

Title of Session: Middle School Portal - MSP2

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Room: Middle School Portal Group

KimberlySL: let's go ahead and introduce ourselves

BJB2: I'm a retired arts and communication teacher in Pennsylvania

GlenysM: I am a teacher of Grade six in Saskatchewan, Canada

KimberlySL: I'm a science educator at Ohio State University - I teach science methods courses for middle and high school preservice teachers

NatashaG: I'm a senior at University of Texas Pan American

KimberlySL: Natasha - what are you planning on teaching once you graduate?

KimberlySL: Glenys - do you have a self contained classroom?

GlenysM: I have been teaching for 30 years and still enjoy it.

NatashaG: um I have not picked a grade but my major is early childhood through grade 6

GlenysM: Yes I teach all subjects to about 25 students

KimberlySL: well - I'll tell you about Beyond Penguins and Polar Bears at the end of this session

KimberlySL: Today we are going to explore the Middle School Portal 2: Math and Science Pathways – MSP2 – online social network - <http://msteacher2.org/>

GlenysM: We are not quite cold enough for polar bears in Saskatchewan :-)

BJB2: hold down the ctrl key on your keyboard when you click on the url

KimberlySL: We are very loose when we define middle school - you both would fit in quite nicely!

NatashaG: man polar bears... it is going to be 105 here today

KimberlySL: We are funded through the National Science Foundation specifically to

support middle school math and science educators – mostly teachers.

KimberlySL: The NSDL Middle School Portal for Math and Science Education (MSP1) has been around for quite a while – we are evolving into MSP2 because we are integrating web 2.0 tools into our work – NING, Diigo, wiki, blogs, twitter.

BJB2 . o O (and Tapped In)

KimberlySL: True!

KimberlySL: So why would we want to start integrating these tools?

GlenysM: Not familiar with Ning

KimberlySL: ning is a free social network platform - that is what we are using for our MSP2 social network

GlenysM: like facebook?

KimberlySL: yes!

KimberlySL: We want to build an “architecture of participation” where our users become active participants in the creation and sharing of knowledge.

KimberlySL: that is why we are starting to integrate these tools

KimberlySL: We are using these tools to contextualize resources (the sifting and sorting of resources so you don’t have to), publish, and then have conversations around these resources.

KimberlySL: So MSP1 was static - MSP2 is active

KimberlySL: BTW - we have kept MSP1 alive so that teachers will still be able to get to much of the content even though lots of schools are filtering these tools...

KimberlySL: So first of the social network – you don’t have to register to read postings but to add any content you do have to register.

GlenysM: Yes the great dysfunctional filters :-)

KimberlySL: Go to <http://msteacher2.org> and look at the tabs at the just underneath the banner

NatashaG: k

GlenysM: okay I'm there

KimberlySL: this probably looks pretty familiar if you have a facebook page

GlenysM: somewhat

KimberlySL: you can have your own page - and really make it your own - determine what content visitors can see, you have a wall where people can put content, etc.

KimberlySL: click on the Events tab - you'll see the upcoming MSP2 TechTalks

KimberlySL: We have a few groups that are forming - the literacy in the content areas might be of interest to you?

NatashaG: for digital storytelling

KimberlySL: We have two scheduled TechTalks - digital storytelling and then wikis. The next tech talks will be about Moodle, Interactive Whiteboards, and Diigo

KimberlySL: We have lots of other events that will be forthcoming - book discussions, citizen science projects, etc.

GlenysM: should I be able to see them on the All Events page?

KimberlySL: I haven't added everything yet so you can only see the next few

GlenysM: okay thanks

KimberlySL: I'll be adding more this week - I'm a little behind!

KimberlySL: Let's go back to the Main page - click on the Main tab

GlenysM: Life is hard to catch up with

KimberlySL: Look down the left side of the page - the first box says MSP2 Resources

KimberlySL: First thing is the Science and Math Resource Guides. These cover topics that middle school math and science teachers have told us are challenging to teach. Click on a couple of these and see how they are laid out.

KimberlySL: BTW - we add resource guides all the time - the ones we are working on now are Financial Literacy and Heredity and Reproduction

GlenysM: it says sorry the page is not found

NatashaG: on both...

KimberlySL: Which one did you click on?

NatashaG: I got the same message

GlenysM: Math resource guides

GlenysM: science the same

KimberlySL: good grief - I shouldn't be allowed to change stuff

KimberlySL: I just was in there are made some changes

GlenysM: the wiki link works

KimberlySL: Ok - let's go to the next resources - I'll come back to the Resource Guides in just a minute

GlenysM: blogs work too

KimberlySL: we have three project blogs - look at the next three boxed areas under MSP2 Resources

KimberlySL: Exemplary Resources for Middle School Math and Science, Polar Research, and Connecting News

GlenysM: k

KimberlySL: Click on a couple of these are see what kinds of content you get

KimberlySL: We publish to each of these blogs once or twice a week - you can sign up by using the email alert on the blog itself

KimberlySL: when you sign up, any time we have a post - the post will show up in your email box

GlenysM: lots of stuff here

NatashaG: wow

KimberlySL: You can look at the categories down the right side of the blog pages and see all the topics we've addressed

KimberlySL: Back to the main page of the social network - <http://msteacher2.org>

NatashaG: ok

KimberlySL: On the left side of the page - under the blog entries - you'll see our hosts - anytime you have questions you can always ask them for help

KimberlySL: Alright - back to those resource guides - they actually live on <http://wiki.nsd1.org/index.php/MiddleSchoolPortal>

KimberlySL: we then distribute them to the social network - not sure why they are being distributed incorrectly but we'll look at them on their original page

KimberlySL: you'll see in the Table of Contents it says Explore in Depth Math and explore in Depth Science - scroll down and look at a few of these

KimberlySL: click on the link below the image (not the image)

KimberlySL: You both might be interested in the Reading Comprehension Strategies - http://wiki.nsd1.org/index.php/MiddleSchoolPortal/Reading_Comprehension_Strategies

KimberlySL: These resource guides have been written in wiki – probably the most famous wiki is wikipedia.

KimberlySL: The beauty of wiki is that users can edit pages - add comments, resources, annotations - whatever.

KimberlySL: Previous versions of the wiki pages are saved so that if somebody adds inappropriate content then you can revert to older versions.

KimberlySL: I watch all these pages - and nobody has added anything inappropriate yet...

NatashaG: that's good

KimberlySL: OK - let's look at the middle column of the social network - back to <http://msteacher2.org>

KimberlySL: we have the network blog (different than the ones we looked at earlier)

KimberlySL: and then the forum - where some really deep discussions are going on, members, and then the groups

KimberlySL: the forum discussion that has had the most comments is the one on homework

KimberlySL: On the right side of the main page - I am feeding some other blogs that I think might be interesting for our audience - a history of engineering blog and then two article feeds from the New York Times

KimberlySL: We haven't changed anything much since we started this in February but we are looking for feedback and ideas on making this main page really be a portal to those things that are really important to middle school educators

NatashaG: well, from a personal view...

NatashaG: I live in Texas and I am 15 min from the border

NatashaG: A problem that we have here is that our students start school as bilingual

NatashaG: so they not only have to learn English, but also learn all lessons in English

KimberlySL: that is a real issue that cuts across everything

NatashaG: this obviously is a problem and as they move through the different grades the ones that have more trouble get behind

NatashaG: so

NatashaG: in the class room you have advanced students who are on schedule and then the ones trying to catch up

NatashaG: in every subject

NatashaG: it is a true struggle

NatashaG: I think that your network is a great idea

KimberlySL: I can't even imagine... I never taught in a situation like that

KimberlySL: so what can this network do for you?

KimberlySL: we can sure put together some resources guides on the topic, get some webinars where we connect you with experts in the field and others that are struggling with these same issues

NatashaG: and yes your teachers are help each other but if more teachers with bilingual classes or if they just have ideas on how to teach students on different levels at the same time

NatashaG: I mean you do not want to slow any student down or drag any along

KimberlySL: you could join the network and then start a group and then have discussions with those folks

KimberlySL: you can invite people to join in your discussions - not just assume people

will stumble upon it

KimberlySL: I see that Glenys has already joined!

KimberlySL: we really are experimenting - and doing research in terms of what are the best practices in building an educational social network

GlenysM: I would think that there would be a number of places that are close to the border with similar issues

KimberlySL: gosh yes

BJB2 . o O (there are places NOT close to the border with those issues!)

GlenysM: That is true

NatashaG: ya everywhere

KimberlySL: good point....

NatashaG: and many many school districts

NatashaG: just in my immediate area there are a lot my only hold back is that I am not teaching yet, and will not be for at least another year

KimberlySL: BTW - it was me that screwed up those resource guide pages - if you try the links in a couple of minutes they will be fine

BJB2: I was listening to a webcast today by Scott McCleod. One of the items on the list for students in the 21st Century is being bilingual

BJB2 . o O (those links will be in your transcript)

KimberlySL: Back to the discussion - we are hoping that joining a network such as this one will decrease the isolation that teachers feel in general

NatashaG: ya it is part of our curriculum at this university to recognize diversity and cultural habits of others

KimberlySL: wow - that is quite a goal

BJB2 nods solemnly about isolation

KimberlySL: good grief - we are almost out of time - I wanted to share with you my other project - Beyond Penguins and Polar Bears - Integrating Literacy and Science in K-5 classrooms

KimberlySL: <http://beyondpenguins.nsdl.org>

BJB2: Kim meets in Tapped In on the first Wednesday of the month to do a tutorial on Beyond Penguins

BJB2 . o O (and the second Monday for MSP)

KimberlySL: we have had 15 issues of a free online magazine so far - each with a polar theme, science content, and literacy strategies with informational texts that we write ourselves - K-1, 2-3, and 4-5

GlenysM: This looks like an awesome resource

KimberlySL: these texts could help with the bilingual students - we have electronic versions - all of them are at <http://beyondpenguins.nsdl.org/information.php?topic=stories>

NatashaG: that's cool even my kids get mad when I leave a light on telling me I am killing the polar bears

BJB2: Penguins is a great resource, Glenys!

KimberlySL: Natasha - One thing - do you have a person in mind that is an expert in the field of bilingual education that we could get to do a webinar

NatashaG: hmmm

BJB2: there are archived transcripts of Kim's sessions at www.tappedin.org/transcripts

NatashaG: well there are many professors at my university

NatashaG: all that specialize in bilingual ed

NatashaG: I am just entering my education courses so I do not have a specific expert off hand

GlenysM: I see the Story Recess at 20 Below. We have recess at 40 below about 10 school days of the year. :-) We are a hardy bunch

KimberlySL: Brrrr

NatashaG: wow we freak out if it gets in the 40's here

NatashaG: it is only every now and then

KimberlySL: how funny

NatashaG: most Christmases are warm and sunny

NatashaG: no more than jeans and a light jacket

GlenysM: We have sunny Christmas' but not warm

GlenysM: I am going to give a heads up to our

BJB2 looks at the clock on the wall

GlenysM: Division science consultant, this is a great resource for the younger grades

GlenysM: I hear my husband wanting help to finish the deck. (and I really want the deck finished. :-)

NatashaG: I'll try to spread the word also around my campus to see what i can stir up

KimberlySL: that would be great! Thanks so much for coming - Kim

GlenysM: I have not been in Tapped In for awhile, thanks for the email about the sessions.

BJB2: Thanks, Kim....always nice to have enthusiastic participants!