Title of Session: Kiwi WebQuests
Moderator: Bernie Dodge
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Room: Comfy Conference Room

BernieD: I can't wait for introductions. Looks like an interesting group here already.
BjB: with that segue, how about if we start with introductions!
BernieD: Great.
BjB: I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania and a helpdesk volunteer for Tapped In
BernieD: I'm Bernie Dodge, a professor of Ed Tech at San Diego State University.
CathyArr: I'm an EdTech grad student online through SDSU from Northern California
BernieD waves northward to Cathy.
AlberthaC: I'm an EdTech certificate student online through SDSU and live in Northern California
CathyArr: hey~
DaveGst4: I'm an ed tech student as well.
SandraGl: I'm a teacher with Edmonton Public in Alberta, Canada. I work with teachers integrating technology into their curriculum. Also an ed tech student...
BjB . o O (btw, if you're new to Tapped In, click on the ACTIONS menu in the top right of the chat window and highlight DETACH)
BjB: that will make your chat window larger and easier to read
AlberthaC: Thanks BjB
BernieD: zat everyone?
DaveGst4: web away
BernieD: Greetings to all. The purpose of this evening's chat is to look at the world of WebQuests as practiced in New Zealand. I had the great experience of speaking at a conference there a couple of weeks ago and was impressed by the teachers I met and the direction the schools seem to be going there.
ChrisP: I'm Chris Pfrang and I'm an English teacher going over to Ed Tech soon. I'm also in Bangkok so if my intro is a bit slow please forgive
KristenFS: hi, my name is Kristen and I am a preservice teacher at the University of Houston interested in gaining knowledge in technology!!
BernieD: And Adrienne?
StephaniRW: Hi - I'm a computer teacher in Jersey
AdrianneH: Hi! A university prof, big webquest fan
BernieD: OK....
BernieD: I guess a good place to start would be the conference itself.
BernieD: Take a look at the website for a second.
BernieD: http://www.navcon.org.nz/
BjB: click on the blue hyperlink to open a new window
BjB . o O (hold down ctrl if you have a pop up blocker)
BernieD: One thing I noticed right away about the program was the emphasis on the teaching of thinking skills. Everywhere I looked, people were focused on higher order

thinking skills. It seems, at least among this crowd, that the old norm of teacher-centered rote learning has been absent for many years.

BernieD: Have any of you been to New Zealand?

KristenFS: no

StephaniRW: I wish

CathyArr: sadly, no

AlberthaC: No, not yet.

JeanCh: no

ReginaSe: Maybe someday

BernieD: I invited a slew of the people I met to this chat but the timing is bad.

BernieD: Thanks to those pesky time zones, most are still in the classroom right now. It's Friday afternoon there.

StephaniRW: Maybe we can take a virtual tour

BernieD: Another thing that struck me as very creative was that the conference people set up blogs for all attendees. You can see them described here:

BernieD: http://intranet.navcon.org.nz/spaces/space.php?space_key=1

BernieD: Some of the latest postings by attendees and speakers are here:

BernieD: http://intranet.navcon.org.nz/spaces/newblogs.php

BjB checks to see if anyone is having trouble opening the urls?

KristenFS: got it

StephaniRW: Got it

ReginaSe: I have it

JeanCh: I'm there

CathyArr: Bernie - I love the blog option.. I'm also noticing that quite a few people didn't take advantage of it!

BernieD: Yes... and they were smart enough to know that it would fade after the conference.

StephaniRW: I've only just heard of blog while doing taking edtec570

AlberthaC: I recently attended a session on blogs.

BernieD: In a month or so (I think) the blogs go away. Hopefully people will have been introduced to it and will go on and do it for real on their own.

DaveGst4: Kids are really into blogging these days!

BernieD: Seems like a smart way to keep the conversation going after the conference.

CathyArr: Are blogs being implemented in the New Zealand schools?

BernieD agrees with Dave.

SandraGl: I came across the blog feature on google the other day - free - and a perfect way to set up discussions in classrooms.

BernieD: I think that's the hope, Cathy, though it seemed to be pretty new to most people.

ChrisP: slow but sure, I got it

StephaniRW: How is it different from a chat like this

CathyArr: To me, one not only needs to blog.. but to READ other blogs for it to be successful.

BernieD: Worlds apart, Stephan.

DaveGst4: So do you use the blog to extend the webquest thinking or would you use it as part of the webquest process?

BernieD agrees with Cathy.

KristenFS: I know I'm still only preservice but....what is a blog

BernieD: Oh... I've got a whole hour long session on that, Dave. Let me find the URL.

BjB . o O (you can check the TI archives at www.tappedin.org/transcripts)

KristenFS: ok thanks

BernieD: http://webquest.sdsu.edu/necc2004/blogs-and-wikis.htm

BernieD: This is a summary of the presentation at NECC.

SandraGl: Here is the url for the blog site I found yesterday. It is worth a look if anyone is interested in trying it... http://www.blogger.com

ChrisP: Thanks Sandra

ChrisP: I was going to ask you that

BernieD: Blogger is what I use. It's free and easy.

KristenFS: I've been using a wiki this semester-it looks sort of like the same thing

BernieD: But blogging isn't really our topic tonight (unless you'd like it to be...)

KristenFS: no I'm sorry

SandraGl: There is a team feature where you can set up a whole class and keep the comments within the group.

SandraGl: On to web quests...

DaveGst4: Bernie - how have you seen the NZ teachers take advantage of the webquests in classes - are they ahead in integrating to the classes or is it enrichment?

ChrisP: I've seen the you use bloger Bernie , but never had the time to set it up.

BernieD: Well... that's a good question, Dave. There has clearly been a lot of training in the past about WebQuests, but

BernieD: when I Google around, I don't find many examples.

BernieD: I think the problem is that people put them on their school intranets rather than out in the open.

BernieD: That makes them invisible to the rest of us.

StephaniRW: That is the case in my school

BernieD: One of the virtues of going to a new place is that it allows you to see how others have dealt with similar problems and how they've conceptualized teaching and technology.

BernieD: I think New Zealand is very ripe territory for WebQuests, given the direction the Ministry is taking.

BernieD: You can see some of that here:

BernieD:
http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout=document&documentid=6760&indexid=6918&indexparentid=1024

DaveGst4: Do the NZ schools face the same security issues?

CathyArr: I still face the issue of teachers who still see computers as a necessary evil.. but really don't want to incorporate new ways of teaching... Is New Zealand any better?

BernieD: They don't seem to be as uptight about some things, but I may be mistaken.

StephaniRW: I have the same problem Cathy

BernieD: Cathy... yes I think so. Of course I was at a tech conference and thus preaching to the choir, but I have the sense that NZ is really embracing technology.

BernieD: It makes sense, doesn't it, if you're far away from all the rest of the world.

ChrisP: Thailand has the same problem with teacher not being comfortable with computers

CathyArr: What was exciting about webquests/NZ?

SandraGl: I see teachers as really excited about web quests but so often they don't fit our curriculum and then it means they have to make changes. That's when it becomes more effort than they see it being worth.

BernieD: And yet I know the government is pushing it there, too. It's just a matter of time and other resources.

DaveGst4: I have worked with several Aussies who seem to repel at the idea of security controls

DaveGst4: for the classroom

CathyArr: Are webquests/tech being integrated into curriculum packages.. or are they only for the super-motivated teacher?

DaveGst4: So are webquests becoming part of the curriculum or are they just enrichment?

DaveGst4: Cathy ... great minds think alike

CathyArr: Most teachers I know are so overwhelmed with what they HAVE to do, that they struggle with adding anything.. If webquests were integrated into "packaged" curriculum, maybe more teachers would get on board.

DaveGst4: ye ha

ReginaSe: I agree Cathy

BernieD agrees.

SandraGl: It takes time to create a good web quest. I think they should be part of resource development in each district.

StephaniRW: It has to be seen as an enhancement, not another thing added to the curriculum

DaveGst4: Ah but Cathy - they would have to go to all the time and effort of training - you can lead a horse to water...

BernieD: Most people will end up using some existing WebQuest. A minority will make their own at least until it gets easier (something I'm working on right now)

CathyArr: Another difficulty is broken links

StephaniRW: I agree. It would be nice to have a committee of teachers who knew the curriculum in all the grade levels

SandraGl: But it is another way to deliver curriculum and once the kids understand how they work and the teacher has gone through a successful experience, they are a wonderful way to teach.

DaveGst4: if the cats away the mice will play ... I'm not sure admin would take the time to see that teachers are using the webquest

BernieD subtly bangs gavel.

AlberthaC: Funding for such administration tasks are limited.

StephaniRW: You have to have the support of the admin.

BernieD: Shall we return to New Zealand?

ChrisP: That's what I like to start in my school. Some place and someone to integrate them into the curriculum and then guide the teachers in using them

CathyArr: ok

DaveGst4: True Sandra - the teachers need to have a paradigm shift in their thinking and allow students to teach them.

BernieD: As I said, I wasn't able to locate many kiwi WebQuests. Let's look at what I found.

DaveGst4: So are the kids in NZ teaching teachers? Do teachers have required training? Is it something that is happening top down or bottom up?

BernieD: Here's Eruption Update. Take a look and tell us what you think.

BernieD: http://www.macleans.school.nz/students/science/Earth/main.htm

BernieD: (later, Dave)

BernieD: Do we like it?

KristenFS: that sounds like fun!!

DaveGst4: Cool - Mt St Helens is in my neighborhood

StephaniRW: Wow!

ReginaSe: Interesting!

JeanCh: Great!

CathyArr: At first glance, I'm liking it... I want to know how much higher level thinking is involved..

SandraGl: They aren't creating anything new; just researching.

BernieD nods sagely at Cathy

BernieD: Paraphrasing, mostly.

BernieD: Looks like fun, though.

CathyArr: Isn't that what Webquests tend to turn into a lot?

BernieD: I would like to have seen more scaffolding of each of the roles, too.

ReginaSe: I agree

DaveGst4: I work with LD kids ... can we lower the level of thinking? A web quest for slower learners. (Let them have computer fun as well?)

BernieD: Not good WebQuests, Cathy, and certainly not the ones from my classes. I shoot to kill.

SandraGl: Me, too, Dave. Some of these activities can be a real challenge.

JeanCh: isn't that what we want?

BernieD: That's always a challenge, Dave. As the teacher you can redefine the task downward to whatever is doable. At some point it becomes something other than a WebQuest but you can use the same general format.

DaveGst4: So a webquest is to promote higher level thinking skills?

BernieD: Yes. By definition.

SandraGl: I find that breaking everything down into smaller steps really helps a lot for our LD kids. They have the smarts, they just get overwhelmed with all of the info.

BernieD: If you Google for WebQuests, though, a lot of what you'll find have missed that point.

BernieD: Let's look at another kiwi quest.

CathyArr: All right. I'm new to Webquests.. How could this have been changed to really hit the target?

BernieD: Hmmm.

JeanCh: how is that? are they just activities?

DaveGst4: So are WebQuests usually used for enrichment exercises?

BernieD: Yes. Call them "WebActivities" rather than WebQuests if they don't hit the top three levels of Bloom's Taxonomy: analysis, synthesis, evaluation.

JeanCh: bingo

DaveGst4: If so, then do they really belong in the 'average' classroom

BernieD: No Dave... when used well they're for everyone. They become the curriculum rather than something extra.

DaveGst4: gotcha

BernieD: About improving Eruption Quest....

BernieD: I would require more than just reporting.

JeanCh: each student brings a different level of knowledge and understanding to the process.

BernieD: I'd have some interpretation, prediction, explaining.

JeanCh: Wiggins/McTighe?

BernieD: Perhaps have eyewitnesses appear to describe what they saw. To make up that kind of account takes at least a little creativity and selection of data.

JeanCh: Understanding by Design?

CathyArr: Maybe then evaluating ways to lessen destruction.. or why do people live in dangerous places... or what are the economic choices that people are evaluating in taking risks like that... or..

SandraGl: I find showing teachers a scavenger hunt and then a good web quest helps to illustrate the differences. A scavenger hunt really doesn't require many brain cells; a web quest requires the learner to process what he or she has learned and I as I understand it, use it to create something of their own.

BernieD: Yup, Understanding by Design.

DaveGst4: It's great chatting with you Bernie - I remember in '96 talking with you about this in the early stages. I happened on you. What really helps is knowing how YOU envision the use of them.

BernieD throws Mardi Gras beads to Cathy.

CathyArr: cool

DaveGst4: Ah ha - light bulbs are flashing all over the screen

BernieD: Good strategy, Sandra. I cringe when something thinks WQ and Scavenger Hunt are synonyms.

DaveGst4: I have used several webquests - not WebQuests - and found them to be scavenger hunts. I wondered where the learning really was.

BernieD: Let's look at another kiwi example.

BernieD: http://www.doglinks.co.nz/educatn/dogquest/dogquest.htm

KristenFS: that one sounds pretty interesting too

BernieD: Does it meet my completely unreasonable requirement for higher order thinking?

AlberthaC: It is comparative.

DaveGst4: what I like about it is that almost all kids can relate to it - high motivation.

BernieD says hmmmm to self.

AdrianneH: Looks like a lot of reading and not much collaboration.

BernieD agrees.

CathyArr: Umm, how are they evaluating their data... other than personal experience?

BernieD: Is collaboration necessary for thinking?

DaveGst4: the rubric helps a kid know where they stand but I'm not sure it encourages the unreasonable thinking

BernieD: I think they're looking at the description of Kim and relating it to the data.

SandraGl: It's meaningful in some ways but might not really matter since it is a fictional character.

BernieD: A character much like the learner him/herself, though.

BernieD: OK... time's up. Here's the right answer:

BernieD: (kidding)

BernieD: I think this qualifies as a good WebQuest.

BernieD: It makes good use of web resources. The level of analysis and judgment required is appropriate for this age learner. It certainly isn't about rote recall.

BernieD: It's a bit texty but maybe kiwi kids read more.

CathyArr: It's rather nice to see a WebQuest for this age level.

DaveGst4 smiles

BernieD: I see the clock on the wall ticking now, and BJ is about to warn me that we're almost done.

DaveGst4: so what age group was this for?

BernieD: 9 year olds.

BjB glances at the clock

ChrisP: It may need some more scaffolding when they get back together as a group

BernieD: Or American high schoolers.

BernieD: (kidding)

SandraGl: How much time would you see this webquest taking to complete?

BernieD: A few days, I think.

BernieD: A few classroom periods, I mean.

DaveGst4: Bernie - you have a WebQuests home page at SDSU. Are those posted or linked to what you would consider your top 10%

BernieD: DogQuest is in my database at http://webquest.org.

ChrisP: That's the trouble with my school's scheduling. I usually only see my students once a week

BernieD: I don't remember if it's been rated.

BernieD: Well, buckaroos and buckaresses.... it's time to wrap things up.

CathyArr: thanks so much

BernieD: Thanks to all of you for coming.

ReginaSe: Thanks

SandraGl: Thanks, Bernie...

JeanCh: thank you

AdrianneH: Thanks, Bernie.

TimothyPW: thank you

StephaniRW: Thanks and bye bye

KristenFS: thank you

ChrisP: thenks Bernie

DaveGst4: SO Bernie - back to my question - are the NZ changes coming bottom up (user driven) or from top down (You will use WebQests and ...

AlberthaC: Thanks.

BernieD: Hope to see some of you again next month for a topic yet to be named.

KristenFS: maybe I will get to sit in on a blog session
BernieD: NZ top down with bottom up support, I think. They're ready for this.
BernieD: Good night all.