**IreneR:** are visuals being used to capture attention

**MidgeF:** One teacher told me that her students hate that she teaches with PowerPoint

**MidgeF:** They feel it is the same old lecture

**MidgeF:** Let's take a look at my blog. With my hosted Web pages, I can see data on which pages are popular. This monthly range shows from last year at this time to now. What does this data tell us about the Web viewing habits of teachers?

**MidgeF:** <http://MidgeFrazel.net/blog/>

**MidgeF:** Go there and read the post and come back

**BJB2:** hmhhh

**BJB2:** since I'm no longer in the classroom, I'm eager to hear what Irene thinks

**MidgeF:** I am getting more and more emails from places who want me to put back the greeting card and the old Pilgrim pictures

**BJB2:** why do you think that is, Midge?

**JeffC:** so... put them back!

**MidgeF:** Because they get paid to promote those sites and if they get a link exchange they get paid

**MidgeF:** The greeting card sites are fronts for viruses.

**MidgeF:** You did know not to open them up anymore

**JeffC:** oh... you mean the emails you get are from the site owners? yuck! well... keep them off then! There are a few greeting card companies that are free and safe though.

**JeffC:** but yeah... I stay away from greeting card sites now... you're right about the virus issues.

**MidgeF:** I am just ignoring them all. There's a lot of good stuff teachers should be using to teach for Thanksgiving

**MidgeF:** A noted reader of this blog posted a comment about crafts in the classroom and how they are often the first hands-on experience remembered by students. They often demonstrate to teachers where students have problems with fine-motor skills and if they are engaged in activities they must work on alone. Certainly this is an early indicator of how well a student performs alone and in a group.

**MidgeF:** But, the upper grade teachers openly make fun of the teachers and their colorful

classrooms. They say not much learning (ie teaching for the test) is being done

**JeffC:** is it at that point when the younger grade teachers punch the older grade teachers/

**MidgeF:** I think it is why schools are being restructured to a middle school model so students can get serious earlier

**JeffC:** ?

**MidgeF:** yes

**JeffC:** right... it's important for the m to get serious early and drain the will to learn out of the students.

**MidgeF:** Early grade teachers would rather be in a K-4 school where they can collaborate and get students reading and doing math earlier

**MidgeF:** But, that's what people want...kids who score higher on a test

**MidgeF:** You can see what types of problems are being made that have nothing to do with technology

**MidgeF:** Do we do a disservice to students by removing celebration in the classroom? Do teachers change their point of view to include winter activities that revolve around literature and history to provide students with a fun and memorable classroom experience?

**MidgeF:** I made a page about gingerbread for lower grade teachers to use as a literature infused unit

**MidgeF:** It is well visited

**BJB2** wonders if Irene is still here?

**MidgeF:** Many teachers say that kids did not know what gingerbread is

**JeffC:** She might have had to leave... I told her to stay logged in for the transcript even if she can't stay.

**MidgeF:** I think Irene just left her browser open to TI to get the transcript

**BJB2** nods to Jeff

**BJB2** . o O ( and Midge )

**MidgeF:** This is parent conference week here with some next week

**MidgeF:** BTW, I just learned that there is a new trend for Thanksgiving week

**JeffC:** what is it?

**BJB2:** . o O ( Christmas shopping? )

**MidgeF:** The idea is to put the whole day professional development days on Monday and Tues of that week with Wed off

**MidgeF:** Parents can take the kids traveling and college students can come home

**MidgeF:** I wondered if it would mean that some of the Thanksgiving hits to my site would be earlier

**BJB2:** have you noticed any change yet?

**MidgeF:** Grad classes for Master's programs (like mine) are doing projects and are done by the first week in December

**MidgeF:** Yes, heavier hits for this week than last year

**MidgeF:** I learned a lot of strange things in grad school

**MidgeF:** For the transcript this is where I wanted people to go

**MidgeF:** <http://www.MidgeFrazel.net/snow.html>

**MidgeF:** and

**MidgeF:** <http://www.MidgeFrazel.net/gingerbread.html>

**MidgeF:** I have given up a few of my pages that got few hits per year and beefed up those that teachers want.

**MidgeF:** Family in America is changing and it is important for teachers to know more about the world that their students live in. Students who have low self esteem live in families where there is no celebration. Parents working two jobs and leaving childcare to grandparents or daycare workers have little energy for holidays.

**BJB2:** I love Snowflake Bentley!

**MidgeF:** and certainly have no money (with the average family hold \$10,000 in credit card debt

**BJB2:** yikes

**JeffC** is still waiting for the fed bailout check.

**MidgeF:** But, teacher forge on, teaching stuff that can be looked up, avoiding copyright discussions and trying to get kids to meet the bullet point standards

**BJB2:** well, gosh, you're in a dark mood, Midge!

**MidgeF:** I don't know how my daughter does it teaching Kindergarten kids the work she did in 2nd grade

**BJB2** . o O ( must be all the news about the flu )

**MidgeF:** Yes, I am as I am wondering what people are going to do about things

**MidgeF:** Teachers are not knowledgeable about celebrations that do not match their own. How many students in the past had to participate in Christmas activities when this was not their religion? Schools decided that holidays should not be recognized or celebrated leaving teachers to wonder about teaching Veteran's Day, Flag Day, Constitution Day which ARE part of the curriculum.

**MidgeF:** The younger grade teachers are inviting the local Iraq vets to the classroom

**BJB2:** When I was teaching I had a bulletin board for Celebrations...

**JeffC:** my oldest kid had a veteran's day assembly on Monday... I've never seen so many old people in hats before!

**MidgeF:** Yes, it was encouraged to demonstrate creativity.

**BJB2:** and tried to post as many cultural observations as I could...many cultures celebrate independence, changing of seasons, harvest time, etc

**MidgeF:** Teachers in my grad classes told me that their schools told them to omit the Pilgrim lessons

**MidgeF:** because they came here for religious reasons

**MidgeF:** and focus instead on being thankful

**BJB2:** celebrations should be taught like anything else...integrated throughout the year just as Black History should be, and not relegated to one month or one holiday

**MidgeF:** I think this is where this is going

**BJB2** nods to Midge....do you think this is bad?

**BJB2** . o O ( many cultures also have celebrations about thanksgiving or being thankful )

**MidgeF**: I think this is why parents pull kids out of school to go on vacation

**MidgeF**: I think they don't care if their kids study black history or pilgrims or gingerbread

**BJB2**: <http://www.kidlink.org/KIDPROJ/MCC/>

**MidgeF**: Which is why so many schools have mandated attendance

**MidgeF**: Yes, I have investigated that site. So many good ideas and a fast way to learn about other cultures.

**MidgeF**: But, it is not a bullet point on a test

**BJB2** sighs

**MidgeF**: Yes, so much to be concerned about.

**MidgeF**: I checked my links early for this year.

**JeffC**: with all these bullet points... can't we just shoot the tests?

**MidgeF**: Thanksgiving is quite late and is only covered in MA in third grade

**MidgeF**: Massachusetts is the worst. You must pass a test to graduate from high school and underperforming students are put in special groups early

**MidgeF**: It cost \$2 billion dollars a year. No wonder we have no money

**MidgeF**: I thought this was quite a controversial topic and I made it part of a mandated character ed

**MidgeF**: class for teachers in an underperforming city school.

**BJB2**: char ed for the teachers or for the students?

**MidgeF**: Their answer? Have me come to their school and teach it for them.

**BJB2** . o O ( should have been for the teachers )

**MidgeF**: Their school must show that they are doing something to be a strong performer.

**MidgeF**: One teacher flatly refused to attend . He went to his real job instead.



**MidgeF:** It was killer 5 hours

**MidgeF:** But, I don't think it changed anything

**MidgeF:** They didn't feel that there was anything to celebrate.

**JeffC:** changing status quo in education is almost flat out impossible.

**MidgeF:** One teacher tried to celebrate sports and music "heroes"

**JeffC** has to run... but will stay logged in and lurk.

**MidgeF:** Bye, Jeff. I am really done

**BJB2:** what happened to the sports and music heroes idea?

**JeffC:** ok

**MidgeF:** I did know that we wouldn't get the crowd we had last month.

**BJB2** . o O ( everyone is studying for the tests? )

**MidgeF:** It depends on when the "online assignment" is given. Probably October,

**BJB2** nods sadly. I have a couple very cool endorsements of TI that will be in the November newsletter, Midge...so hang in there

**MidgeF:** The college semester plays into this mix. They assign the heavy collaboration in the middle of the semester.

**MidgeF:** It shows that "teacher education" is changing too.

**BJB2** nods.

**MidgeF:** I wasn't impressed with many of the assignments given in my own grad class.

**MidgeF:** One teacher is obviously teaching the same activity-project as in 2005

**MidgeF:** I did not link the project I made to my main page until today

**MidgeF:** I noticed the "hits" were there twice/year at the same time

**MidgeF:** That's when she uses mine as an example

**MidgeF:** [http://www.MidgeFrazel.net/hayden\\_studyguide.html](http://www.MidgeFrazel.net/hayden_studyguide.html)

**MidgeF:** It's a poetry assignment in a Language Arts in Technology class

**BJB2:** cool. Thanks, Midge

**MidgeF:** I have only checked a few links

**MidgeF:** The other student and I enjoyed the project but most were not impressed with a "black" project

**MidgeF:** Well, I guess that's a wrap for this session.

**BJB2** nods...sorry, got distracted by a bunch of people in reception

**MidgeF:** Do you have an 8 o'clock session?

**BJB2:** yes...Pam Berger is doing her web tools for education

**MidgeF:** Well, then I will stop and put on my bathrobe.

**MidgeF:** Thanks BJ. Cya next time

**BJB2** hugs. Take care...and don't get sick!

**MidgeF:** No flu.....