

Title of Session: Global Project Based Learning

Moderator: Linda Ullah

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Room: After School Online Room

BJ: Welcome to the Global PBL discussion with Linda Ullah.

BJ: We usually start discussions in Tapped In with introductions

LindaU: I'll start> Hi, I'm Linda Ullah. I'm teacher in residence at Foothill College-a community college in Los Altos Hills, CA. We run a teacher oriented technology staff development program called LINC (Learning in New Media Classrooms.) One of our online classes, and my passion is Global Project Based Learning. I've just returned from Bangladesh, and I'm hoping to try to set up a partnership with a school there. One of the issues, however is infrastructure.

BJ: I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania and a helpdesk volunteer for Tapped In

SusanR: I am a K to 8 Occasional Teacher from Ottawa, Ontario

MargaretHe: I am the facilitator at the Region 8 TLTC in Monroe Louisiana. We train area teachers to use technology in the curriculum.

DougP: I'm the Computers in the Classroom Consultant for Greater Essex County Public Schools

LindaU: Let's start with a common definition of global Project Based learning-
<http://www.garlic.com/~lullah/gpbl/topic01/reading01.html>. You will need to scroll down to the bottom to read their definition.

LindaU: If you click on the link, you'll go there.

LindaU: oops... try again <http://www.garlic.com/~lullah/gpbl/topic1/t1read1.html>

DougP: I wasn't able to get the reading. Kept getting 404 errors until I backed off to:
<http://www.garlic.com/~lullah/gpbl/>

LindaU: This should work now.

DougP: got it

MaryGst4 joined the room.

BJ: Hi, Mary.

LindaU: Hi mary, We are looking at

<http://www.garlic.com/~lullah/gpbl/topic1/t1read1.html>

BJ: Are you here for the Global Project Based Learning discussion?

LindaU: to get a common definition of global project based learning. Meanwhile feel free to introduce yourself.

LindaU: Have you all gotten the link. I apologize for my sloppy fingers (getting the url copied and pasted correctly.

BJ nods.

MargaretHe: Yes I have it.

SusanR: Got it, Linda

MaryGst4: Yes, I am. I'm a technology coordinator at a k-8 public school, interested in all kinds of learning. Don't know anything about global project based learning but it sounds interesting.

LindaU: Let me ask this.. when you finished reading.. does this definition fit with what you were thinking that global pbl is... if not what is your definition?

DougP: I'm intrigued by the comment that technology integrated into the project overcomes language barriers

LindaU: What intrigues you about this?

DougP: My son just returned from a Canada World Youth project In Uruguay. He had to learn Spanish to survive and also to just work with others on their various projects.

MargaretHe: I'm interested in how that works.

LindaU: I'll tell you a funny story.. I think BJ has heard it many times.

LindaU: Several years ago when I was an elementary school teacher, my students did a project with students in Sao Paulo Brazil.

LindaU: In our initial email contact we got emails signed "slugs and holds" and the student's name.

LindaU: My students couldn't figure this out and were quite offended

LindaU: Can you figure out why the Brazilian students would sign their emails this way?

LindaU: I'll take all guesses...

MargaretHe: Did they mean hugs and kisses?

LindaU: very good.

DougP: I can see the hugs part...

LindaU: that is what we finally figured out by going to a Portuguese/English web based translator.

LindaU: It allowed my students to understand how language translation and interpretation can get in the way of true communication.

LindaU: How often do we in the U.S. criticize others who are not native English speakers because of the mistakes they make.

MargaretHe: It happens quite often in northeast Louisiana.

MargaretHe: I'm embarrassed to admit that!

LindaU: And Margaret do you sometimes find that a southern accent is interpreted as less than educated English by "northerners"?

MargaretHe: Always!

DougP: Why is that?

MargaretHe: Unless it is accompanied by a pretty face.

MargaretHe: I think simply because it is different and also the stereotype that has always existed.

SusanR: I am sure it happens with the "valley" accent in Ottawa, Ontario.

LindaU: It has to do with stereotypes and prejudices.

LindaU: My thought is that by connecting school aged children we can help to overcome some of these stereotypes and prejudices.

LindaU: My students here in CA were amazed to find out that Brazilians don't necessarily like Mexican food, and their culture is very different from Mexican culture.

LindaU: They also thought all Brazilians were soccer (futbol) fans...

LindaU: Boy were they surprised to find out they were working with a bunch of Chicago Bulls fans.

LindaU: Doug, does that help with your thoughts about gpbl overcoming language barriers?

LindaU: any other surprises in the definition?

LindaU: or thoughts about it?

BJ: the technology part ...

LindaU: tell me more...

BJ: you mentioned that you were planning a collaborative project with Bangladesh...

LindaU: right.

BJ: but that the infrastructure may not be there?

LindaU: exactly...

LindaU: I ran into the same problem with Brazil in the mid 1990s

LindaU: In the United States most schools have high speed access to the Internet; however in many emerging countries Internet access is still unstable, slow and EXTREMELY expensive. Often, still the level of technology (older computers) limits what software can be used and what browser versions can be used. This affects how we can work together on collaborative projects. If you were to be working with a school in one of these countries, how might you work around these issues?

SusanR: the email component should be ok

LindaU: The school I want to work with in Bangladesh has computers, and the principal is determined to get his staff and students ready for gbpl but the Internet a big problem.

LindaU: Yes, when the "system" is up and working.

LindaU: When we worked with the school in Brazil we discovered that even our email (because the students were attaching documents) would crash their system.

LindaU: We forget what it was like before we had high speed internet in our schools.

BJ: there is always snail mail

DougP: Even with the best equipment and connectivity, we all have our moments. The challenge is to have it ready when the kids are ready for it. Before we had reliable connectivity in our schools, I would capture email and pages from my personal account and bring it into school the next day where we could interact with it on a delayed basis.

LindaU: ah... true... but the beauty of technology is to make the connections in real time when possible... like we are doing now.

DougP: It wasn't immediate, but it was reliable.

MargaretHe: That is a great approach. Everyone has times when the system is down.

LindaU: Exactly Doug.

SusanR: start small..basic email exchange..no attachments...

LindaU: We did many work arounds with the Brazilian school until we figured out what we realistically could and couldn't do given the technology available to us.

BJ: so one solution could be to find third party support?

LindaU: exactly BJ.

BJ: o O (local university, etc.)

LindaU: There are some organizations that are working to wire emerging nations.

DougP: Another approach would be to have milestone deadlines on either end and then exchange project status at that time.

LindaU: <http://www.wirelessafrica.com/opener.html#> is a new organization that is looking for partners for teacher training and potentially global K-12 projects.

LindaU: Their web site is flash oriented, so may be difficult to access if you don't have the Flash plug in.

DougP: or a 21.6K connection...

LindaU: This intrigues me because they are trying to get basic infrastructure in Nigeria and Ghana for education and health.

LindaU: Another organization that is trying to help emerging nations "get wired" is Across World. <http://www.acrossworld.com/>

LindaU: What I found fascinating is three and a half years ago when I was in Japan most families did not have Internet access because it was so expensive...a year ago when I returned DSL lines were universal and inexpensive.

LindaU: Cell phone technology has taken off faster and bigger in other countries than it has here...and...

LindaU: some emerging nations are moving faster toward wireless technology because they don't have the wires to slow down their thinking/planning process.

LindaU: How do you think this will affect our ability to connect with schools in other countries?

DougP: I'm picturing a school with kids on computers and the other end has kids using cell phones texting back to them.

LindaU: yup/

DougP: Doesn't that limit the type of things that could be accomplished though?

LindaU: Now consider this. Just a short while ago I felt discouraged because I felt the digital divide would prevent village children in emerging nations from having access to internet technology... now I'm wondering if they'll move ahead of us like Japan has.--and how will that affect teaching and learning?

MargaretHe: That's what I was wondering..

LindaU: Good thought Doug...

LindaU: My cell phone has a complete web browser, and both video and still digital camera.

SusanR: Interesting point, Linda

LindaU: What can students do with this kind of technology?

DougP: My cell phone has a battery that's good for about 2 hours.

DougP: How about Palm technology with wireless?

LindaU: Imagine students on the Great Wall of China (school field trip) taking digital video with their cell phones and posting it on the web in real time for students around the world... with full audio explaining to them about their field trip and what they are learning about their own history and culture.

LindaU: Palms are another technology that are merging with cell phone technology.

MargaretHe: The ability to take pictures of the people and geography would have an impact.

DougP: Agreed. They seem to have mastered the concept of battery life well as well.

LindaU: sure beats BJ's snail mail doesn't it/

LindaU: and we are almost there..

BJ smiles

LindaU: Now what does that do to curriculum?

LindaU: Linda winks at Bj

LindaU: and to breaking down stereotypes and prejudices.

SusanR: Are we as teachers ready for these changes?

LindaU: Susan, you've asked the BIG questions.

LindaU: How do we prepare teachers to deal with this?

SusanR: We are still grappling with basic tech integration!

LindaU: I guarantee the students will discover many possibilities before we do.

SusanR: ..for the last 5 years

MargaretHe: Yes, so teachers need to get ready for them.

LindaU: That is the urgency...

LindaU: We need to make sure the student learn to use the rapidly emerging technologies which so easily seduce them for the right purposes..

SusanR: . o O (I must get one of these phone or palm gadgets)

LindaU: I'm open to your thoughts on this topic.

MargaretHe: Yes, I feel that old cell phone is an antique.

DougP: It's such a crap shoot. Everyone wants to latch onto the right technology and not invest in the flash in a pan stuff.

LindaU: true... aka Laser disks...

SusanR: Put a Palm on every student desk...

LindaU: Do you know what Bluetooth technology is and how it got its name?

DougP: You've been talking to Elliot Soloway, Sue?

MargaretHe: I've been to several workshops that use handhelds to integrate technology in the curriculum. Many good ideas..

MargaretHe: Haven't heard of Bluetooth?? What is it?

LindaU: Bluetooth was the name of a 10th or 11th century Nordic feudal lord.

DougP: I have Bluetooth in my new Powerbook and my iPaq.

LindaU: He united the unruly Nordic kingdoms

LindaU: Bluetooth is wireless technology that is supposed to unite the unruly technologies that previously didn't talk to each other.

SusanR has gadget envy

LindaU: The two main wireless technologies now are Bluetooth and WiFi

MargaretHe: Finally-a solution. I must see about that.

LindaU: Eventually... and I think in the not too distant future the world will be totally wireless

LindaU: We need to be ready educationally for this.

BJ: what is being done in Teacher Ed programs at the university level?

DougP: I can tell you that, at Windsor, they're turning out grads who think that the answer to every question is Powerpoint.

LindaU: Our center is engaged in provide tech integration staff development for teachers.

LindaU: What are the r-tecs doing?

SusanR: Everything is a Grassroots project here, Doug!

SusanR: web page building

LindaU: Here is the list of classes we teach: <http://www.foothill.edu/cgi/lincclass-db.cgi>

MargaretHe: Our area is working hard on the integration area, but equipment is old in some cases and not enough new technologies to keep up.

LindaU: We also do a summer institute : <http://linc.ca.campusgrid.net/home/Information>

MargaretHe left the room (signed off).

LindaU: The state of Calif now requires all teachers to meet certain technology proficiencies for credentialing.

LindaU: I think we are moving forward (good news) but the pace is uneven and maybe not well planned.

BJ: what about NETS from ISTE?

LindaU: but, on a happy note, maybe that is the way all change really takes place.

LindaU: <http://www.iste.org> yes.. these are the USs national technology standards.

LindaU: Just think a few years ago we could not have had this conversation because of distance

LindaU: and here we are... from two different countries discussion global project based learning and the implications of emerging technologies for global education.

DougP: distance and cost

LindaU: exactly...

LindaU: I'd like to wrap it up now... but I'll be back at another time to continue this conversation. You all are great...

BJ: Thanks, Linda. My mind is spinning!

SusanR: Thank you, Linda. This was enlightening.

LindaU: From islands of innovation to connecting

DougP: Thanks so much for taking the time to lead the discussion, Linda. I apologize for losing carrier and having to call back.

MaryGst7: Thanks, Linda and BJ.

LindaU: BJ tells me Feb 26 is my next GPBL discussion

SusanR: I am doing a lot of reflecting.

LindaU: Reflection is good.

DougP: Good night everyone.

LindaU: Glad we got spinning minds..

LindaU: thank you all

BJ waves goodnight.

SusanR: I have an improved understanding of GPBL

LindaU: fantastic