

Title of Session: Global Project Based Learning

Moderator: Linda Ullah

Title of File: 20080918gpbl

Date: September 18, 2008

Room: GPBL Group

BJB2: here for the GPBL discussion?

JuliaFK: Yes!

BJB2: great! Now all we need is the discussion leader

BJB2: what is your interest in the topic, Julia?

JuliaFK: This is my first Tapped In discussion. I thought the topic looked intriguing. I am a high school teacher, and I am always looking for new ideas to bring into the classroom. What about you?

DavidW joined the room.

BJB2: sounds good, Julia. I'm on Tapped In helpdesk and enjoy Linda's discussions

BJB2 waves hi to David

DavidW waves

DavidW: Hi, Julia

JuliaFK: hi David

BJB2: while we wait for Linda, you might want to look at the featured items above this chat

BJB2 . o O (below the welcome note)

DavidW: Wasn't Linda hoping to have an art teacher she knows here for the discussion?

BJB2: yes

JuliaFK: Thanks. I will do that.

BJB2 . o O (Lori Nock)

DavidW: right

BJB2: Have you participated in any global projects, Julia?

JuliaFK: I had my students pen pal with an African school. I thought it was amazing because some of my students had never left their own city, so it really opened their eyes.

JuliaFK: What about you?

BJB2: wow...very cool!

DavidW agrees

BJB2: Tapped In is as global as I get.

JuliaFK: One of the teachers at my school volunteered at the school this past summer.

BJB2: ahhh...connection

DavidW: Where is the African school?

JuliaFK: I don't remember the name of the town--I can't even pronounce it. It was really small. The school didn't even have the money to properly finish constructing the building.

DavidW nods

BJB2: how did your students react to that?

JuliaFK: Some didn't want to do it. The population I worked with is primarily Mexican-American, and some students complained because they only wanted to write to students in Mexico. There is some racism at the site I worked at. Other students were really excited about the project. They spent some much time on their letters.

DavidW: Some interesting feelings come out in those situations

BJB2 agrees with David...and many teachable moments

JuliaFK: Yes. It is hard to change the minds of 18 year old when they have developed prejudices. But...I think it can be accomplished.

JuliaFK: What kind of conversations does this group normally have?

BJB2: similar to what we're doing now, Julia...taking real experiences and seeing how we can build on them

LindaU joined the room.

BJB2: giving students authentic learning experiences

DavidW: Linda works with schools doing a lot of project-based learning ...

BJB2 sighs...Hi, Linda!

DavidW . o O (ta-dah!)

JuliaFK: Yeah!

LindaU: My apologies.

BJB2: everything ok?

LindaU: Yes.. I worked a long day.... and honestly forgot this evening when I got home.. I'm at fault.. sorry

BJB2 hugs Linda.

LindaU: I started out today reminding myself about tonight..

BJB2: this is Julia's first TI discussion

LindaU: Where were you all in the conversation?

JuliaFK: I always do that. I need an electric shock to remind me of my appointments.

BJB2: we were trying to answer her questions about what this group is for and what kinds of discussions you have

LindaU: I turned that shock sound off when I was at the school... and forgot to turn it back on.

BJB2 . o O (offering students authentic learning experiences)

JuliaFK: Are you a teacher, Linda?

LindaU: I was for many years.. Now I'm a school development coach--new high schools.. PBL and technology schools

LindaU: Please tell me about what you do, and why this topic interested you.

LindaU: My latest focus for this group has been to foster projects that help students help people in need.

LindaU: I think this past week gives us another reminder of our need to teach our

students to help others.

JuliaFK: That is great! I am getting my masters in education this year, and I am taking the year off from teaching. I live in California, and I lost my job due to the current budget crisis. I taught at a continuation high school last year; I taught English, but I also taught a class called connections that was all about students making connections with others. I am always looking for projects to bring into the classroom to teach empathy.

JuliaFK: How have you seen classrooms respond this week?

LindaU: Not this week particularly, but yes, in the past.

LindaU: What do you know about Project based learning?

JuliaFK: To be honest, I don't know anything.

LindaU: I ask because this is more than just taking a donation and sending in money to an organization for a one time cause.

LindaU: PBL is not just "doing projects"---It is an instructional method (philosophy)

LindaU: Students learn content (based on standards) through doing projects.

JuliaFK: What kind of projects have you heard of/lead/facilitated?

LindaU: Projects need to be authentic (real-world), involve student decision making, be assessed (Formatively or ongoing as well as summatively to see that students "got" the content...

LindaU: When I taught I didn't do many projects....One was a Water Pollution Project with a school in Sao Paulo, Brazil (archived at: <http://www.garlic.com/~lullah/brazilus/water.html>)

LindaU: But that was awhile ago. Now I work with teachers who are doing MANY kinds of projects.

JuliaFK: What kind of projects?

LindaU: There are many organizations that foster collaborative (school/school) projects.

LindaU: Take a look at: http://linc.ca.campusgrid.net/home/Curriculum_Projects Many of these links may be dead.. but look at Search our Project Database.

LindaU: These are projects developed by teachers I worked with before I had this job.

BJB2 checks to see if Julia got the url

LindaU: If you look at the iEarn site <http://www.learnsite.org/> you see collaborative (country/country) projects that really do help others.

JuliaFK: What was one of your most successful projects? Yes. I go the url. Thanks:)

LindaU: The Water pollution project was successful on many levels.

LindaU: PBL becomes a way to teach.. I think all my projects were successful on many levels..

LindaU: Students need to master content (required by the state) in the process of doing the projects.

JuliaFK: Could you tell me about PBL? Which category of standards are you basing the projects on? For example, I look at English standards when I teach.

LindaU: the high school teachers I now work with do PBL all year long and teach all their curriculum that way.

JuliaFK: Could you tell me more about PBL?

LindaU: In English, I've seen them put Odysseus on trial, and create music videos for To Kill a Mockingbird, and create the Harlem Renaissance (as examples)

LindaU: WebQuests are a form of PBL.. Do you know about WebQuests?

LindaU: In PBL pre-planning is critical.

JuliaFK: Yes! But is there a specific criteria? I have had students do webquests on the apartheid in Africa and Chicano writers. I always have specific information that I want them to find.

LindaU: You need to start with the end in mind.. what must students learn/know by doing the project (content standards), What product will best demonstrate that they have learned the content....

LindaU: Yes.. I begin with the standards (selecting which standard the project will teach- and what I'll accept as evidence that the students have mastered the content. (assessment).

LindaU: I also look at what 21st Century skills students will learn http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=254&Itemid=120

LindaU: Then I create an entry document--a hook (Intro in a WebQuest)... Something

authentic that will excite the students and get them really interested in doing the project.

LindaU: Then I plan the assessment. --both formative and summative (ongoing and final)

LindaU: I also determine what the final product will be.

JuliaFK: A teacher I know did a project based on "Invisible Children." Have you heard of it?

LindaU: Then I map the project... (scaffolding such as lectures, workshops, research, texts, journals, assignments to support the project, etc.

LindaU: Tell me about it.

LindaU waits to hear about the Invisible Children project

JuliaFK: I also approach lesson planning that way. If I don't start with the objectives, I find myself getting caught up in all the ways I should teach the lesson. Invisible children is about the plight of child soldiers and night commuters in Uganda. The students did research on the invisible children, and then they watched the movie.

LindaU: What is the final goal of the project?

LindaU: In other words.. do the students just learn about the plight of child soldiers, or do they do something to help the situation?

DavidW finds the Invisible Children web site

LindaU: For example there is a coalition to stop the use of child soldiers: <http://www.child-soldiers.org/home>

DavidW: <http://www.invisiblechildren.com/home.php>

JuliaFK: I am not sure what her final goal was. I would guess that she wanted the students to learn about the struggles of other children in the world. They didn't do anything to help the situation. I believe the project could have been developed. However, at the school we taught at, it was a big deal to get students to care about others that are not part of their culture.

LindaU: and Human Rights Watch is trying to stop this abuse: <http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/crp/index.htm>

LindaU: That is not unusual --students not caring... as responsible educators, I believe we MUST help them learn to care.

LindaU: One way to do this is to do projects that help others.

JuliaFK: How would you have the students help?

LindaU: Just learning about it is still very abstract.

JuliaFK: I agree

LindaU: There are many organizations that help others.

LindaU: If you look at the resources (links) in this room I have many listed.

JuliaFK: whoops

JuliaFK: I am going to look:)

LindaU: Find a cause--that ties into your curriculum.. or one that you care about that you can tie to your curriculum and work with your students to learn more about the issue/problem and come up with solutions to help those people

JuliaFK: I am definitely excited about trying. I just hope that I have enough support from the next school I taught at. I would like to work at a continuation school again because I felt they were more flexible in how and what we taught to reach students.

LindaU: It can be people in crisis (Hurricane Ike victims---or more long term... Hurricane Katrina victims--3 years later... or ongoing like child soldiers, slavery, child prostitution, etc.

LindaU: These are kids that should understand need..

DavidW . o O (migrant farm workers in the US who are children)

JuliaFK: Yes. But unfortunately they don't always know how to care initially.

LindaU: There are organizations like "Free the Children"
<http://www.freethechildren.com/index.php> that you can work with.

LindaU: or <http://www.heifer.org/> or <http://www.grameenfoundation.org/>

LindaU: where the students can not only make a difference but see the difference they are making.

BJB2: Linda, will you be doing a GPBL discussion in October or will you be traveling?

BJB2 . o O (October 23)

LindaU: I'm home in late Oct. That should work

LindaU: I'm traveling for the next 3-4 weeks.

BJB2: I'll send you a reminder ;-)

BJB2: have safe travels!

LindaU: thanks.. I seem to need them

DavidW smiles

LindaU: Julia.. did you get your needs met?

DavidW: Happy traveling, Linda

LindaU: Mostly CA and NC... school visits and back to Napa for meetings.

DavidW nods

LindaU: but I'll take time to visit friends in the SF area

BJB2: Thanks for leading the discussion, Linda. Hope you get rested up

LindaU smiles faintly.

BJB2 hugs. Take care, dearheart

LindaU: Thanks' all.. and BJ thanks for the emailnudge.

BJB2: my pleasure ;-)