Title of Session: Teaching Teachers
Moderator: Dianne Allen
Title of File: 20070412teachers
Date: April 12, 2007

Room: Teaching Teachers Group

DianneA: Welcome to today's Teaching Teachers session

DianneA: Have you come with an agenda /expectations of today's session?

JoseMH: Here to learn

DianneA nods

DianneA: if you like to check out the Discussion item for April Session you'll see we are open to suggestions

DianneA: If no one comes up with a more pertinent current issue we might well run with how Tapped In might support peer mentoring for teachers for professional development

BJB2: interesting, Dianne. I just read somewhere that mentoring is not very effective

DianneA looks to Bj to elaborate

BJB2: even though it's been done for many years

BJB2: Dianne, perhaps a reminder to go to the Actions menu in the top right of the chat window and click on detach

DianneA: than lets start with some tips ..

DianneA: BJ has given you the first one

LindaRob: That was a good one. Thanks

DianneA: do what Bj says, and also repeat that, this time opting for the larger text

DianneA: The second regular starter involves introducing ourselves ...

DianneA: where we are from, what our teaching area is

DianneA: I am from Wollongong NSW Australia, I am currently focused on professional development by mentoring and reflective research of practice

BJB2: I teach remedial communication in Pennsylvania, US

LindaRob: I am from West Point, New York. I am the Educational Technologist at the elementary school.

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

DianneA: Thanks Bj, David, Linda

DianneA: how about you Jose?

JoseMH: I am a graduate student at Texas A&M Kingsville. Instructional Technology is my study.

DianneA: thanks Jose

LindaRob: It seems we are a very diverse group.

DianneA: If no one comes up with a more pertinent current issue we might well run with how Tapped In might support peer mentoring for teachers for professional development

JoseMH: Great

LindaRob: That would be great

DavidWe smiles

DianneA: so does anyone have a pertinent current issue around 'teaching teachers' or mentoring ...?

DavidWe has one thought but will wait to see if our guests have contributions

JoseMH: no

LindaRob: Do you have any suggestions for getting older teachers to buy into the technology

BJB2 figured Linda would ask that question!

BJB2: Linda, sometimes it's the older teachers who are the leaders in tech!

DianneA: Ok, with two technology folk that looks like the goer, and it is not unrelated to my fall back position!

LindaRob: It such a difficult thing. I've used almost all of my tricks.

BJB2 . o O (although you may not be experiencing that)

DianneA puts on her elder hat!

DianneA: OK, every one ... let's start this way ....

DianneA: how did you get started in 'tech' and or Tapped In?

LindaRob: My master's program was technology. I'm taking a pbs class right now and one of our activities is Tapped IN

DianneA: So Linda's intro is course work and accreditation and assignment

JeffC: well... there was something on wwwedu yesterday about how tech isn't used in schools in general.

DianneA: anyone else?

JeffC: let me see if I can find it.

DavidWe: I have a topic - I think it is quite interesting, Dianne - but it might involve a little setting up

DianneA listens to David

DavidWe . o O (math <--> technology<-->teaching/school reform/etc.)

DavidWe: Just came back from the annual math teachers' conference

DavidWe . o O (15,000 math folks in Atlanta)

BJB2 hopes David will expand on his formula

LindaRob: Can we leave out the math part? Not my forte.

DavidWe: that's integral (bad pun, sorry), Linda

LindaRob: That's Ok

DavidWe: I'll be back in Atlanta in June for NECC (technology folks)

JoseMH: I deal with private school educators and have found they embrace technology.

DianneA: My intro was a personal one, I was referred to TI from an email list interchange

DianneA: I was looking to try and develop a professional development network for relatively distanced practising professionals

DavidWe: Jeff and I (Jeff is the presenter, I'm the helper) are doing a 6 hour workshop on Tapped In, there

JeffC: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wwwedu/message/9558

DavidWe: so, the challenge is to PUSH NCTM to look at more technology...

JeffC interrupts David briefly to post the link to the article that discusses why tech isn't used.

DavidWe: this year they chose (for a variety of reasons) not to have computer labs for people to use in presentations or to show-off new software from exhibitors

LindaRob: Why was that?

DavidWe: Well, money/lack of widespread appeal/a host of other reasons...?

DavidWe: I can't tell you precisely - no one has been able to tell me

LindaRob: If we are to bring students into the 21st century as far as technology goes, I'm surprised at the hold on the tech.

DavidWe: so, trying to encourage that has been something that has been part of my "mission" since I got into this field

LindaRob: It's not an easy task.

DianneA: thanks David

DianneA: that makes two missioners

DavidWe: On the other hand, ISTE (the organization that sponsors NECC) - not done, Dianne

DavidWe: tends to promote TECHNOLOGY - but often unconnected with topic-areas (math/science/language arts/social studies, etc.)

DianneA: Jose, what brought/brings you into tech?

DavidWe . o O (last but not least....one more thought, Dianne)

JoseMH: Home schoolers

DianneA: sorry David

JenoraS joined the room.

DianneA listens to David

DianneA: Hi Jenora

DavidWe: There is teacher education that has a role in BOTH worlds (tech and (for me) math) where teacher educators need to get some content across, some technology (personal favorites?) and also train young people to be teachers

DavidWe: so, three big circles overlapping more or less

JenoraS: Hello Dianne! Sorry for being late!!!

DianneA remembers Jenora from a recent T&T session

DavidWe: If students don't learn about teaching math with technology when they are pre-service teachers, they've missed out on formative learning experiences

DianneA nods to David

DavidWe needs to draw things on a whiteboard but will end it there

LindaRob: I agree.

DavidWe: So, that's what I'm concerned about with respect to teaching teachers and encouraging more interaction between the TECH world and the academic-subject world

DavidWe is done

DianneA: Bj, what brought/brings you into tech?

LindaRob: My problem is our school doesn't seem to hire many new teachers.

DavidWe is actually going to talk with Mary Thompson (teacher educator at the University of Houston about this, tomorrow)

DavidWe: How long have you been teaching, Linda?

DianneA: Jeff, what brought/brings you into tech?

LindaRob: 29 years

DavidWe smiles

DavidWe admires Linda's longevity in teaching

LindaRob: Only 9 in the tech field. Before that kindergarten, and other grades

DianeP joined the room.

DavidWe: Hi, Diane. Welcome

DianneA notes to Jenora we are discussing a bit about why tech hasn't got off the ground properly in education

JenoraS shakes her head

DavidWe: I think it HAS gotten off the ground in some places, Dianne - I know some of them

DianeP: Hi! It took me a while to get into the chat, but I finally made it.

DianneA: and whether the teacher's age has anything to do with it

BJB2: I got involved in tech because I liked the freedom it gave me to try new things

DianneA: and what is people's experience with coming into tech themselves

DianeP: I agree with David. It has gotten off the ground in some places.

LindaRob: I think tech gave me the freedom to do something new and open ended.

DianneA: David can you expand ...

JoseMH: I agree BJ

DianneA: which places? what do you think has made the difference so that it has worked there?

DianeP: Places that have good implementation, planning and training have made it work

LindaRob: That's exactly the catch, Diane

DavidWe: There is a school in my neighborhood (private school, expensive) in which every 6th grader and up has a tablet PC

LindaRob: That would be great. How do they use them?

DavidWe: Technology is as much a part of what goes on in that school as a pencil is part of what goes on in other schools

DavidWe: Everywhere, all the time, without thinking that it's a big deal

DianneA remembers the PC/pencil analogy

JoseMH: My wife teaches in a similar school

DianeP: David - one of the problems we have is that the tech is there, but not used well

DavidWe: Of course, Diane

JenoraS: I'm currently student teaching at a school where technology is prevalent but, some teachers there are still scared of computers and any other new technology.

DavidWe: If teachers stand at the front of the room and lecture in a traditional way - all the technology will make very little difference

LindaRob: I deal with that issue daily. They don't seem to see the need to use it.

DianneA: OK, what was it that convinced each of us that tech is not frightening?

DavidWe: Learning will happen 24 hours a day/7 days a week - if students always have access to a computer and the Internet when they want/need it

DianeP: that is part of the problem with my school - plenty of tech - not used well

DianneA BJ and Jose are excited by new and different

MaureenB joined the room.

DavidWe: There needs to be a plan, Diane

DavidWe waves to Maureen

LindaRob: When I saw what could be done with it, I was hooked

DianneA: thanks Linda

MaureenB waves to all

DavidWe: there needs to be support (prof. development for teachers/technology support for the equipment)

DianeP: We have a lot of teachers willing - but the planning isn't there at the district level

DavidWe: Ideally, we shouldn't have to worry about teaching "technology"

LindaRob: I agree

DavidWe: It's like pausing to teach kids how to use a pencil - THEY KNOW ALREADY

JoseMH: Technology can be a powerful tool if used correctly

DianeP: I also like the freedom it gives to offer a lot of variety to the class, and teach multi-levels easily. that's what hooked me.

LindaRob: The problem can also be that the students know more than the teacher and that's scary.

DianneA: Diane can you elaborate a bit more please

DavidWe: Many teachers can feel uncomfortable if they feel the students know more about THE COMPUTER than they do - this doesn't matter - the teachers know more about TEACHING than the students (hopefully)

LindaRob: But it still frightens them. They feel insecure.

DavidWe: Well, Linda, what would make them less frightened, less insecure?

DianneA: It takes a teacher comfortable with their own expertise to let others be experts instead of them

JenoraS: I agree with Linda

DianeP: We need to get the teachers to focus on the lessons and the quality of those lessons - the technology should be secondary. All they need to know is enough to grade what the students do - of course it would be nice if they new more!

DianneA: that is a fairly rare personal trait, it seems

DavidWe: That's a question that I try to answer ALL THE TIME with my work with teachers

JoseMH: yes

DavidWe: Isn't the first day/week/month/year of teaching terrifying to most teachers?

MaureenB: I have set up ITeams with my fourth grade students. They are welcomed in any and every class.

DavidWe . o O (Great idea, Maureen)

LindaRob: How do their teachers feel about them leaving the classroom to help another class?

DavidWe was on the A-V patrol in 5th grade

JoseMH: Great move

DavidWe got to leave class to set up the film projectors

DianneA grins at David

DavidWe: same thing

JoseMH: David the Great

MaureenB: They usually go during their recess but if they are supporting reading, the teachers have no problem

DianneA: that might be an answer David, familiarity early in life and so all we need to do is wait for Maureen's 4th graders to become teachers

DavidWe: Well, that is one thing, but, I think we can do SOME things in the mean time

LindaRob: Exactly...but in the meantime

DianneA: I unpacked a radio at about 11

DavidWe: I think we all like learning new things in a safe, supportive environment

DianneA: I didn't get it back together but machines don't frighten me most times

BJB2 . o O (like Tapped In)

JenoraS nods

DavidWe: We saw people (my early work with teacher education at the Math Forum) whose lives were changed by learning about technology

DianeP: supportive environment is the key David you are right.

DavidWe . o O (Like BJ)

DianneA: and when I remember they are machines and I can turn off the plug I know who's in control

MaureenB: I have a student teacher and I insist and facilitate a tech piece with every lesson she does

LindaRob: That's essential I think

DavidWe: It's not rocket science, Diane - people need supportive environments and time to play and learn - whether they are in 4th grade or in 25th grade

DavidWe: mentor teachers to young teachers...

LindaRob: I think you hit the nail on the head. Time... to play and learn

DavidWe: It's what we give children - it tends to work

DianneA notices that David has made the connection with my earlier suggestion of topic

LindaRob: Yes it does. But teachers never seem to get that time.

DianeP: But so many times teachers are taught something in a 1/2 hour and then the follow-through is never given. They find it hard to remember or hard to implement - and there's no one to help

DavidWe: right, Linda - but that needs to CHANGE also

LindaRob: I agree.

DavidWe: Too much new stuff - requires a new way of looking at the structure of school - we are still using a 100 year old model of the school day

DianeP: Our district is actually cutting back on tech services & personnel in order to meet testing goals

LindaRob: I think it needs to start with administration seeing the need for educational change.

DavidWe: There are ALWAYS going to be limitations (budget, time, goals)

MaureenB: and yet Tech can help in that area

DavidWe: Right now TESTING is Job #1

DavidWe . o O (that has to CHANGE, too)

LindaRob: That's a sad thing.

DianeP: We have a Classrooms of the future grant that was supposed to be up and running this year

DianeP: so far nothing is up or running. all that has been accomplished is a fight over the Mac/PC platform

MaureenB: I saw an article where they are considering allowing the use of computers on state testing but the playing field has to be leveled

DianneA: Can I ask another question to take us to another place?

JenoraS: sure

DianeP: ask away

JoseMH: What happened Diane?

LindaRob: Interesting.. I'm giving an online SocSt test to 3rd graders next week.

DianeP: we are still waiting for the set up - teachers got to choose their platform and they ordered a mixture of mac & pc

DianneA: It is a question about mentoring, doing it or receiving it, to be supported while developing tech skills to support teaching

DianeP: Linda - how do you format and administer your test?

DianeP: I teach in a computer lab

DianneA lets the testing queries have the floor for a bit

LindaRob: It is a program purchased by our district from the Bookette Company.

DianeP: I would love to push the apps classes I teach to the elementary & ms level and focus on programming and also on helping teachers implement tech

DianneA: Maureen you mentioned mentoring your student teacher

DianeP: if teachers could bring their lessons to me and we could work together add the tech aspect in - web quests - online assessments - research techniques -etc. I could focus on the implementation while teaching the teachers how to do it the next time

LindaRob: That's what my job consists of.

DianneA: has anyone experienced being mentored to implement tech in teaching?

LindaRob: No

DavidWe has done it (been the mentor)

DianeP: I would LOVE to get the curriculum to work that way - but as David said - the old style ed system is holding us back

MaureenB: yes I have noticed that the student teachers I have gotten in the past two year were not coming in with tech skills

JoseMH: no

DianeP: I have been an unofficial mentor

MaureenB: so I make sure that I do a major project using Tech when they are with me

DavidWe: That is what concerns me, Maureen - young teachers are not learning about technology with respect to education in school

DianneA: OK let's look at folks experience of mentoring others to use tech in their teaching ..

DianeP: I am working with an English teacher now to set up a web site/lesson. We are trying to get our district to allow her to start using a blog/message board format for journals

DavidWe: sounds great, Diane

JenoraS: What type of project Maureen?

MaureenB: podcast

LindaRob: Have you investigated gaggle.net?

MaureenB: or video cast

MaureenB: Power point presentations

JenoraS: never heard of podcast, what's that?

MaureenB: like a radio show

JenoraS: Oh ok.

DianeP: Maureen I am jealous - our district has restricted our computer access to the point of almost stifling

LindaRob: We have a lot of restrictions also

MaureenB: we were doing persuasive essays and we used those skills to do an audio presentation

DianeP: the only thing you mentioned that we can do is PowerPoint

DianeP: students can't even email "legally" in the school

DavidWe: What's the concern, Diane, in your school?

JenoraS: That's too bad!

LindaRob: That's why we use www.gaggle.net It is a very secure program.

MaureenB: if you set something up in Tapped In which is safe, they won't let you?

DianeP: early on when they implemented the tech we had almost free reign - it ended up with threats over email and students accessing things they shouldn't

DavidWe: We have interacted with school district folks on behalf of teachers wanting to use Tapped In - keep that in mind

LindaRob: I can understand their concern.

DianeP: so they went the total opposite way and locked down mostly everything

DavidWe: can't students pull the fire alarms?

DavidWe: can't students break windows?

DianeP: They can't even right click on the Internet

DavidWe: can't students use curse words?

DianeP: They view tech differently - and after 9 years I'm tired of arguing the point

DavidWe smiles

DianeP: I just try to do whatever I can!

LindaRob: I understand

DianneA wonders if in the midst of these kinds of frustrations whether there is then space to be involved here at Tapped In in a more formal mentoring program, mentoring

teachers who start to come to Tapped In, and then find it the supportive learning environment needed to work more with tech

DavidWe: Administrative leadership is key

LindaRob: I agree

DavidWe: If Administrators are implementing rules to LIMIT tech use...one needs to CHANGE that

JoseMH: Perception of technology has to change.

MaureenB: Our middle school has the one on one laptop incentive. (but not our ES which is me). They are constantly finding ways around blocking. Just have to keep ahead of them

DianneA wonders what would happen to admin if their use of tech were limited ...

LindaRob: Kids are more tech savvy than we think.

DavidWe: of course they are

JoseMH: My 4 year old is tech savvy

DavidWe: but use that to an advantage not as a reason for concern

LindaRob: Correct!

DianeP: OH how I wish we could

MaureenB: very true that's why I created our ITeam

DianneA: Maureen can you elaborate on the creation of that IT team a bit more ...

DianneA: how did you start? how long have you been at it?

DianneA: what did it involve negotiating with admin?

MaureenB: I teach the kids to trouble shoot the simpler problems or a program that the students in the younger grades are using so they can help the teacher

LindaRob: How do you get the message for help?

MaureenB: those printing problems like is the printer turned on

MaureenB: are all the connections secure

DianneA grins at Maureen, very important that switch control!

MaureenB: internal IM

MaureenB: or email

DianneA Dianne looks at the clock ....

JoseMH: Or cockpit error

DianneA: this has been a very fruitful discussion

LindaRob: Darn. We're not allowed to use IM

BJB2: the next Teaching Teachers discussion will be on May 3

MaureenB: just internal between classes

DianneA: you may notice that we have a discussion thread here at Teaching Teachers

DianneA: can you join the group, and join the discussion

DianneA: and Maureen could you work at the elaboration so that we can continue to work with this aspect next session in May?

LindaRob: Hope to maybe

MaureenB: sure

DianeP: no im for us either Linda

JoseMH: Hopefully

BJB2: Thanks, Dianne.

LindaRob: Thanks Dianne

JoseMH: Yes thank you

DianneA: Maureen you could post your description to us in the Discussion thread between now and May, and others can interact out of session

DianeP: thanks Dianne!