

Note: This is the verbatim transcript, although I did edit out all the "kfisch joined the room" type entries - everywhere you see ". . ."

KarlF contributed 89 messages during 62 minutes.

2007.07.20 10:44:38 Login

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ElizabetK2: We will start soon (It's Liz, I am under ElizabetK2)...have your questions ready!

GillianD joined the room.

JenniferT: Hi Liz, is there a way to enlarge this text screen?

KarlF: Yes, choose detach under the Actions button.

KarlF: upper right corner

KarlF: of the chat window

KarlF: and then maximize your window

DavidRus joined the room.

GillianD: Hi everyone!

KarlF: you can also enlarge the font size in the same place if you want

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ElizabetK2: I would like to introduce Karl, Anne, and Barbara from Arapahoe Schools In Colorado. We are very lucky to have them as our guest speakers today. I think I will start off the conversation by asking Karl why he decided to write his grant and what the grant was for? Karl...

. . .

KarlF: Okay, how much time you got? :-)

KarlF: Seriously, it's a long story, but I'll try to summarize.

. . .

ElizabetK2: The short version

. . .

KarlF: The grant was primarily for two things - tech "stuff" and, more importantly, staff development time.

KarlF: We felt that the thing teachers needed more than anything was time.

KarlF: Time to meet together. Time to discuss and learn and collaborate and explore.

KarlF: To learn not only about the tech tools, but also about the latest research into how humans learned.

KarlF: The latest research on best practices - pedogogically.

. . .

KarlF: We really focused on the idea of constructivism.

KarlF: And then how we could use the emerging tech tools to help us foster a more student-centered, constructivist environment.

KarlF: The why was because I felt we weren't doing a good enough job for our students.

KarlF: Our school has always done well, very successful.

KarlF: But whenever I asked students (when I was a math teacher) to go beyond the "usual", they balked.

KarlF: I was violating the "code."

MarkSte: What is entailed in "staff development"?

KarlF: The code that says - you tell us some stuff, we'll do the homework and take the tests, and nobody really hassles each other.

KarlF: I felt like the skills that students would need in the 21st century would be much more involved than just sitting back and taking in the information.

KarlF: Our staff development meets approximately every three weeks.

GillianD: how do you decide what is relevant and useful for your teachers when you use staff development?

KarlF: We try to use as many existing days that we have that don't impact students, but there aren't enough.

KarlF: So the grant pays for release time for teachers (subs).

KarlF: Each staff development session is 3 hours.

JenniferT: during the normal school day?

KarlF: We split it roughly into thirds. One hour for theory, one hour for pedagogy, one hour for tech.

KarlF: Yes, those release days are regular school days.

BarbaraSt: Jennifer,

JenniferT: yes

KristieD: Do you change the time of day you meet each time to avoid always missing the same classes as a teacher?

KarlF: Teachers miss from one to three periods at a time. We rotate the time of day so that they don't miss the same classes all the time. They typically miss 2 to 3 per semester.

KarlF: Also, we have a variable schedule (like a college schedule, classes don't meet every day).

JenniferT: are all teachers involved? if not, who participates?

GillianD: can you give us an example of staff development topic and what was addressed in it?

KarlF: So often teachers will only miss 1 or 2 classes each time we meet (sometimes none)

AnneKS: Gillian- we have a planning group that meets to decide what to present to our cohorts (usually what we plan is thrown out the window and we practice constructivism and go where the group needs to go-whether that is with learning emerging technologies or talking about what is going on in our classrooms or with theories/ pedagogies we are reading about i.e. College Knowledge, Alfie Kohn, etc..

MarkSte: Are the teachers involved novices or are they more technologically savvy?

KarlF: <http://www.lps.k12.co.us/schools/arapahoe/21c/c2y1/index.htm>

DavidRus: This grant was focused specifically on technology? Or on a constructivism approach?

GillianD: Can I ask Anne and Barbara, what subjects do you teach?

BarbaraSt: Jennifer - the first year we asked teachers to apply and they had very little idea what they were getting into. We started with 18 teachers the first year. Last year we added 30 more. so we now have about 50 (out of 100 staff members participating.

AnneKS: Gillian- grading practices has been a huge discussion topic for us. What to grade, how to grade it, do grades matter, do grades measure learning. This topic is one of the most heated we have because so many people have different views on grades and their motivation value versus assessment value. Don't even get us started talking about giving zeroes on assignments or giving points for extra credit.

KarlF: DavisRus - you can read the entire grant at <http://www.lps.k12.co.us/schools/arapahoe/21c/ahslpsgrant.doc> - it was focused on both.

KarlF: The grant did focus more on technology than we actually do because that was necessary to get the grant.

BarbaraSt: I teach algebra, geometry, and calculus

AnneKS: Gillian- I (Anne) teach language arts (9th grade regular and Honors as well as English Lit-senior level college prep class)

KarlF: But we focus on the learning first, the tech second.

JenniferT: Barbara, are all the subjects equally represented, or does it seem, for example, that more science teachers than language teachers are involved?

KristieD: Since the entire teacher's group is not involved, how do you share the knowledge that is gained by those that do attend to the entire school?

JenniferT: Anne, does your school and or district use similar rubrics? Or is it too difficult to reach a consensus on this?

GillianD: Anne-I am an English major, so I have a question for you. Do you find that using technology enhances or detracts from the quality of writing you receive?

BarbaraSt: The only departments we do not have represented are business and special ed. All other departments are represented amongst the 50 teachers. BTW, that's what is cool...before we were a very departmentalized school.

KarlF: All teachers were invited.

KarlF: We wanted folks that were interested and would make the commitment.

AnneKS: KristieD- that's the power of the lunch table conversations in each department. One teacher hears what another is learning about and doing and the word spreads. In fact, one of our former AP's told a staff member that our group effects our entire building whether a staff member is involved or not. Cool, huh!

KristieD: AnneKS that is very powerful!

KarlF: That assistant principal actually met with me before he left (he's a principal at another school now) asking how he could replicate it at his new school.

JenniferT: that's exciting

KarlF: He said it came up in every teacher evaluation he did, even though half of them were teachers that were not in our staff development.

AnneKS: Gillian- what is truly amazing is the vast improvement in their writing because writing has become a seamless part of our class day...using Word continuously for notes, editing, etc. or using GoogleDocs for group work, using blogger to get their thoughts and work out to expose them to a wider variety of audiences, all of it has transformed our classroom.

JenniferT: do you involve parents in anyway? for example, do you held workshops or training sessions, so they can become more familiar with technology?

KarlF: JenniferT - not as much as we would like.

KarlF: We've tried to involve them some. Anne invited parents to blog along with their kids when reading 1984.

AudryN: is there ever a problem with students having access to technology?

GillianD: Can we get some specifics on what technologies you have implemented in the school?

TouFueT: AnneKS- Just curious, how are some ways you use blogs?

KristieD: BarbaraSt, my concentration is in Math, so I am wondering how you use technology in the classroom?

KarlF: Anne had two parents that participated, her colleague had only five, but it was a start.

JenniferT: Karl, that's great

KarlF: We also have parents that hop on and off the class blogs on occasion and comment.

KarlF: As we get better at this, we will be promoting it more and hopefully have more participation.

AnneKS: TouFue- I would encourage you to check out our classblogs to see for yourself... (a bit of constructivism there...) www.annesmith9h.blogspot.com, www.smithewl.blogspot.com, www.learningandlaptops.blogspot.com

KarlF: GillianD - The grant provided for a mounted LCD projector and decent teacher computer in each classroom.

JenniferT: do you have computers in all your classrooms?

KarlF: It also provided us with three classrooms of wireless laptops (Anne has one of them)

MarkSte: I have spent the last four years abroad. I noticed that your grant talked about your students being a part of the global community. What has been done to reach this goal?

AnneKS: JenniferT- yes we have a mounted projector and computer in each classroom as well as on our teacher desks

KarlF: In terms of tools - blogging, wikis, podcasts, vodcasts, google docs, word, powerpoint, . . .

DavidRus: Mark: do you mean how is it part of a global community when the vast majority of people do not have access to computer?

KarlF: Mark - we've just started with that, but there are a couple of examples we can share.

KarlF: First, we had a joint project called 1001 Flat Word Tales. A wiki was created and students from our school, South Korea, and Hawaii. <http://burell9english.wikispaces.com/>

KarlF: We've also had comments on various blogs from all over the world.

BarbaraSt: Kristie - I have a projector hooked up to my computer in my classroom. We also subscribe to Unitedstreaming. The math department will have 15 new laptops (there are fifteen math teachers at my school) this year. All the technology helps me teach to the moment. If they have a question we can look it up on the computer. My students also use blogger and scribe about algebra.

KarlF: We are also trying to get our students to create their own learning networks from folks all over the world.

ThomasO: do you find it difficult to curtail students from using this technology for personal uses (e-mail, myspace) in the classroom?

KarlF: This year I think we will have much more global collaboration as folks are more comfortable with both the tools and the pedagogy.

KristieD: thanks BarbaraSt

MarkSte: The way that people use computers, for example, in China, for example, is very different from how and why we use computers here in the US. Is that a problem? (For example, Chinese attitudes towards intellectual property are very different.)

KarlF: Mark - a problem how?

MarkSte: What students in the US would see as their own creation and owned by them would be seen very differently in China. Chinese grad schools no longer require dissertations, for example.

MarkSte: Because students download them from the web.

DavidRus: Mark, are you saying it is similar to how native americans thought of land...before the white man? how can anyone own land? That kind of process with thoughts and ideas?

AnneKS: Thomas- not really, i guess this is one of those choose your battles things; if students didn't have the laptop they would chose to tune out if they wanted by doodling, gazing into space, counting ceiling tiles, etc. At least, I feel like through what I have observed, they are more engaged. In fact our CIO walked around one day in my classroom and only saw 2 out of 33 not totally on topic.

JenniferT: Anne, How often do you require the students to write in their blogs? do students tend to make comments they wouldn't say in class?

KarlF: I don't think students see it as owned by them. We are really encouraging an environment of sharing (Creative Commons stuff if you're familiar)

KarlF: We feel students can learn from each other - no matter where they are. The differences actually help the learning, expands their horizons.

KarlF: A lot of teachable moments.

BarbaraSt: Jennifer - I am going to pipe up about blogging. Some teachers require students to blog but others just see it as a way to continue the conversations started in class to beyond the classroom walls and after the school day.

ElizabetK2: Karl, how do you learn about new technology resources (especially web2.0)?

AudryN: Can you briefly explain Creative Commons

KarlF: Liz - I don't sleep much.

ElizabetK2: haha

KristieD: BarbaraSt how do you use your blogs?

KarlF: I learn via my personal learning network. Via the "teachers" in my network of RSS feeds.

AnneKS: JenniferT- blogging has broken down the walls of the classroom as well as broken down student walls of speaking in class. Some kids are so shy as ninth graders they don't feel comfortable expressing their view points to the class orally. However, once their comments are recognized as worthy and insightful by their peers or even the teacher, they simply open up. They realize what they have to say is of value! It is awesome! I require some kinds of blogging such as scribing and answering out of the box questions, etc...

JenniferT: great, thanks Anne and Barbara

DavidRus: Does the question of trade offs ever enter into the class? What I mean...is what we are giving up environmentally to produce energy and technology...that is not fully sustainable with our current energy reliences??? Or how to dispose of outdated technology....how there are many toxic components to computers and other tech devices...and we mostly discard them after 3 to 5 years?

KarlF: I've learned more in the last few years via RSS than in any of my other professional development activities since I became a teacher.

ElizabetK2: I have your blog on my feed

KarlF: Creative Commons is a new version of copyright. <http://creativecommons.org/> it allows you to put what rights you want attached to any piece of "work". There's a strong community of sharing built up around it.

AudryN: oh great., thanks

KarlF: Liz - you and about 1000 other folks.

GillianD: Can I ask, how is your school set up? Are there wings for different departments? I ask because, earlier you mentioned how everyone is affected by the the grant, and I was just wondering how the physical and social set-up of the school and staff facilitates such informal communications.

KarlF: David - that might be hard to address here, but let me try.

ElizabetK2 -)

BarbaraSt: I make a post daily about the essential learning for that day. Then a specific student is assigned to comment, summarizing what was learned that day and what was assigned as homework. I also ask my calculus students to read an article and blog about it after every test I give them.

KarlF: I think that the environmental impact is definitely something to consider, but I don't think we can withhold these tools from our students.

KarlF: You could make the same argument about paper, electricity, running water, . . .

KristieD: Thanks BarbaraSt I am new to blogging, so learning about different uses is very helpful.

KarlF: We dispose of our outdated technology in environmentally correct ways.

KarlF: But I think the environment is something we definitely need to address in all of this.

TouFueT: I'm sure with so much technology floating around, you need a lot of IT support. How do you handle maintenance issues? Doesn't it become a big demand?

KarlF: TouFueT - Umm, I'm so good we don't have any issues.

AnneKS: Gillian- we have about 2100 kids at our school with approx. 150 staff members, 120 teacher, 5 administrators. Each department has a departmental office as well as an area of the school they are supposed to teach in however, none of us actually has our own classroom. Most of us travel to a minimum of 2 classrooms. The school was built in 1964 with one major remodeling of classrooms in the late 90's. Not exactly built for the 21st century educator or student.

TouFueT: haha

JenniferT: I think Audry raised a good point earlier about access to technology, what about students who don't have computers at home?

KarlF: TouFueT - well, I support everything. I have district support for the network and servers.

AudryN: thanks Jen!

JenniferT smiles

MarkSte: Yes, what about the "digital divide" ?

TouFueT: Mark did you copy and paste

MarkSte: No

KarlF: We have 3 or 4 year warranties on our computers, so for any hardware issues we get replacement parts within 1 to 2 days (if I can "prove" the problem.)

AnneKS: In my laptop classroom, I only had one student who did not have a computer at home. We provided a USB for him to take back and forth so he could access his work while at the library.

KarlF: I take care of software issues, training issues, etc.

KarlF: I think the digital divide is a huge issue. It's one of the reasons why I think we must provide it for kids at school, because we can't count on them having it at home. We are lucky enough to have a well-off school where almost every students does have a computer at home, but not all schools can say that. We must provide all students with the tools to be successful in the 21st century.

BarbaraSt: Also, regarding the digital divide, there is a public library across the street and it is equipped with about 40 computers for anyone to access.

MarkSte: But, your grant talks about global issues and community. There are many students in the US who don't have access to computers. Aren't we further disenfranchising them.

TouFueT: AnneKS- I don't know if you can answer this, but what is the population like? are the mostly middle, upper?

AnneKS: Also, our hopes through having the laptops is that the word spreads to parents that these are necessary tools for their child's education. Students will "demand" the need for it, parents will "demand" the school provide it (or parents provide it for kids to bring to school), and the school board will miraculously come up with the money to support it and all the world will laugh and sing together....YEAH for all!

KarlF: Mark - first, I can only solve so many of the world's problems at one time. I can't deny our students because of global issues.

KarlF: Second, I think we do need to address that. I think we all should support OLPC and their efforts.

TouFueT: Good point. Is it understood that everyone has access to the same programs or do you limit it to programs that are easily accessible?

JenniferT: Anne, lol, i like it

KarlF: The more students (and adults) communicate with each other globally, the more connected we'll all feel.

KarlF: And the more responsibility we'll take for each other. Kids are kids. Whether they are in Littleton, Ann Arbor, India or China.

AnneKS: TouFueT- our school district is upper middle class with most parents working, 97% graduation rate, 94% attending college, most parents have graduated from college as well, very white and suburban

KarlF: Students use whatever software meets their needs.

TouFueT: danke

KarlF: There are some common ones that we do use a lot, but we are moving lots of things to web 2.0 tools that are available to anyone with internet access.

KarlF: There are also quite a few open source (free) pieces of software they can install if they don't have access to things like MS Office, etc.

KarlF: But we don't focus too much on the specific software. We focus on what they want to do and how they want to demonstrate their learning.

JenniferT: Karly, I've actually done quite a bit of research on OLPC- do you actually think it will succeed in its mission? I feel given China's massive student population, for example, OLPC won't hit the mark.

KarlF: The kids do the rest.

DavidRus: Karl- Do the kids often introduce you to new technology?

KarlF: I think they've already partially succeeded in their mission because they've made the big boys pay attention. (Intel came on board this week)

KristieD: OLPC?

JenniferT: good point- it has certainly drawn a lot of attention

JenniferT: one laptop per child

KarlF: They are putting pressure on the computer manufacturers to bring down prices and serve these populations.

KristieD: THANKS

AudryN: thanks for clarifying, i wasnt sure of that either

KarlF: They will probably ship upwards of 3 millions computers to kids before the end of this year.

KarlF: Negroponte is amazing and will drive change.

TouFueT: KarlF- that's really incredible

KarlF: We heard him at NECC last year. He travels something like 28 days a month.l

KristieD: KarlF, That is great.

KarlF: He could be making millions in industry, but has devoted himself to this. I think we need to give him a chance.

JenniferT: Negroponte started this up at MIT- mission to provide every child in the world (think developing countries) with their own laptop

ElizabetK2: I would like to take a minute and thank Karl, Anne, and Barbara for sharing their knowledge with us today. Jeff and I are happy to aid in any future communication that you may want to have with them. At the very least you may want to subscribe to their blogs to stay up to date on what they are doing. Please everyone take a minute and thank our guest speakers today. We appreciate your time and what you do everyday.

JenniferT: karl, do you think his education view is constructive? he's mentioned the importance of students having the tools to direct their own education

KarlF: Yes, he's very constructivist.

ThomasO: Thank you

DavidRus: Thanks everyone...good questions and GREAT points... keep on keeping on

KarlF: He does have problems with formal educational systems, though, and can be pretty hard on teachers.

JenniferT: thank you everyone

MarkSte: Thank you, speakers.

JenniferT: yes :)

TouFueT: Thank you all. I've found this meeting very informative.

KristieD: Thanks you for taking the time. Learned a lot!

GillianD: Thanks for answering all these questions.

AudryN: thanks everyone

ElizabetK2: Karl, Anne, Barbara...Thank you, Jeff and I will be in touch!

GillianD: As you said Karl, time is of the essence!

KarlF: Can I blog the transcript?

ElizabetK2: MACers please meet in the lab at 3:30...

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ElizabetK2: YES, Karl you should get a copy in your email

KarlF: from our NECC session - <http://www.lps.k12.co.us/schools/arapahoe/21c/necc2007.html>

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2007.07.20 11:47:15 Signoff