

Title of Session: GPBL - Projects That Make a Difference in the World

Moderator: Linda Ullah

Title of File: 20050929gpbl

Date: September 29, 2005

Room: Hot Tub Conference

LindaU: Hi.. shall we get started?

BjB nods to Linda. Intros?

KerenS: ...sure..

LindaU: Hi, I'm Linda Ullah. I work at a community college in the San Francisco Bay Area. My passion is working with teachers and classrooms around the world.

MarkAH: I'm teaching pre-service teachers at the University of Oregon to create Webquests

KerenS: I'm a technology teacher on special assignment in the Los Angeles area, and a student in the Online Masters of Ed Tech at Apu

DavidWe: I'm David Weksler - typist extraordinaire in New Jersey where I help people learn more about Tapped In

LindaU giggles

LindaU: I've just returned from Pakistan where I met with a former teacher about a project she has in mind re: staff development for teachers there. I've also just been in El Salvador teaching in a joint MA in Instructional Tech program with San Jose State and the Univ. of Don Bosco.

KerenS: ...sounds fascinating and important Linda

DavidWe: Cool beans!

ShanaD: very interesting

LindaU: At least interesting.. but what it has triggered in my mind is how can we work together internationally to create an educational venue so that teachers and students can all learn, benefit and help each other.

MarkAH . o O (wikis)

LindaU: enhance your concept Mark...

ShanaD: do you have any suggestions how that could work

MarkAH: I should think wikis would be a good environment for communications between folks in an international learning community

MarkAH: We all work together on a project and create something in the wiki

LindaU: Do you have some good examples of global project wikis?

MarkAH: No, I'm hoping to hear something about that here

MarkAH: ... or whatever else might work....

ShanaD: what exactly is wiki

LindaU: I've not personally explored wikis for this, but I have tried other things.

MarkAH: a wiki is a word processing environment supporting multiple authors.....

ShanaD: ok thank you

LindaU: Here is a good definition.. click on the link:
<http://wiki.org/wiki.cgi?WhatIsWiki>

DavidWe: Community-built encyclopedia - people can add what they know or what they THINK they know

DavidWe: Lots of cross-referencing

MarkAH: ... the classic example is no the Wikipedia... a community authored encyclopedia

ShanaD: thank you

LindaU: I find that all over the world (at least the places I've been) ministries of education, teachers, administrators, students, and universities are all interested in many of the same educational issues, but with a different twist depending on their unique cultures.

MarkAH: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

LindaU: The developing countries are in desperate need of integrating educational technology into their classrooms so they can create a viable global workforce.

KerenS: ...What issues do you find are common to the various people/places around the world, Linda?

LindaU: oops.. I answered your question Keren before you asked it.. hmhhh

KerenS: That's perfectly ok! Thanks...

LindaU: The digital divide issue is huge in developing nations...as well as is the educational gap between those who are able to go to school..and those who can't

LindaU: The other issue.. that my Pakistani contact person is concerned about is the lack of standards in the K-8 schools

DavidWe smiles

DavidWe . o O (No Child Left Behind?)

LindaU: I hope not..

LindaU: But standards are not bad.. it is the way they are administered????tested???

DavidWe smiles

KerenS: ...sometimes to the exclusion of pbl..

LindaU: There is a proposal that is waiting for the Pakistani president's signature to try to create a standard at least for the military schools in Pakistan to assure that there is at least a minimum standard or quality to the K-8 education for students in these schools..

LindaU: Interestingly, I find more interest in PBL these days outside the U.S.

DavidWe nods

DavidWe: Sadly

KerenS: ...could you say more about that?

LindaU: Both the Chinese and the Japanese ministries of education are moving their schools in this direction.

LindaU: My class in El Salvador (which focuses on PBL and emerging technologies) is filled mostly with folks from the ministry of educ. there.

KerenS: ... so you're working with El Salvador nationals,....in conjunction with San Jose and Don Bosco?

LindaU: The standards/standardized testing movement interrupted much of the good pbl in the U.S., but I'm happy to say there are still great PBL teachers and we run a great pbl/tech program here at Foothill College for teachers.

LindaU: Yes, these are Salvadorians in the program.

DavidWe: . o O (3 cheers for Foothill College)

LindaU: I'm hoping to work with the Pakistani government on their proposal should it get funded as well... (more pbl/technology training for teachers... I've worked with teachers in Japan.. and I know folks doing PBL training in China... I've also been talking to folks in Bangladesh about pbl/tech training for teachers there.. and will be meeting next week with folks from New Zealand...

LindaU: Yes, PBL is alive and well... but now for the concept of global pbl..and ideas we can share.

MarkAH: What similarities do you see in the approaches to PBL in these different countries?

LindaU: I think most of the ministry of ed (top down) approach is based on the 1990's in the U.S. when PBL was being more widely accepted there.

LindaU: There are many organizations sponsoring global pbl projects such as iEarn, Global School Net, Thinkquest, Think.com, Global Learning Communities, ePals, etc.

KerenS: earlier you mention their concern for integration to create a viable global workforce interesting that seems to set the stage for pbl

LindaU: Absolutely.

LindaU: Interesting, these counties are trying to break into the global economy. Many of these countries are poor, have few resources, and know that they MUST quickly come up to speed technologically if their economies are going to survive at all.

DavidWe: Do you know about Tom Friedman's latest book, Linda?

LindaU: They are well aware of the SCANS skills and PBL/Technology are at the top of their list (along with basic literacy, etc.)

KerenS: ... what's the general state of their tech infrastructure?

LindaU: Businesses and industries won't come to their countries if they don't have a workforce that can work collaboratively, solve complex problems use technological tools, etc.

LindaU: Well behind us, but growing..

LindaU: I think wireless technologies are taking hold faster in the developing world because they were not able to do the hard wiring phase.

LindaU: Internet access is still expensive for private use in these countries.. and low speed.. dial up.. per minute or per hour charges.

KerenS: ...sort of skip the cables and go straight to wirelessthat works!

DavidWe nods

LindaU: Bear in mind that in a country where \$300/mo would be a good salary.. a \$10 per hour internet connection is very expensive.

KerenS: If they can get business up and running and schools/education that sounds like a good place to start .. and grow into the homes?

LindaU: When I first went to Japan.. c 5 or so years ago.. (and they are NOT a developing nation now)... they had expensive per minute dial up.. but a couple of years later.. DSL had taken hold in a big way.. It was a dramatic change.

LindaU: Yes.. and the teacher training component is huge!

LindaU: There are schools with a lot of technology.. and schools with none (village schools for example)

DavidWe: I imagine the disparity is HUGE

LindaU: Many developing countries have American Schools..and these are all wired and the teachers are doing great things.. but then their student population is the wealthy and influential.

LindaU: These countries still have low literacy rates.. they have a enormous task ahead of them.

LindaU: They still deal with basic issues such as decent housing, food for all, medical needs, etc.

LindaU: Think of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.. and know that many of their citizens are at the bottom of his hierarchy.

LindaU: However, one of my thoughts is that those of us working with schools in wealthier nations can through global pbl help the schools in emerging countries.

MarkAH sorry, got to run. thanks Linda

LindaU: My other thought is that the Katrina/Rita victims and the Asian Tsunami victims could work vial gpbl to help each other heal from their traumas

DavidWe: Very interesting idea, Linda

LindaU: The issue for me is how can we help these schools to do this?

KerenS:both ideas arehuge

LindaU: Especially when schools have been wiped out in these areas.

DavidWe: In Hurricane Central we were trying to look into some ways that TI and other online resources could support displaced students/teachers/PEOPLE, essentially

BjB: the main obstacle is the time zone difference...so an asynch opportunity would probably work best

LindaU: Yes, exactly David..

LindaU: yes.. time zone and language...

LindaU: as well as some cultural issues.

LindaU: Threaded discussions are best.. as is email.

LindaU: The El Salvadorian teachers in my class talked about a teddy bear project they'd participated in (some were min. of ed folks, some teachers, and some Univ of Don Bosco faculty..in my class)

LindaU: There are many versions of this project. They had a Teddy bear in their classroom who went home each night with a different student. The student kept an eJournal of everything the Teddy Bear did. At the end of the time.. the bear was mailed to the next school in another country..

KerenS smiles

KerenS: Did they have a certain focus in what the bear did, or just things in general?

LindaU: Just what they did as a family..

LindaU: I think this was through Kidslink.

KerenS: ... great cultural exchange how did they handle the language issues?

BjB: some groups that do this include digital pix

LindaU: I'm not sure.

BjB: exchange of art would work

BjB . o O (mini graphic novels)

LindaU: art work is a wonderful medium

KerenS: both the pix and the art work would help address the language issues

BjB . o O (could be linked to Blanket the World with Peace)

LindaU: yes.

LindaU: Some GPBL organizations do work in multiple languages.. For example Kidproj: <http://www.kidlink.org/KIDPROJ/>

LindaU: Our time is running short.. Please think about how you can reach out to schools in emerging countries, or in areas in need through your schools and create projects that will form meaningful connections between your students.

KerenS: ...also interesting is connecting for teacher growth ...

LindaU: I'd like to continue to explore how GPBL an become a way of promoting multicultural understanding AND helping kids in need.

BjB . o O (and include hurricane effected areas in your thinking)

LindaU: absolutely.

KerenS: ...in some ways the effected areas are very much multicultural in terms of Los Angeles...

LindaU: I've heard of one interesting proposal for rebuilding the schools in the hurricane areas.. with high-tech pbl schools.. in a habitat for humanity type model...

LindaU: Interestingly the L.A. Gangs are alive and well in San Salvador.

KerenS: ..no kidding.?

LindaU: There could be a real gpbl connection there...

DavidWe: Where have you seen/heard that, Linda?

BjB: I've heard similar stories, David

DavidWe: cool

BjB . o O (about gangs..uncool)

LindaU: In El Salvador.. during their revolution families fled to the U.S. L.A. was one of the areas they wnte

DavidWe agrees with Bj's thought

KerenS: I work in agang suburb of LA

DavidWe . o O (it's nice to know that the gangs have access to the suburbs, now)

DavidWe winks

BjB: God bless the interstates

KerenS smiles

DavidWe smiles

LindaU: when they returned home there kids, who'd been in the LA gangs (new immigrants seem to end up in gangs historically)... brought the gang culture back to San Salvador with them.. It is a huge problem there.

DavidWe 's favorite Turnpike

KerenS: I can imagine -- are they connected to drugs?

LindaU: Any final thoughts

DavidWe . o O (source of income, I guess)

LindaU: Not sure about the drug connection.

BjB: thanks, Linda. Great discussion

LindaU: I'll be in El Salvador again in two weeks... I'll learn more and be back next month

KerenS: well -- this has been most enlightening and energizing might open up some doors...I'm very interested in possibilities...

DavidWe would like to hear more about Pakistan at some future point

BjB: Next GPBL discussion is October 27

LindaU: Will do... I'm hoping to develop that connection.

BjB waves goodnight

KerenS: ..Linda, are you leading the Oct 27th discussion?

BjB: Linda leads all the GPBL discussions, Keren

BjB: scripts are archived at www.tappedin.org/transcripts

KerenS: great -- thanks so much