Title of Session: Web Tools For Education - Ning
Moderator: Pam Berger
Title of File: 20071003webtoolsning
Date: October 3, 2007

Room: Web Tools for Education Group

PamB : Well, let's get started. Would you like to introduce yourself?

BjB : Welcome to today's WebTools for Education discussion

JenniferKL: I'm a grad student in IT this is my second visit to Tapped In

PamB : I'm Pam Berger, a library and educational technology consultant from theNYC area.

DavidW: I'm David Weksler. I help teachers learn more about educational technology. I'm in New Jersey, near NYC

JenniferKL: I'm in Knoxville, TN

BjB : I teach communication and am on Tapped In helpdesk. I'm in Pennsylvania

PamB : I thought we would explore NING tonight. Have any of you used it?

BjB : I have

JenniferKL: Yes

PamB : Great! Can you share your nings with us?

JeffC: yup

JenniferKL: CR 2.0, PD 2.0 and SchoolMatters, a site for general education discussion right here in East TN

PamB : what's the URL?

BjB : http://www.classroom20.com/

BjB . o O (classroom 2.0)

JeffC: ditto

PamB : let's look at Bj's ning and then come back

BjB : that's the same as Jeff's and Jennifer's

BjB : but I also belong to http://arted20.ning.com/

JeffC: also Teachers2.0

JeffC: Stop Cyberbulling and a couple of others.

JenniferKL: how do you guys project your thoughts like that

JeffC: type a colon first

DavidW: type :waves

JenniferKL: got it

JeffC isn't very active with Ning... should post more.

JenniferKL Jennifer feels like the newbie here

JenniferKL: it works

DavidW: well, you are, but you are picking up things fast

BjB : Jeff, that is just what Pam and David and I were discussing...

PamB : that's a great ning-- very active!

BjB : how can you possibly keep up with all the communities?!

JenniferKL: That's my problem too

DavidW: I'm not sure you CAN keep up with all the communities

JeffC: that's what people ask me about the groups I'm in here... it's all a matter of basically becoming way overextended.

PamB : I was wondering about that, Jeff.

JeffC: bloglines helps... but I tend to ignore a lot of them as well.

JeffC: not to mention the two dozen educational lists I'm on... but back to ning.

DavidW smiles

JenniferKL: My hope is to dabble in a few and find the right fit, then pare down.

PamB : do you have bloglines set up for the nings?

JenniferKL: I use it to track new posts in my nings

PamB : how many nings are you in?

JenniferKL: four, I think, plus I'm in the process of creating a private one for my family

PamB : so would you say ning is the new blog?

JenniferKL: I like the threaded discussions, not all blogs have that power

PamB : I agree. and the ability to share photos, start groups, etc.

PamB : it kind of a cross between a blog and a wiki.

JenniferKL: I still like my blog for personal reflections, venting, that sort of thing.

JeffC: I've used bloglines for a few... but like I said... I'm not heavily involved with Ning... so I tend to ignore or really gloss over what could be really great info.

JeffC: I look at it as one more place to show teachers where there is really cool stuff.

PamB : has anyone seen teachers using a ning with their classroom(s)?

JenniferKL: I've learned a lot by searching the forums for specific issues/tools and so on

PamB : on the classroom 2.0 ning?

PamB : well, you all know about nings....so let's move on...

JeffC: how *would* you use ning in the classroom?

JenniferKL: Cr 2.0 is my go-to place right now for quick answers in forums, but I don't always get the response I need to my questions

PamB : what's your favorite web 2.0 tool?

JeffC: I suppose you could decorate it with different stuff for your students.

JeffC: you could repost those questions to relevant groups *here*, Jennifer.

PamB : I would have kids form groups on the projects they are working on

JenniferKL: Yes, that's why I'm shifting my focus for a while

JeffC: so... have all your students create their own ning accounts, Pam?

JeffC: which means having them all create email addresses as well?

PamB: you don't think it a good idea?

PamB: my   hs students all have email addresses already.

PamB: you can make the ning private

JenniferKL: yes

JenniferKL: My family network is private

JenniferKL: I'm thinking of creating avatars for the grandparents to make joining as smooth as possible

JeffC: I'm for it Pam... but I know a lot of districts forbid having teachers help students create email accounts.

JeffC: and many ban student email.

PamB: That's such a nice idea...you are really making me think about setting up one for my family

JenniferKL: that's the case here

PamB: but the kids have them anyway, right?

JenniferKL: I mean email is supposedly forbidden but kids and teachers interact with it quite frequently under the radar

PamB: that bugs, me. How will kids learn to live effectively and ethically without educators helping to guide them?

JenniferKL: agreed

JenniferKL: are there any networking platforms out there created specifically for school settings?

JeffC: what makes you think those are the goals of education?

JenniferKL: has anyone tried ectoLearning

PamB smiles at Jeff

JeffC: nope... what's the url, jennifer?

JenniferKL: give me a sec

PamB : no

JenniferKL: http://www.ectolearning.com/ecto2

JenniferKL: I don't remember how to send out a URL. did I do it in the right way?

BjB nods to Jennifer

JenniferKL whew

JenniferKL: I'm researching social software for purposes of new teacher mentoring and induction. Just heard about ectoLearning

JenniferKL: It turns out setting up networks for teachers is just as tricky because all the same filters/blocks apply, of course

JenniferKL: Ning is blocked in my state.   Haven't checked yet on Ecto site

JeffC just joined ecto... why not?

JenniferKL: You're the guinea pig

BjB : ecto allows you to skype from within the environment

PamB : it's free...how are they supported? ads?

PamB : Jennifer, what other environments have you found in your research for the mentoring group?

JenniferKL: So far Ning, Tapped In (how it's used by TLINC) and I'm also going to explore how Moodle might work with new teachers in a learning community

BjB . o O (Tapped In also has a safe and secure K-12 Student Campus, Jennifer)

JenniferKL: I'm reporting back to the PD supervisor for my county. We just went system-wide with a mentoring model. He wants to add e-mentoring.

JenniferKL: Do you think that would be the venue for a mentor-novice group of teachers?

BjB : teachers would be better off using a group room in Tapped In

JenniferKL: the K-12 campus, is it strictly for young folks?

JenniferKL: Ok

BjB : yes, K-12 is for kids...teacher creates the group room and assigns usernames and passwords

JenniferKL: have any of you done work with the TLINC groups from U. of Memphis, Denver, or Seattle?

JeffC: http://www.wiziq.com

JeffC: http://www.yugma.com

JeffC: the first is in beta, the second established... free videoconferencing for educators... there's another (I'll get it in a minute).

JeffC: the first also has a repository for lessons, etc. and is community oriented, whereas yugma is more for real time conferencing.

JenniferKL: Good -- conferencing tools. . . haven't explored any of those yet.

DavidW: I think there are many tools - the challenge is getting a group of teachers (at various abilities) comfortable enough that they can interact successfully

JenniferKL: How does Tapped In fit within the whole web 2.0 landscape? It seems to have a little of everything.

PamB agrees with David. It's tough.

JenniferKL: David, I just posted a question at PD 2.0 about my concern for who moderates and facilitates all these activities.

JenniferKL: Moderating also seems like a full-time job

DavidW: More than the technology, Jennifer, I think Tapped In was set up to try and create a community of practice for teachers - an online environment - that concept is still far from easily understood by many folks

BjB : Jennifer, in Tapped In each group moderates themselves

PamB : moderating is so important-- a group can live or die on the moderating.

JenniferKL: Ok, so other than the helpdesk folks, the groups keep up as little or as much

as they want.

JeffC: right Jennifer

DavidW: Pepperdine University uses Tapped in to host many classes in their online graduate ed. tech. programs

DavidW: They've pretty well dedicated themselves to TI

BjB : one thing that I think is important is that Tapped in is a Professional Development community...

BjB : and the members are expected to be professional in their behavior...especially in public rooms

JenniferKL: Well that excludes you people . . . just kidding ;)

BjB winks

BjB . o O (we're in a group room right now)

PamB : BJ, have you ever had any problems with guests or members?

DavidW smiles

JenniferKL: Seriously, what would you tell a tech newbie who wants to or is required to adapt something like TI into their practice? What is the learning curve like here?

BjB : yes. They're banned

BjB . o O (and their accounts are deleted)

JenniferKL: Really?

JenniferKL: OK

DavidW: I think with some effort and spending some time in Tapped In, people get comfortable pretty quickly - the hard part is if you are "being told" to use it and aren't sure why or what it might be good for

BjB : Jennifer, we've tried to make the learning curve as smooth as possible. One thing we do is offer tours of the community

JenniferKL: Agreed. How do you ensure novices will adapt this though?

BjB . o O (check the calendar for tips and tricks.)

DavidW: If people take one of the Tips and Tricks tours, attend 3 discussions, most of the basics become pretty straightforward

BjB agrees with David

JenniferKL: Thanks, I like your specificity here. That's what I need.

JenniferKL: Is that pretty much how it worked for you at first?

PamB : They will if they build connections to other educators and find the discussion valuable to their teaching.

DavidW: I'm just throwing that out, Jennifer, but part of joining any community is seeing how it works, how people behave, etc.

DavidW agrees with Pam

BjB : it also helps to have specific reason for returning...like a weekly discussion with peers

DavidW: I think the connections can be the MOST valuable aspect of the TI community

BjB hugs David and Pam...we have wonderful connections!

PamB : I agree. One reason I come back was the connection I made with BJ

DavidW: Jeff and I were assisting a group of social studies teachers in the Bay Area who are hoping to use TI to do lesson studies

PamB : she was my mentor...still is!

BjB : we've all known each other for almost 10 years!

JenniferKL: Really?

PamB : has it been 10 years?

DavidW: The challenge today was the leader of the group allotted 20 minutes to do an introduction to TI - he had lots of other things to do, and, of course, tech problems and first-time problems got in the way

BjB : yep. I became a member of TI in Feb of 1998

JenniferKL: Back to connections. Give me an example of "feeling connected" without the F2F interaction. Again I'm the newbie here.

DavidW: In the last few years we have had more pre-service teachers coming to Tapped In with their education classes.

DavidW: I think we would like to see a connection to Tapped In for young teachers - a resource for them when they are out in the world

BjB : one good example of connections is the K-3 Resources group...

JenniferKL: Are they just lurking or is there sustained interaction and learning with the novice teachers here?

PamB : I think it helps to build an office and put some photos and links, etc.

JenniferKL: That's the aim of TLINC which is using Tapped In, but I only started reading about it this week.

BjB : taking ownership in your membership is important

JenniferKL: TLINC is Teachers Learning in Networked communities sponsored by NCTAF

BjB . o O (offices, groups, buddies)

JenniferKL: Explain "taking ownership" please.

PamB : it depends on the program as much as the technology environment

BjB : create your own membership account, edit your profile, create an office and learn how to use the features

JenniferKL: I joined in June for an online class, this is the first time I've returned. I'm one of those slacker members.

BjB . o O (the best way to learn is by doing)

JenniferKL: Before I forget, how do I make sure to receive a transcript of this?

BjB : Pam, our time is almost up. You'll be meeting again on November 7?

DavidW: After you logout, Jennifer, it will come to your email

PamB : yes. Nov 7

JenniferKL: great!

BjB : Jennifer, check out www.infosearcher.com

PamB : thanks...this was enjoyable. Good luck Jennifer.

JenniferKL: OK, "see" you again soon.

BjB : that will give you a glimpse of how much Pam has to contribute to the Tapped In community!

DavidW: Great questions, Jennifer

DavidW agrees with Bj

JenniferKL: Thanks to everyone!

PamB : Good night everyone.

BjB : thanks, Pam.

BjB waves goodnight

PamB waves good night

DavidW: Thanks, Pam