

Title of Session: Global Project Based Learning -

Moderator: Linda Ullah

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Room: After School Online

LindaU: Welcome, we are just getting ready to get started with the Global Project Based Learning discussion. Is that what you are here for?

AmyD: yes it is

LindaU: Fantastic. Are you from Texas?

AmyD: yes

AmyD: I am a preservice education student at the University of Houston

LindaU: Does that mean you are doing your student teaching right now or are you still taking your coursework?

AmyD: I am working in the schools right now observing a teacher two days a week

AmyD: I will be doing student teaching in the spring

LindaU: what grade level and or subject?

AmyD: I am currently observing in a fifth grade classroom and am going for certification in early childhood

LindaU: What do you teach?

HeatherV: I'm a tech supervisor for an afterschool program

HeatherV: I run the computer lab during our summer camp

LindaU: what grade levels

HeatherV: pre-k through 5th

BJ: Looks like you've already done introductions!

BJ: Linda, would you like to start?

LindaU: Hi, I'm Linda Ullah. I'm teacher in residence at the Foothill College Krause Center for Innovation in Los Altos Hills CA. A few years ago I was an elementary school teachers. My students did a water pollution project with students in Sao Paulo, Brazil... I was hooked. Recently I did a Masters Thesis on Global Project Based Learning.. It has become one of my passions... Tell me why you are interested in global pbl

DougP joined the room.

LindaU: Hi Doug.. we are just getting started.

DougP: Thank you. Hello, everyone.

HeatherV: we are just starting to get into PBL

LindaU: Tell us a bit about yourself and why you are interested in global pbl

HeatherV: I have to give a presentation to the curriculum coordinators for our district on Monday

LindaU: Heather is it on doing global projects with kids?

DougP: I am the computer consultant for a district of 80 schools and am always on the lookout for great ideas

LindaU: where are your 80 schools.. whew!

HeatherV: yes it is Linda

DougP: Southwestern Ontario. Biggest city would be Windsor

HeatherV: the district tech dept is trying to get teachers to move towards pbl

LindaU: Maybe I should reintroduce myself.

DougP: I went to teachers' college at the U of T.

LindaU: John, and Shawna.. please introduce yourselves... where and what do you teach..what is your interest in Global PBL?

ShawnaR: I am a preservice teacher, I plan on teaching first grade and I am currently working with a second grade class.

ShawnaR: I am interested in learning more about the project.

LindaU: I'm here to discuss a course I've written on global PBL as part of a Masters Thesis I completed last spring. It is an outgrowth of a project I did with my former students in Calif. and students in Sao Paulo Brazil

JohnCr: I just received an announcement about Global BPL--I thought I would see what it was about. I am an Adaptive P.E. teacher taking an ETEC546 class from Dr. Decroo

HeatherV: I looked at the course Linda...very informative

LindaU: People often ask me what is global project based learning? The best definition I've found comes from Kiyomi Hutchings and Mark Standley in their book

LindaU: The definition is at the bottom of this web site:

<http://www.garlic.com/~lullah/gpbl/topic1/t1read1.html> Click on the URL and scroll to the bottom.

LindaU: How does this fit with what you think Global PBL is or should be?

ShawnaR: I have been reading about the course and I am excited about the possibilities that it offers for teachers.

HeatherV: it's a great explanation

HeatherV: the biggest obstacle I have found so far in our efforts is motivation

LindaU: Now let me ask how do you think doing project with students in other places can enhance student learning outcomes?

LindaU: Heather what do you mean by motivation being a potential obstacle?

HeatherV: a lot of my staff thinks that pbl is not exactly a good thing for an afterschool program

HeatherV: I am finding it hard to motivate some of them

LindaU: Hmm.. why?

HeatherV: they tend to think more along the lines of our program being play time

LindaU: Maybe a better question goes back to just what is project based learning?

HeatherV: our director is trying to extend on the school day, so we are moving toward more enriching projects

LindaU: Recently I attend the annual PBL conference sponsored by Co-nect.. I heard Susan Sclafani, advisor to Rod Page speak about PBL

LindaU: She said that Project Based Learning supports No Child Left Behind because it promotes higher order thinking skills, and all the SCANS report necessary skills..

LindaU: PBL, if done right is based on content standards and has a strong assessment component that drives the learning.

HeatherV: GPBL allows students to learn about other cultures and lets the students know that there are other people in the world beyond their front yards

LindaU: Getting back to Heather's concerns... some people do think that projects are just playing because they don't understand what goes into organizing a project.

LindaU: Exactly Heather..

LindaU: What do the rest of your think about the explanation of global pbl?

AmyD: I think it is a great concept

AmyD: definitely a great way to teach students through experience

DougP: One of my concerns is that we encourage students to write for an audience. Just throwing up a web page doesn't necessarily mean that you'll have a focused audience. Engagement in a project ensures that there will be someone who is reading and paying attention to it.

ShawnaR: I personally believe that giving children the opportunity to interact through e-pals is a great step towards promoting student diversity.

LindaU: Shawna have you done any epals projects?

HeatherV: has anyone had success with e-pals?

LindaU: When I did my research for my thesis.. ePals in foreign language had great success...

ShawnaR: no I have not, but when I have my own classroom in the future I would like to do it. It sounds like an excellent learning tool for children.

LindaU: You might take a look at the Water Pollution project my students did several years ago at: <http://www.garlic.com/~lullah/brazilus/water.html>

ShawnaR: I think that there many ways that Global PBL can be of benefit to the students in many curriculum areas.

LindaU: We had many curriculum objectives before we started the project.

AmyD: I remember when I was in elementary school and we had pen pals from different countries. I think epals would be even better so you don't have to wait so long for a reply to come through the mail

LindaU: Exactly, Amy... I had a German Pen Pal and Australian Pen Pal in grade school.. The experience helped my not only understand their cultures better, but want to know more about their countries...

HeatherV: We have a tech fair coming up in Feb. I want each of my campuses to attempt a pbl project for the fair

LindaU: The 7 A's of PBL are authenticity, academic rigor, applied learning, active exploration, adult connections, and assessment practices... all are important in creating and doing global projects.

HeatherV: my staff is supposed to tell me what their topics are tomorrow

LindaU: This is great, Heather... we did this for several years in my former district.

HeatherV: was the implementation difficult?

LindaU: It was a huge job... to be honest...

ShawnaR: I have read over your project and it looks like it was very involved, what grade level did you do the project with.

LindaU: We participated in the Challenge 2000 Multimedia Project (<http://pblmm.k12.ca.us>) and we set up a room at one of the middle schools for the first few years..then at a high school the last year for each participating school.

LindaU: Some schools had more that one room because they had so many projects. I'll see if our site is still online.

HeatherV: I guess my interest tonight is to learn about some projects that would seem interesting to both staff and students to get them excited about the pbl concept

ShawnaR: wow, I would really to be able to set up something along those lines in the future. I am a firm believer in constructivist learning. When students are involved and allowed the responsibility for their learning I think that it takes on more meaning and value for them.

ShawnaR: I have similar interests

LindaU: I think the site is gone.

HeatherV: but how can you get others to see the benefits of pbl, Shawna

LindaU: Take a look <http://linc.ca.campusgrid.net/home/Project+Pages> There are many projects linked here..

HeatherV: I'm sorry, but I have found that older teachers are set in their ways and don't take lightly to change

AmyD: I definitely agree with Shawna. Students learn better when problems are self posed because it is something they are interested in

LindaU: Some older teachers Heather.. I work with teachers of all ages.. I've worked with older teachers who found PBL to be the one thing that renewed them.

HeatherV: In our district, the teachers don't like more work

HeatherV: terrible to hear when you know that this could really help kids

ShawnaR: I think that the best way to get teachers on board with the idea is first to inform them about the benefits and then to show them past successful projects so that they can see the rewards for themselves. I am afraid that many are not willing because they are unsure about how it works and frankly many do not want to put in the time to explore it further.

AmyD: There are teachers of all types....some are more open minded than others

LindaU: When you plan a project you begin with a driving question. (open ended and feasible.

HeatherV: that's why I'm hoping that my presentation on Monday will spark some interest

LindaU: Then you create your measurable objectives and plan assessment strategies...

LindaU: (notice I've put assessment ahead of activities..that is on purpose..

AmyD: why is that?

LindaU: Sometimes showing teachers successful projects is a good way to motivate teachers.. They need to know what is possible.

ShawnaR: I think if I could do it in my class and they could see first hand the benefits and see the amount of work that it takes they may get on board.

HeatherV: good point

LindaU: Assessment drives the learning... You need to know where you are going and how you will know when you get there before you plan your route.

LindaU: Assessment includes knowing your learners, and learning environment... pre testing or assessing prior knowledge, and mapping how you will know you are on track as the project unfolds...

AmyD: A successful example is definitely one of the best ways to influence other teachers

LindaU: This is called formative assessment.. You also need to have summative assessment to determine the degree to which the project was successful.

HeatherV: I thought assessment was only at the end to see what was learned

ShawnaR: Assessment does drive learning, teachers here in Texas are very concerned about getting through information that will be on the state test, and they are not willing to put in time into something that they do not see appearing on the test.

LindaU: Take a look at: <http://www.garlic.com/~lullah/gpbl/topic5/t5read.html>

AmyD: Very true Shawna....the test is what administrators care about most

HeatherV: but with pbl the teachers could touch on several subjects in just one project

LindaU: That is why you go to your standards when you plan a project and map the project to the standards.

LindaU: I like to have teachers map out the year's curriculum to standards first.

LindaU: Then have them select which parts of the curriculum can be best taught through a project.

LindaU: Then determine which standards the particular project will meet. That way you know your students are learning the content they will be tested on.

LindaU: Remember that our goal as educators is not to make standardized testing the do all, be all, end all of education. There is much more to education than teaching students to raise their test scores.

ShawnaR: I agree, I think that a teacher like myself would probably have to put in all the work initially to show them that Global PBL can fulfill many of the standards set by state.

AmyD: That is the reason I do not like standardized testing....it influences teachers to teach in the wrong manner

ShawnaR: I can not wait to have my own classroom so that I can begin to implement projects like this in my classroom.

LindaU: If you just want students to do well on "the test" then you should drill them all year on sample test items. If you want students to become engaged motivated learners with good problem solving and higher order thinking skills then pbl works well.

HeatherV: and how often do students cram for a test and remember that information years later?

AmyD: never....experience is one of the best learning tools

LindaU: Amy, the testing and standards are not necessarily bad..IF used correctly... unfortunately they've become the goal of education because that is where the money is (politicians are in charge of education, not educators)

AmyD: and that is why this is such a great idea

HeatherV: I agree

LindaU: I mentioned I participated in the Challenge 2000 Multimedia Project. We did a lot of research on PBL.

AmyD: I see your point....this could be a great way to teach the curriculum and teach other skills at the same time

ShawnaR: exactly, I think that this sort of learning could be very positive if young educators are able to get the word out about the benefits of the PBL, I say young because teachers that have been teaching for a while are harder to convince to change.

LindaU: See <http://pblmm.k12.ca.us/sri/ReportsPDFFiles/MMPY5rpt.pdf>. It's a long PDF file...don't take time to read it now... but book mark it.

HeatherV: Linda, do you mind if I mention your course in my presentation on Monday?

LindaU: Please, I'd be honored.

HeatherV: thank you

HeatherV: I have suggestions for projects for my staff who can't think of any

LindaU: Basically the multimedia project evaluation determined that test scores do not go down in PBL classrooms and the students have better problem solving, higher order thinking, collaboration (SCANS report) skills...

ShawnaR: Thank you for having the discussion tonight it has been very informative and I will use all of the links you provided for further inquiry.

HeatherV: one of them is a gpbl....international recipe book

LindaU: You can always email me at ullahlinda@foothill.edu if you need more information.

LindaU: oooo I love it...and international recipe book! Great idea.

AmyD: that is a neat idea

HeatherV: I would gladly take any information you can offer

LindaU: Take time to review the course.. there are some great ideas there.. One of my teachers did a great Art and Peace project.

HeatherV: and with the holidays coming up I heard one of my staff mention....different holidays in different cultures

LindaU: Take a look at her project plan:

<http://linc.ca.campusgrid.net/home/Project+Pages/Projects+2002/lnock>

AmyD: there are so many different holiday traditions...this would be great

LindaU: This is important now... especially with the current war and world condition

LindaU: It is Ramadan in the Muslim World now. It is a month of fasting and prayer.

LindaU: I believe that if we can help our students understand children in other cultures, they will have a better understanding of the world, and perhaps we have a better opportunity to promote world peace.

HeatherV: the project plan is good

HeatherV: I did take a look at it

LindaU: There are several healing projects too... linking kids in war torn areas with kids who survived 911 or major earthquakes, etc..

HeatherV: At this point in our implementation, I thought that it might be too large of an undertaking to attempt right now

LindaU: Heather, It is best to begin small...

LindaU: You might also be interested in the Jason Project <http://www.jasonproject.org>

LindaU: It has a curriculum and connects kids from around the world with research scientists ..all working on the same project...

LindaU: Right now it is rainforests.

HeatherV: it looks interesting

LindaU: I think we've just about run out of time.. Please feel free to keep in touch with me.

HeatherV: expect an e-mail

HeatherV smiles

LindaU: Just don't let the naysayers take away your enthusiasm.

AmyD: thanks for your time. I really enjoyed this discussion

HeatherV: thank you for all the information...it will definitely help with my presentation

LindaU: I'm impressed with the energy you all have expressed.

HeatherV: let's hope it's contagious

LindaU: I think it is....

LindaU: That's what I'm betting on at least.

LindaU: Thank you all for coming....