

Title of Session: American Indian Studies -Digital Divide

Moderator: Michael Wilson

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BjB waves hi to Michael

BjB: did you get my gazillion emails?

BjB . o O (sorry they were so piecemeal)

MichaelDW: Hi BJ. Yes I did.

MichaelDW: Thank you. I started to answer, but I didn't know where to start.

BjB: no need to answer. Just thought it might give you ideas for a discussion topic for your weekly sessions

BjB . o O (sometimes posting a topic attracts more participants)

MichaelDW: Yes, it's a very good topic.

MichaelDW: I tried to hunt up my copy of a study done about 10 years ago by the National Indian Policy Center when it was still around.

MichaelDW: I actually have done a fair amount of work in the area working for a group called the National Indian Telecommunications Institute in Santa Fe.

BjB: sounds like a lot of research has been done, but it's all scattered

MichaelDW: Yes, it really varies from community to community.

BjB: are you saying that the digital divide varies from community to community?

MichaelDW: Yes, very much so.

BjB: is there no networking to unite the separate American Indian Communities?

MichaelDW: I'd heard a few years back that the remote Chapter Houses on the Navajo Nation were establishing uplinks to satellites. That was interesting.

MichaelDW: Not that much, no. It would be a very good undertaking for some non-profit.

BjB agrees

MichaelDW: NITI was interested in doing some of that work, but the grants wanted the organization to focus on capacity -- training of Indian technicians, teachers, &c.

BjB: this was a problem?

MichaelDW: No, that was very important undertaking, but then the organization didn't do as much on the policy side.

MichaelDW: Tribes generally focus on their own infrastructure, rather than a larger, pan-tribal undertaking.

KrystalLC joined the room.

BjB nods. Sounds like school districts

MichaelDW: Hi Krystal.

BjB: Hi, Krystal! Welcome

KrystalLC: hello

MichaelDW: We were talking about the Digital Divide, i.e., access for tribal groups to telecommunications.

BjB . o O (and to collaboration, education, and all that telecommunications can provide)

MichaelDW: Where do you work, Krystal?

KrystalLC: I'm a student teacher at the University of Houston

MichaelDW: What level?

KrystalLC: EC-4

MichaelDW: Do you have many American Indian students there?

KrystalLC: No it's mostly African American

MichaelDW: How does your school handle diversity issues?

KrystalLC: Are you referring to the Elementary School or University of Houston

MichaelDW: I was thinking of the Elementary School, but it would be interesting to know UofH does things.

KrystalLC: I haven't run across any issues so far since I've been there

MichaelDW: Does the school include American Indian issues at your school?

KrystalLC: No Sir

BjB: what about in the curriculum standards, Krystal?

KrystalLC left the room (signed off).

MichaelDW: Too many questions.

BjB: preservice teachers can be a whole topic!

MichaelDW: Next time I'll let the teacher do the asking!@

BjB . o O (they don't want to think, just listen to someone handing them information)

MichaelDW: I'm interested in how Tapped In might be used for postbac credit.

BjB: Texas has a pretty set TAKS testing system. No thinking involved...just teach to the test

MichaelDW: That is such a wrong approach to teaching.

BjB: yes, I'm hoping you will be able to collaborate with some of the other TI members, Michael. I gave your name to Dianne Allen, a teacher in Australia. She's the one who showed me the cpKeep site originally

MichaelDW: Thank you. I imagine people might be skittish after the problem in Florida.

BjB: schools are running scared with NCLB. Testing is the only way they know to meet the requirements and not lose fed. funding

BjB . o O (and in many cases state funding)

BjB: Dianne should be contacting you and Mary Thompson and Karen Connaghan to discuss CEUs for Tapped In participation

BjB: Mary is probably one of Krystal's teachers

BjB: She teaches preservice teachers at the University of Houston

MichaelDW: I see. I'll be looking for Dianne's note.

BjB smiles happily. Great! Thanks, Michael.

BjB: You brought up another great topic that you might want to feature...teaching cultural diversity

MichaelDW: I'm very curious about that -- how it's done and why, according to teachers, it's important.

BjB nods. Mary might be interested in assigning her students to participate in a discussion on that topic

BjB: I'll suggest it during her next Teachers in Training session on April 6

MichaelDW: That sounds good. Thank you.

BjB: perhaps you can collaborate with her.

MichaelDW: That would be great.

BjB agrees

MichaelDW: FYI, I had planned to be here every week up to May 10.

BjB: cool. Thanks.

MichaelDW: Do you have a general idea of which schools are signed up with Tapped In? I wonder if tribal schools are connected.

BjB: I don't know.

BjB: lots of teachers, but not a lot of school districts yet

MichaelDW: I see.

BjB: you know how to look at the demographics page?

MichaelDW: I notice that nationwide there are 35 users connected right now.

MichaelDW: No, where is that located?

BjB: go to the Tapped In tab at the top of your screen

BjB: then click on the subtab PEOPLE

BjB: there is a link to demographics

MichaelDW: That's good information at the fingertips.

BjB: do many of the states that are listed include American Indian populations?

BjB: or is that population pretty evenly distributed among the states?

MichaelDW: Not really -- Oklahoma, Arizona, New Mexico, not there.

MichaelDW: Minnesota has a fairly sizable population. It's listed.

BjB: I know we have members in those states.

MichaelDW: Alaska would be a good place as well.

BjB nods

BjB: and apparently Hawaii

BjB . o O (from one of the emails I sent you)

MichaelDW: Alaska Natives do some excellent work with Native Knowledge -- I think it's the Alaska Native Network Organization run by the Univ of AK.

BjB: do you have that resource listed in the group room?

BjB . o O (group rooms are a good place to put information like that)

MichaelDW: I'll find it and put it there.

BjB: you know about folders?

MichaelDW: I went to one of their conferences in Anchorage -- very impressive.

MichaelDW: No, I don't.

BjB: you can organize resources in a group room by putting similar topics into folders

MichaelDW: Sounds good.

BjB: then feature the folders so they appear on the welcome screen

BjB: that helps to keep the welcome screen from becoming too cluttered

MichaelDW: I will definitely check that out. I've put things on a web page, but that sounds much better.

BjB: the group rooms in Tapped In can be really valuable resource rooms.

BjB: and the discussion boards can serve as a way to communicate with group members at times other than real time chats

MichaelDW: That sounds like very good way to stay connected.

BjB: you are such a valuable resource yourself! I don't want to lose all your input

BjB . o O (it's too important to the Tapped In community!)

MichaelDW: Thanks. I enjoy this kind of work. I actually have my own bulletin board for Choctaw Issues, and it includes a little chat server.

BjB: feel free to invite the members of your bulletin board to Tapped In...might be a way to increase the diversity of the TI population

MichaelDW: I'm thinking that teachers at tribal schools and BIA schools might find this to be a very valuable resource. What is the cost to them?

BjB: nothing! Membership to Tapped In is free to all educators...

MichaelDW: How do you gatekeep?

BjB: we expect professional behavior and have high expectations. There is a code of conduct.

BjB: most tenants pay a fee for their buildings

MichaelDW: How do you know the registrant is an educator?

BjB: but for a starter organization, they could just create a group room

BjB shrugs. All members are educators or students of education

BjB: Tapped In is huge and takes a lot to keep it going.

BjB . o O (the interface is huge...staff is small)

MichaelDW: I can imagine.

MichaelDW: It's very nice software.

BjB: I would think if BIA or a group like that wanted to own a tenant building, they could apply for grant dollars

MichaelDW: Well, the BIA certainly has a few dollars that it spends on education.

BjB nods

MichaelDW: Do you go to conferences?

BjB: Tapped In doesn't advertise...so it takes word of mouth to reach special populations

BjB: sometimes TI staff will go. Often, it's volunteers who attend the conferences

BjB: two people from TI are presenting at NECC

MichaelDW: If you want to reach a large number of Indian Educators, you might consider the National Indian Education Association Conference in the fall. Generally, over 3K attend.

BjB: wow. I'll forward that information to Mark Schlager.

BjB . o O (he's the director of Tapped In)

MichaelDW: A presentation would be very welcome, I'm sure. They have many many booths there as well.

BjB: I'm not sure that a booth or even a presentation at a conference is that effective in attracting people to Tapped In

BjB . o O (just a guess on my part)

MichaelDW: You may be right.

MichaelDW: It's in Alaska this year, I see. I might save my pennies and make the trip.

BjB: oh, cool...then YOU can do a presentation on Tapped In ;-)

BjB winks. See how that works?!

MichaelDW: I generally do something about teaching native lit, but of course one could always put in a word about other things.

BjB: and you can suggest that one way to teach native lit is to bring the students to the K-12 student campus and do online education

BjB . o O (or if the students are adults, they can get their own membership and you could teach in a group room)

MichaelDW: One of the members of the board at the Comanche Tribal College is arguing for an on-line campus. Things like Tapped In could be very useful to them.

BjB: ok, I know you have an important TV program waiting for you....hopefully, I've given you some ideas.

MichaelDW: Yes, you certainly have.

MichaelDW: Have a good night!

BjB: it's been a delightful discussion

BjB waves goodnight. Take care, Michael

MichaelDW: You too. Night.