

Title of Session: GPBL - Projects that make a difference: Cultural Understanding and Tolerance

Moderator: Linda Ullah

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Room: Global Project Based Learning Group

BJB2: Welcome to the GPBL discussion, everyone!

BJB2: if you are new to Tapped In please go to the ACTIONS menu in the top right of the chat window and click on DETACH

BJB2: This will make your chat window larger and easier to read

HopeGst13: thanks

ShengkaiC: thanks

BJB2: Linda Ullah is the leader for this discussion. Linda, would you like to start with introductions?

LindaU: I'm Linda Ullah. I run a technology integration staff development program at Foothill College in Los Altos Hills CA. One of our courses in Global Project-based learning. My passion is connecting teacher and students to do projects that have real-world significance.

LindaU: This evening I want to focus on projects that help promote cultural understanding and tolerance.

JonathanWE joined the room.

BJB2 cheers...wonderful topic, Linda!

CKM: That's really interesting!

KB . o O (my passion)

LindaU: Hi Jonathan, we've just started introducing ourselves

DavidWe joined the room.

JonathanWE: good-- I was worried that I'd be too late to get in. I'm a newbie here.

JeffC joined the room.

BJB2: welcome, Jeff...we're just doing introductions

JeffC nods

LindaU: Hi Jeff and David, feel free to introduce yourselves.

HeatherNG joined the room.

BJB2: I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania and a helpdesk volunteer for Tapped In

JeffC: Helpdesk here at Tapped In, in Forest Grove Oregon.

LindaU: Yey Heather, you made it.. we are just introducing ourselves.

HeatherNG: Am I in the right room? The Global Project Based

KB: Hi all I'm Kathleen Bacer and direct an Online MA in Educational Technology program and I have a global learning project component throughout program and teach a Global Learning class

LindaU: Yes

HeatherNG: yeah! thanks Linda!

LindaU: **KB...** We'll look forward to learning about your program.

HopeGst13: I am from Taiwan

HeatherNG: I am a student teacher in Humble Texas

JonathanWE: I'm a grad student in physics education at the University of Utah.

CKM: I'm a student in Texas A&M

KarenGst12: I am a grad student and student teacher currently in California

LindaU: Wow.. you all are from all over.. fantastic.

CKM: I'm from Thailand

HopeGst13: I am a grad student

LindaU: Here is the situation for this discussion. We live in a world where intolerance has led to war and terrorism. As educators, grad students, etc. we have a major role to play in bring back the balance to the world through what we do with our students.

LindaU: There are many educators and associated organizations that are promoting projects that help students learn to value each other's cultures.

CKM: Do you mean different cultures make the war?

KB: I think misunderstanding between cultures create conflict

KarenGst12: exactly

LindaU: Here is one I want us to look at: (Click on the link to bring up this site:

<http://www.gng.org/>

CKM: But I think we know what is good or bad

LindaU: Good question.. CKM.. In a sense perhaps.. It is the misunderstanding of cultural differences that creates conflict. For examples Sunni's vs Shiite Muslims...

DavidWe joined the room.

DavidWe waves

HeatherNG waves back

LindaU: or Christians vs Muslims.

HeatherNG: I agree with KB

HeatherNG: sometimes it is the misunderstandings between cultures that creates the conflicts

HopeGst13: Some people hold on to their own views

CKM: But I don't think cultural conflict will make war

LindaU: The site I gave upi all Global Nomads promote dialogs between students from different parts of the world.

ShengkaiC: sometimes the leader is mean to create the conflict, even the war

LindaU: Take a look at the Islam and the US - a clash of cultures? project on their site:

<http://www.gng.org/>

HeatherNG: I don't think culture alone will lead to war, but we've seen recently how one's culture and religion can easily cause a war/conflict

LindaU: Click on more to read about this project

LindaU: Good point Heather.

KB . o O (I receive their email news biweekly - very good)

LindaU: The question I have for you, after you've taken a few minutes to look at this site is to what extent do you feel this kind of project can be successful and why?

CKM: I think bad people use religion to make war

KB: the site is powerful in providing a means to educate which removes false biases

JonathanWE: I think a distinction is necessary: cultures, religions, etc... do not CAUSE conflict themselves--their adherents, constituents, or members in general consciously engage in conflict, perhaps believing (rightly or wrongly) that their particular moral or civic systems justify or demand it.

LindaU: Exactly CKM.. It is not the religions that are bad, but people who use the religions politically for the wrong reasons... But the question is how to we stop this and bring back cultural understanding and tolerance and peace to the world.

LindaU: Can dialog among youth bring about the necessary understandings?

LindaU: If so, how.. what are the necessary elements for success?

JeffC: I think that is an excellent site Linda. It is important to get students involved with learning first hand (even if it's virtual first hand) what other cultures offer. I feel that we have a very "us vs. them" attitude in the U.S. I think it's also very difficult to broach this topic, given the "you're with us or you're with the terrorists" (false) dichotomy put forth by the administration.

HeatherNG: this can be very successful for all grade levels. It is important for us to teach our students acceptance and understanding of all cultures. This website gives us unbiased information-which is very hard to find nowadays

KB: re dialog among youth bring understanding -I really think so - but also collaborative experiences

LindaU: Yes KB.. the chance for students to collaborate on a project that will help someone in need or improve something in the world is important.

LindaU: Here is an interesting set of facts to ponder as we discuss this topic:
http://www.familycare.org/news/if_the_world.htm

HeatherNG: I don't think dialog alone can bring our nation's youth to understanding... you can talk all you wants... but a teacher has to make the information meaningful and relevant to the learner...

JonathanWE: I agree very strongly with the general point Jeff and **KB** seem to be making, namely, that dialogue, awareness, and information are not sufficient means to bring about change. actual experience with the cultures is necessary to develop empathy and tolerance.

HeatherNG: wow!

LindaU: Good point Jonathan.. How can we do this?

HeatherNG: what a great website to put everything into perspective

LindaU: Amazing isn't it Heather.

HeatherNG: yes!

LindaU: Let me ask this.. At what age should students start to learn about other cultures... and participate in cultural exchanges/

HeatherNG: prek

CKM: But if we teach our students know the differences between cultures, I don't think we can stop war anyway

HeatherNG: we start teaching about other cultures in PreK

LindaU: Do you all know about Flat Stanley?

KB: yes - very popular

JonathanWE: As educators, I think it starts with moving beyond informational assignments and content--we need to begin using the resources that are at our disposal (highlight: technology) towards actually putting students in the most intimate contact with other cultures we can manage.

HeatherNG: yes! the kids love him!

LindaU: Tell us more CKM

JonathanWE: Flat Stanley is a fantastic project. I've signed 5 of them in the past few months.

KB: Youth in Action www.teaching.com/act also fits into what you are sharing Linda

CKM: I mean our students learn the different culture but the person who wants to make war will teach their people different

LindaU: For those of you who don't know about Flat Stanley.. check out <http://flatstanley.enoreo.on.ca/>

CKM: They will teach their people to fight for something that they believe

LindaU: Thank you KB.. I'll just take a minute to look at your site.

HeatherNG agrees with CK, but is a universal problem...

CKM: Yes, I think so

LindaU: Here is the Flat Stanley project I just participated in for a school in San Jose CA; <http://www.lullah.com/flatstanley/>

LindaU: You are right CKM.... but how can we overcome this problem?

KB: Kids are our best hope!

LindaU: It is my hope that my travels with Flat Stanley will help students learn about a Muslim country.

JeffC: well... considering the direction politics have taken education (NCLB, "Standards based curriculum," etc.) I have serious doubts that project based learning will take off in schools. I'm pushing for it myself in my local district... but it's swimming upstream.

CKM: Do U mean how we can do to change their belief?

LindaU: Keep swimming Jeff. I still have great hope..

HeatherNG: wow, awesome idea Linda!

KB: I'm certainly not giving up on it Jeff:-)

JeffC: here are a couple of other sites people might be interested in fostering international understanding: <http://www.nabuur.com> and <http://www.takingitglobal.org>

LindaU: Yes, CKM, in a way.. but I don't want to change people's beliefs really, I want to help people understand each other's beliefs and understand that is okay for each of us to have different beliefs.. but it is not okay to hurt people because they have different beliefs.

LindaU: Yes, Jeff.. these are great.. I hope everyone will take a few minutes to explore your sites.

JonathanWE: I'm with Linda--there is hope. I've spoken in the past week with several teachers that have used historical inquiry with online primary sources to completely alter student opinions on "the south" during the civil war. it's apparently much easier to appreciate a commonly marginalized position when you have personal access to its perspective.

CKM: But it's difficult to do so Linda.

KB: My favorite of all favorites is www.ilearn.org - they are so committed to bringing students together globally to make a difference

KB: very fascinating Jonathan!

LindaU: Yes, KB iEarn is a wonderful organization. Their site is well worth bookmarking and taking a look at.

LindaU: Thank you Jonathan.. I've been searching for a site for a project I heard about while in Charlotte NC last week.

CKM: Wow!! Y'all so wonderful. I can learn a lot from your websites

CKM: Thank you

LindaU: A class there did a project with a class in South Africa about the history of slavery in both countries. There was a story on the local TV news, but I didn't write down the information.

HeatherNG: yes! thanks for all the great online resources

LindaU: There are obvious parallel histories between South Africa and the U.S. so this seemed to me to be a very powerful project.

JeffC: in a sense I'm playing devil's advocate here... because I truly believe in pbl and using it to foster international understanding and academic collaboration... I believe however that the state of education in America now makes it extremely difficult to bring best practices to the classroom... we are all "early adopters" here... but I feel that pbl is a long way off for the majority of educators and districts.

KB: Was it National Geo site? www.nationalgeographic.com/railroad?

LindaU: KB This is a great resource. thank you.. This wasn't the project, but perhaps they could have used this resource.

LindaU: Here is a cultural connections web resources list:

http://www.unibase.com/~mcos/cul_con.html

HeatherNG: I agree Jeff... I haven't seen any curriculum like this in place at any of the school I have been at... but we can make it a goal to inform teachers and administrators about this...

LindaU: The thing about PBL for our devil's advocate here.. is that it can and needs to be standards based.. that is part of the planning process.

JeffC: too much work... too hard to align... haven't done it... no support... blah blah blah

KB: We are standards driven but they still haven't imprisoned us into how to teach the standards, except for those who are scripted

ShengkaiC: excuse me, what is PBL?

KB: Agree with Linda in that if we blend the two it's a powerful experience

LindaU: When I teach pbl and global pbl to teachers we start with the big ideas and the intended outcomes, but then we DO align the standards that will be met.. Next I have teachers write measurable objectives and plan their assessment strategies to determine how they will know students are meeting standards.

JeffC: plus... most pbl assumes some sort of Net savvy on the part of the teacher and students... not to mention access (sustained access)... this is also a major stumbling block. pbl= project based learning.

CKM: Project Based Learning Shengkai

LindaU: PBL is Project Based Learning.. can also be problem-based learning

CKM: I've got to run but I'll be back

JonathanWE: Funny...I'm usually the one playing devil's advocate in the other direction (trying to tone down unrealistic expectations of technology--it's not a cure-all, just another fantastic tool or noting per authors like L. Cuban that American schooling doesn't change quickly or in extreme fashion no matter how far back you look).

DavidWe reads Jonathan's comment with interest

JonathanWE: would wider knowledge and implementation of standards-driven PBL make it more acceptable to the mainstream of American ed then?

JeffC: it's not so much a matter of acceptance imho... it's a matter of pragmatics.

LindaU: Jonathan.. I think so.. We've found that to be true in our districts here.. as we train more and more of their teachers.

LindaU: Take a look at this article in the National School Boards Association Web site.
http://www.nsba.org/site/doc_micro.asp?TRACKID=&VID=38&CID=1465&DID=35784

JonathanWE: how about programs in countries like Taiwan? or is the need for increased cultural tolerance something that's particularly urgent for us here in the US?

HeatherNG: Where are you at Linda?

JeffC: it's like constructivism... teacher education programs show that student-centered engaged learning pedagogically is the way to go... yet... when in the classroom... most educators revert to the teacher-centered didactic method.

LindaU: I'm in California, in the San Francisco Bay Area (Silicon Valley)

JonathanWE: fantastic information on that page Linda. thank you.

HeatherNG: I think it's fairly urgent and important here... after all.... we are the "melting pot". Our youths needs to become understanding, tolerant, and accepting of all of the different cultures, religions, ethnicities, etc.

BJB2 . o O (NSBA is a tenant of Tapped In, btw)

LindaU: My guess is that the issues between Taiwan and China are part of a cultural misunderstanding (and political issues too.)

HopeGst13: I agree with you

JeffC: yes... that's a good site Linda... Yvonne is great (referring to Global School Net at <http://www.globalschoolnet.org/index.html>)... that's where I did my first online project in 1996 at Richmond High (with Newsday).

LindaU: Yup.. Yvonne and Global School Net are doing a great job with global projects:
<http://www.globalschoolnet.org/index.html>

JeffC: didn't I just say that?

LindaU: yes.. sorry

JeffC: lol

JeffC: worth repeating!

LindaU: I got ahead of myself... I was getting that site ready and you snuck in there.. sorry

JeffC: Hilites and Newsday within GSN are excellent... as is IEARN (mentioned earlier). <http://www.epals.com> is also good if you need to get email accounts for your students (it's completely inhouse with epals now... so your students may only communicate with other students with epals accounts)>

LindaU: Absolutely.. this is a great entry level global project site..

LindaU: For those of you new to this discussion (I apologize to the "regulars" for repeating this) here is my Global PBL web resource list: <http://my-ecoach.com/online/webresourcelist.php?rlid=6499>

MelP: hi Linda. I just joined. Can you please post that website again. I was fooling around with the pop up blocker on my computer and it wiped out your posting of the website. Thanks!

LindaU: It has a variety of sites and is a growing list.

LindaU: Mel.. which site do you want?

MelP: the global one...I forgot but I think the word global was in the address

DavidWe smiles

LindaU: <http://www.globalschoolnet.org/index.html>

JeffC: there's also <http://www.takingitglobal.org>

MelP: thanks. I think that might be it.

LindaU: We have just a few minutes.. What have you learned today that you will reflect upon and perhaps use?

HopeGst13: lots of useful web sites

HeatherNG: I have learned many great resources that I would like to use in the future

LindaU: Hope, Which are the most useful?

HopeGst13: iearn.com

LindaU: Take time to review these sites more carefully.

CKM: Yes, I need more time to study them

CKM: Thank you

LindaU: What I like about iEarn is the projects are designed to really help people.

HopeGst13: thank you

LindaU: I hope to see you all next time.

BJB2: thanks, Linda!

HeatherNG: thank Linda!

CKM: It was great to be in this chat room

JeffC: here's another... it's software called "Real Lives"
<http://www.educationalsimulations.com/>

LindaU: This is fun! You all are great. I'm so glad you are here.

BJB2: Next GPBL discussion will be March 24?

CKM: Thanks Linda and y'all

LindaU: Thanks Jeff.

MelP: thanks even though I joined late!

LindaU looks at calendar

JonathanWE: thanks to all.

ShengkaiC: thanks

JeffC: my son loves Real Lives

CKM: The transcript is going to my email, right?

JeffC: yes CKM

LindaU: Yup.. March 24.. same time?

CKM: Thank you

BJB2: yes, please...4pm PST

BJB2 marks her calendar

LindaU: got it on my calendar.. fantastic.. see you all then.

HeatherNG: hope, it gets emailed to you when you log out

BJB2 heads for the Faculty Resistance to Online Learning

BJB2 . o O (guests do not get a transcript)