

Title of Session: World Social Forum

Moderator: Lars Hasselblad-Torres

Title of File: 20040623wsf

Date: June 23, 2004

Room: After School Online Room

BJ: if Lars doesn't show up, Karla, we'll turn this discussion into something else so you can use it for your class

KarlaMB: okay, or I can come back another time. Whatever works for you.

BJ: I have this hour blocked out, so it's no problem

KarlaMB: okay

BJ: how about if we talk about Project Based Learning

KarlaMB: sounds great

BJ: I'll bet Jeff has tons of resources

BJ: there is a monthly group that meets here...Global Project Based Learning

BJ: Linda Ullah leads the discussions

KarlaMB: I did get a chance to check out some of Jeff's sites from another class I took

BJ: are you familiar with the transcript archives, Karla?

KarlaMB: no

BJ: click on www.tappedin.org/transcripts

BJ: go down to Social Sciences

BJ: . o O (and click)

BJ: then 2004 transcripts

KarlaMB: how can I view both pages? I am having to jump back and forth here

BJ: see all the archived scripts for GPBL?

BJ: resize your windows and overlap the screens

BJ: all the events in the archives are pdf files

KarlaMB: got it thanks

BJ: Linda is leading an event during the festival about a school in the UK

KarlaMB: that sounds interesting

JeffC: PBL... well... there are a lot of ways to go.

BJ: <http://www.garlic.com/~lullah/gpbl/>

JeffC: Newsday, Global Schoolhouse, Epals, Takingitglobal.org

JeffC: I recommend joining one of the many online projects... rather than trying to strike out on one's own.

LarsHa joined the room.

BJ: np, Karla...happens to us all

BJ: yay! Hi, Lars!

LarsHa: Hi Bj! sorry to be late so what's up?

BJ: Karla has been patiently waiting for you

BJ: I'll announce and perhaps you can tell her a bit about your project?

LarsHa: great, thanks BJ! I'd also love to hear a little bit about Karla's background and interests. Hi Karla

KarlaMB: hi

KarlaMB: I am a kindergarten teacher working on my master's degree. I am also a leading force in technology on my campus

BJ: we were discussing global project based learning, Lars...

BJ: I thought that would be related to what you're presenting

LarsHa: So let's see, Montpelier to Mumbai was inspired by my direct involvement in the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre (Brazil) in 2002. I basically went for work purposes (www.americaspeaks.org) and came away with a passion sparked to engage US youth in the process...

KarlaMB: tell me more

LarsHa: Global Project Based learning -- GPBL -- sounds amazing! There is a HUGE component of interest-based learning in Montpelier to Mumbai (M2M), which revolves around 4 dimensions of learning:

BJ listens

LarsHa: - Global issues (the local-global connection)

LarsHa: - Technology learning

LarsHa: -cross cultural

LarsHa: -leadership development

LarsHa: any of those more interesting to you than others?

KarlaMB: how about global issues or technology learning

LarsHa: anyway, the WSF (World Social Forum) is perhaps the largest "southern" dialogue that questions a) neoliberal economic policy, b) the cultural paradigm of the US and the "west" (or north these days) and c) what southern nations can do to preserve so many dimension of local and national autonomy

KarlaMB: okay

BJ: this is obviously for high school age and above?

LarsHa: to relate to the global issues piece, I use the book, "High Noon" as a starting point to discuss trends at play across the globe today: population, technology, environmental stress, democratization, and free markets

KarlaMB: I think so. It sounds like more than my little ones can handle.

LarsHa: hi BJ -- yes, the program is targeted toward HS students

BJ: as a tech specialist, you could report on this information to the teachers who can use it, Karla

KarlaMB: that's okay, keep talking, maybe I can get some of our high school teachers interested

BJ: but I'll bet you could create related units for the lower grades too

KarlaMB: that's true

LarsHa: I think in the hands of a skilled teacher such as yourself, these issues can be explored at very young ages... I'd be happy to take any one of them and brainstorm some ideas how. the nuts and bolts of the global reality for these youngsters is that a) the world out there may be creating more jobs than our country, and b) citizenship is likely to encompass dimensions beyond the national (it already does, perhaps less formal though)...

KarlaMB: bring it down to a lower level and keep going

LarsHa: quick lingo check what do you mean/

KarlaMB: brainstorm ideas for younger students

LarsHa: cool: so one of the fun things I'd thought of was to track the

KarlaMB: track the ... what?

LarsHa: (darn return) global supply chain: from field to closet, if you will. this would ask students to go home and choose ten items in their bedroom, identify where it was made. this could be clothes, games, electronics, furniture, etc. then, in the classroom, give every student a red dot for each item and find the corresponding location on the map. then, choose one nation, one product, and a) identify the inputs and b) design a scavenger hunt to figure out where those inputs were harvested, transformed, and used to create a finished product.

BJ: wow, cool idea, Lars!

KarlaMB: that sounds awesome

LarsHa: another example might be in the food supply: compare, through interviews, the values and reasons suppliers do business the way they do business at a Giant or Safeway, and at the local coop, etc. these can be documented in various ways through technology integration or not. but then also interview customers to understand why they shop there, and then, if possible, track down the supplier and ask a similar battery of questions by phone, email, etc

KarlaMB: another good idea and a cool way to integrate technology into a lesson

LarsHa: so while not exactly PBL, you can see how with some tweaking they can easily be converted if a range of "global issues" had been framed in a generalized, open discussion and student could self direct into a couple of project options...

KarlaMB: this is very interesting

BJ would like to be in Lars' class

LarsHa: okay, now I can breathe and read.. thanks for the vote of confidence so, lets explore your questions more...,

KarlaMB: so, what is the high school program all about?

KarlaMB: So the students actually travel abroad?

LarsHa: the highschool program is about students understanding tradeoffs, and those not only associated with our economy but by those living with many of the costs in the south. the students develop an issue that they are particularly interested in, do some fundraising, and yes travel to the World Social Forum to learn about those issues, not in an academic way, but actually in the words that ordinary people (activists, not-for-profit leaders, members, citizens) talks about them. they then return home and write some reflective pieces, they've worked on a documentary video, and make community presentations...

KarlaMB: How neat. Is the program federally funded in any way?

LarsHa: one of the most pleasurable experiences for me was to simply watch students, some of whom had not traveled outside of New England, open and grow under the care, respect, curiosity, vibrancy of students from India and around the world. They shared in hair braiding, dressups, song, theater, and just plain chillin'

KarlaMB: I am in a very small, rural community in South Texas. Some of our students have never even left the state. What an awesome experience for them to become involved in a project of this type. I have to talk with the high school social sciences teachers.

LarsHa: the program receives no federal funds (I've never applied for any; we're only going into our second year), but generously supported through small grants from foundations (500-2500) and the hard won fundraising efforts of students. I set it up that way so students could participate regardless of income, and that wouldn't be some kind of funky issue, rich kids and poor kids. the total budget for the effort, in which 3

chaperones and 6 students traveled to India for ten days, was \$15,000 plus all the followup. of course, I didn't take any compensation; fortunately I have a day job and this is more of a hobby/passion...

KarlaMB: So this whole thing is your idea. You create the program?

LarsHa: hey, that's perfect, see because so many of the issues faced in the south are related to trade policy (i.e. us subsidies not being considered "unfair trade practices" while preferential access for, say, Jamaican bananas to European markets, and the subsidies the industry might receive from the Jamaican government, for example, are).

so the rural-to-rural link is vital. plus Vermont is quite rural

KarlaMB: I will be certain to pass the web page info on to the appropriate people at the high school. I would love to see this program take off here. I have four children of my own who I would like to see involved in something so great.

LarsHa: yes, the idea came from my experience at the WSF03, where I was overwhelmed at the dual purposes of celebration and critique, plus the vibrancy of the "intercontinental youth camp" where hs students and others stay. where was the last place you saw 10,000 young people get together in the US to discuss youth issues and globalization, and where another 90,000 adults were engaged in the same! it was truly an amazing experience that I think every American--given our pivotal, powerful role in the world--should try and have

BJ: amazing, Lars. We keep hearing about a global economy, but I doubt if many kids, let alone adults, actually comprehend what this means and how deeply it goes

KarlaMB: If the teachers access the web page, is all the needed information to start the program there?

LarsHa: the value isn't just in "what we contribute" to the conversation, but also in how we listen, that we demonstrate, as ordinary Americans, what our government often does not: that we are sensitive and aware of these concerns, and willing to consider alternative voices as we deliberate (more or less actively) on the proper course of "America's role in the world."

LarsHa: um, yes I think the website is mostly up to date: www.tagstudio.net/mumbai

LarsHa: the blog is down now

KarlaMB: well, I appreciate your tie this evening. It is 6pm here in Texas and my children are telling me they are hungry. I guess I should sign off and go feed them. Thanks again. This has been an enlightening discussion.

BJ: Thanks, Lars. Lots of great inspiring information. I hope you will present this information again, maybe in the fall or spring?

KarlaMB waves good-bye

BJ: thanks for joining us, Karla

KarlaMB left the room (signed off).

LarsHa: okay, thanks all!