

Title of Session: GPBL: Patriotism in a Global Learning Environment

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BJB2: looks like a small crowd, Linda. I'm looking forward to what you have to share

LindaU: My thoughts are more in the form of essential questions...

BJB2 listens

LindaU: Might as well get started.

LindaU: It has occurred to me that patriotism can be a force for good when doing cross-country projects, but in extreme conditions patriotism can be a cause for conflict.

BJB2 nods

DavidW . o O (definition of patriotism may be necessary)

BJB2 . o O (I'm glad I sent you the transcript from the last discussion)

LindaU: The world has really become "flat" at Tom Friedman says.

LindaU: Good point David, and I suspect that there are MANY definitions.

LindaU: How do you define it?

DavidW: Well, I would like NOT define it as "My country right or wrong."

LindaU: Is it defined the say way in each part of the world?

DavidW: but my sense is many people still see it that way

DavidW thinks that is an excellent question

LindaU: Okay.. but some people do define it that way....

LindaU: Have you all read Daniel Pink's "A Whole New Mind?"

BJB2: no, I've not read that

DavidW: I've not

DavidW: One thing that came to mind that stunned me the first time I learned it...

LindaU: It's a good follow up book to The world is flat

LindaU listens to David

DavidW: Lincoln offered Lee the command of the Union Army - Lee declined because he felt he was a Virginian first

LindaU: Muy interesante!

DavidW: What is "A Whole New Mind" about, Linda?

LindaU: So Lee's patriotism was Virginia-centric.

DavidW: that's my understanding - he was the leading military person of the day - that's my understanding

LindaU: Among other things, Pink suggests that we in the U.S. need to reinvent ourselves

BJB2: <http://www.danpink.com/aboutwnm.php>

LindaU: and contribute what we do best in a global economy in which

LindaU: other parts of the world are doing what we have traditionally done economically--both better and cheaper.

LindaU: He sees that the way to do this is to rely on right brain skills.

LindaU: because other parts of the world (eg India and China are doing the left brain jobs now.

LindaU: He sees affluence means that we need better designers...

LindaU: that goods are no longer okay if they are just functional... they have to be aesthetically pleasing as well.

LindaU: Sort of the old German Bauhaus

DavidW smiles

LindaU: Anyway... as our jobs become outsourced.. how does patriotism... (perhaps defined as the belief that where we live is the best) fit into the equation of the need to reinvent ourselves?

DavidW . o O (nice idea, but, affluence often means MacMansions)

LindaU laughs

DavidW: my sister, the architect, really wonders if she went into the wrong field

LindaU: Interesting.

DavidW: people AREN'T interested in design - they are interested in cheap

DavidW is generalizing, of course

LindaU: Back to patriotism and GPBL. What kind of projects can students do that will allow them to maintain regional/ethnic pride, but, also, develop an appreciation for other cultures and ways of life?

LindaU: How do we educate students for global citizenship?

DavidW: have them interact with people from other parts of the globe

DavidW . o O (other students)

BJB2: first we have to educate the students to respect other cultures

LindaU: how do we do this, BJ?

DavidW wonders about first "appreciating" other cultures

DavidW: Helping people understand that, for example, "Algebra" derives from Arabic

LindaU: Okay, David... How do we create projects that will help students appreciate other cultures.

DavidW: Interesting program on PBS last night about medieval Spain and how Christian/Muslim/Jewish culture all flourished, for a period, in southern Spain

LindaU: Okay.. this is true... But that is still abstract for American students, but Middle Eastern students will often point this out with a certain "patriotic" pride

DavidW: the tolerance and acceptance of differences led to intellectual/cultural advances

LindaU: How does a student whose dad has lost his job because what he has done all his life is now no longer done where he lives, but is in an emerging country?

LindaU: --oops.. didn't finish the sentence

LindaU: how does that child (and his/her family) learn to appreciate other cultures when they are hurt by them economically?

LindaU: How do we design projects that help students learn how to reinvent themselves to live in a global marketplace...?

LindaU: Okay.. let me give an example. A couple of years ago I worked with a classroom (2nd grade) where the students partnered with students in the UK. The 2nd grade curriculum was to learn about their own community.....>

DavidW: Dad's company could have been put out of business by the company in another part of the US, as well

LindaU: They compared and contrasted their community with their UK partners' community.

DavidW nods

LindaU: true...

LindaU: I run into California vs. NC in some these small towns where I go to coach my teachers.

DavidW . o O (NYC vs. New York State)

DavidW: so, with the 2nd graders...?

LindaU: Some people see our schools as "California schools" invading their local way of life and changing their traditional schools and hence their communities..

LindaU: okay back to 2nd grade..

LindaU: The students exchanged email then created digital movies about what was the same and what was different in their cultures.

LindaU: <http://my-ecoach.com/online/teacherguide.php?projectid=5376>

DavidW: ok

LindaU: Consider this project on patriotism in the US

LindaU: <http://library.thinkquest.org/TQ0312233/>

DavidW looks

DavidW: interesting how MANY of the things listed under EVENTS are related to various wars

LindaU: I wonder how many people in the world will recognize our patriotic symbols..

LindaU: but I also wonder if we would recognize theirs.

LindaU: Why is this?

DavidW: well, for one, we tend to learn the stories behind the symbols in school

DavidW: a lot of schooling is, may I say, national indoctrination

BJB2: words are interesting

DavidW agrees with BJ - much more open to interpretation, the words

BJB2 . o O (at the thinkquest site)

DavidW . o O (also more universal)

DavidW: Why do we do the Pledge of Allegiance in schools?

LindaU: Great questions?

LindaU: What pledges do students in other countries recite?

DavidW: What would it mean to be patriotic to the earth?

LindaU: Global citizens

DavidW: it seems rather inevitable given human migration, communication, etc.

LindaU: Hmmm global marketplace, global citizen... yet.....

LindaU: How close are we to accepting this concept globally?

DavidW holds his index finger and thumb very close together

LindaU: Do you really think so?

DavidW: that's how far along we are, IMHO

DavidW . o O (not very far)

BJB2 agrees.

LindaU: when in parts of the world people who might seem to us to be ethnically the same find that they cannot co-exist with people in their countries who are ethnically or religiously different.

LindaU: oh..

DavidW smiles

LindaU: I thought you meant very close.

DavidW understands

DavidW: but, consider what the European Union has done in recent times - different countries have agreed to use a common currency, renouncing the national currency

LindaU: I find it interesting that Jr. Achievement is now focused on the global economy: http://www.ja.org/programs/programs_mid_global_obj.shtml

DavidW: that's never happened before, willingly, is my understanding

LindaU: This is true...what have they lost as a result?

LindaU: I used to have my students look at currency and try to determine what they could learn about a country from its currency.

DavidW: well, I guess people who design money in the EU countries have less opportunity to provide new designs

LindaU: Typically money bears images of famous people and symbols in the history of a country.

LindaU: As we get ourselves involved in conflicts around the world, what do we really know about those countries?

DavidW: You introduced the project with the 2nd graders, Linda, and I wasn't sure if you had a conclusion - did they NOT learn about each other?

LindaU: Yes, they did. I saw their digital movies.

DavidW . o O (US is often woefully uninformed of culture, traditions, history before military involvement)

DavidW: good

DavidW: There was an interesting story of World War II efforts to inform US soldiers

going to the Middle East how to respect Muslim customs...was used to update soldiers in Iraq when they realized it might be useful

DavidW: but, it was impressive that US Military during World War II actually thought about these things

LindaU: The Global Nomads Group has published a book called The Encyclopedia of Misconceptions. It deals with the misconceptions we all have about each other.

LindaU: This might be a great intro for a global project on patriotism.

LindaU: <http://gng.org/>

DavidW: I guess I would like to make people think more about becoming global citizens as well

LindaU: I recently rewatched the movie "Lawrence of Arabia"

DavidW smiles

LindaU: When I was young I watched it to see Peter O'Toole and Omar Sharif (whom I consider to be hunks at the time (Now I find that amusing)..anyway

DavidW . o O (they ARE hunks in the film)

DavidW smiles

LindaU: This time I watched it to see how it dealt with the history of British Imperialism on the middle east.

BJB2 . o O (now they're just old guys)

DavidW smiles

DavidW hugs BJ

DavidW: Not in the movie!

BJB2 nods

LindaU: and skinny young guys in the film...

DavidW: I think it presents a view of British superiority

BJB2: watching a film that old with the hindsight we now have isn't fair

LindaU: My point here, in spite of the hunk discussion, is that what the British did affected what is happening there today.

LindaU: But most people in the U.S. don't know the history

DavidW: oh, certainly - the divvying up of the old Turkish empire to create modern Iraq

BJB2: so we need more history classes?

DavidW: always

LindaU: Nor do we understand the patriotism of the Kurds, Suni's, Shiites--that is not necessarily and Iraqi patriotism.

DavidW: well, the patriotic impulse may be towards your "tribe", "clan", etc.

LindaU: or Lee's patriotism for VA over the US

DavidW: that really stunned me when I learned that (probably from Ken Burns film)

LindaU: There are the tribal conflicts in African nations that have caused mass genocide

LindaU: So.. is patriotism a force of good or evil?

DavidW: false dichotomy

DavidW smiles

LindaU: How can we use patriotism in a way that will allow us to maintain our cultural values while also allowing others to keep theirs...and with both groups appreciating and understanding each other's cultures and patriotism.

BJB2 . o O (and based on different values systems)

DavidW: I think it takes courage to criticize one's organization (team, company, country) when that view may be unpopular - regardless of how valid the criticism may be

LindaU: I'm not sure the value systems are really different.. but just practiced differently.

BJB2: tolerance for different practices?

DavidW: is a doctor treating a soldier from the opposing side patriotic if he allows the wounded man to die?

LindaU: yes.

LindaU: but more than tolerance.. acceptance and appreciation.

LindaU: Back to the question... How can we create cross cultural acceptance and appreciation and still value local patriotism?

DavidW: What's local patriotism, Linda? Flag-waving and fireworks on the 4th of July? Marching in Alabama with MLK, Jr. for Civil Rights?

LindaU: Now that is an ethical and moral question, David, about the doctor.

DavidW laughs

DavidW: Yes, it is

DavidW: I think people who DO protest (let me show you one web page I came across today that's pertinent) it's often to make the country better - they see that the country can do better

LindaU: What is local patriotism? That's a great question, David.. Maybe the problem is the lack of a good definition... How do we help our student come up with a good definition?

DavidW: This has a short video on it that will start playing, but I was rather impressed by the woman featured and the ordeal she went through at the Canadian border

DavidW: Help them define what they mean by patriotism

DavidW: I think lots of people felt that Pat Tillman (former football player who joined the Army) was being "patriotic" - rather sad he was killed by his own troops

DavidW: and, then, for "patriotic" reasons, a cover-up ensued on how he died

LindaU: My son played soccer with Pat Tillman when they were young.

DavidW: I'm sure he was a good athlete

LindaU: A lot of bad things have happened in the name of patriotism.

DavidW: This woman, Ann Wright, former soldier, former diplomat, was recently detained at the Canadian border because of arrests for protests

DavidW agrees

LindaU: Not just US patriotism.

DavidW: Hit the stop button to stop the video which will play automatically

DavidW: http://www.truthout.org/docs_2006/082207J.shtml

LindaU: That is why I ask the questions about whether patriotism is good or bad?

LindaU watches movie

DavidW: well, I guess I want to see if you can get to something that is "national pride" without it being "My country is better than your country"

LindaU: Pride vs prejudice

DavidW smiles

LindaU: oops.. didn't Jane Austin put those words together? hmhhh

DavidW: different conjunction

LindaU: true.

DavidW gives BJ a friendly nudge

LindaU: so it's the word better that is the problem...

DavidW: ?

LindaU: better---when we define our way as the best---that we get into problems.

DavidW: Not sure why so many Americans dislike the idea of the United Nations

LindaU: Anyway.. we won't resolve this tonight.. but my goal was to get people thinking about how to craft a global project that allowed for local patriotism without the "better/best" terms.. just different...

DavidW: seems like there is a greater need, still, for student exchange programs

LindaU: I'm beginning to yawn....

DavidW smiles

DavidW: Thanks, Linda

BJB2: Thanks, Linda!

LindaU: Yes... there is. both virtual and f2f

DavidW: I think the environment will only provide more reasons for world-wide collaboration

LindaU hopes so

DavidW: Article in today's NYTimes about more and more research show guns used in crimes in NYC come from Virginia

LindaU: Interesting piece of info.

DavidW: Virginia still has relatively relaxed gun-control laws allowing it to be a place people can easily acquire guns - it's a short ride up I-95

LindaU: Hence--the incident last spring at VA Tech....

DavidW: Virginia has, apparently, been reluctant to acknowledge this or to consider tightening some of their rules - even in the aftermath of the Va. Tech shootings

DavidW: but, one might look at state-control of public education as well

DavidW . o O (does it make sense in the world today)

LindaU: Another interesting topic...

BJB2: now we're in a loop, David...I think we need to end the discussion...maybe that's a topic for another time.

DavidW hugs BJ

LindaU: Who should control education of our kids.

DavidW smiles

BJB2 hugs David and Linda and heads for bed.

DavidW . o O (KIDS!)

LindaU: What should education look like for this century

LindaU: Linda is not far behind BJ... I'm beginning to fade as well.

LindaU: David just has such interesting thoughts.

DavidW smiles

BJB2 nods...always!

DavidW: Why, thank you, Linda

DavidW bows humbly

LindaU: Wish my brain were more awake...

LindaU: I'll be sure to think on these topics, though.

DavidW: good topics to think about

BJB2: maybe David needs to start a group "what should education look like?"

DavidW: Thanks again for the discussion

LindaU: I think it must be time for good night...

DavidW knows that group would have very long transcripts