Learning at the Border

Timnah Card Gretencord, Sunny Jeong, Karyn Mendoza, Ching-Chiu Lin, Claudia Serbanuta, Michelle Cruz-Santiago, Laura Lowe, Ann Bishop, & Bertram (Chip) Bruce

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Background

* John Dewey, “The School as Social Centre” (1902)
* Jane Addams et al., Hull House
* Community inquiry: of, by, and for communities
Three senses of border learning

- Occurs between the highly-structured realm of schools and life in neighborhoods, e.g., after-school programs, boys & girls clubs, libraries, museums, and community centers.

- The lived experiences of program participants on the borders of society; marginalized because of their language, cultural background, race, or social class.

- The learning done by all participants.
This paper

- Two programs in which universities and communities collaborate to create border-bridging spaces

- Young people have fun, learn about new technologies, and develop academic potential through self-expression and self understanding.

- They learn how to use ICTs to promote community building => become junior community informatics researchers

- Challenges for enabling community participation; insights across multiple sites
Collaboration with UI Extension, GSLIS

Grades 6-8 students developed audiovisual podcasts on topics of their choice over a semester.

Mexican-American families, low-income, low academic achievement, low computer experiences

After school and Saturdays

Post-program surveys and interviews; parent interviews
UMS curriculum

- Planning: Storyboard
- Storytelling through symbols
- Critical literacy
- Copyright, Net safety, Podsafe Music
- Image & Sound: Combination & Manipulation
This page is about my interests, friends, family, and cultural background. Please explain: I like outdoor activities, such as biking and hiking.

I want people to SEE...

**Biking in Oregon**

I want people to HEAR...

I like hiking and biking. I went mountain biking in Oregon last summer, and it was an amazing trip that I have ever had.

In order to see the above pictures, I need to prepare and learn....

1. Bring in some pictures.
2. Learn how to scan my pictures.

I want people to HEAR...

The greatest thing that has happened to me was: I came to the United States to study.

1. A digital camera
2. Ask the teacher to take a photo of myself
3. Learn how to make my photo shows up on the computer.

The greatest thing that has happened to me was I came to the United States to study. I am glad my dream came true and I really enjoy my life here.
Mi vida

- A mí me gusta el equipo cruz azul y también pachuca porque los dos equipos son de Hidalgo.

My Culture, My Pride

- I was born in Michoacan, Mexico.
- I love Mexican food and everything.
- I would love to go back to my country one day.
- Latin people to love to party.
Graduate student learning

Working with students ... was an inspiring journey for me to appreciate Hispanic culture and revisit my own cultural identity...

I tried to put myself in these students’ shoes, imagining how difficult may be for these immigrant young people to live and study in a new country.

I brought my own “away-from-home” experience into designing the sample storyboard...

I came to understand that I was telling my own story to these students as a self exploration journey...

the students and I were interchangeably engaging multiple forms of communication, including visual, gesture, and verbal modes.

Wednesday, October 20, 2010
B.T. Washington Afterschool Program

* Created in 2006 at urgent request of immigrant families in Shadowwood
* Began with support from BTW school, Latino Partnership, Shadowwood owners
* Funds of knowledge theory
* Partners: Don Moyer Boys & Girls Club; Scouts; UI La Casa Cultural Latina; UI Family Resiliency Center; Annie Abbott's Spanish class
BTW program goals

* Help at-risk children in north Champaign succeed in school?
* Develop better connections between immigrant families and community institutions & resources?
* Create a new platform for action research and service-learning at UI?
* Extend community funds of knowledge theory with stories and technology?
BTW activities

* Establish & run afterschool program
  * 4 days/week
  * 40 children (K-7)
  * 90 volunteer tutors each semester

* Data: Participant-observation, daily tutor reflections and teacher reports, tutor and teacher focus groups, parent meetings

Wednesday, October 20, 2010
What We Know Could Fill a Book

Story Studio - Family Resiliency Center

Children’s PowerPoint posters and presentations

Community Treasures summer pilot program (family videos)

Our own technologies: BTW iLab website; FaceBook; listserv; email

Observing and reflecting on technology use in BTW and Shadowwood
Youth Community Informatics

1. Unmet ICT needs relating to health, education, economic development, & community building

2. Untapped funds of knowledge (Moll, et al.)

3. Community/university collaboration can bring together knowledge across diverse experiences

4. Education & community development work best when people from diverse backgrounds learn together & from each other

5. Engagement in these collaborations can open doors to learning & career possibilities for community & university participants

Wednesday, October 20, 2010
Applied to LIS recruiting

1. Active learning related to LIS and facets of LIS that are truly meaningful
2. Significant interaction with professionals
3. Focus on community involvement, not just on individuals
4. Democratic engagement of participants in design, implementation, & evaluation
Modules 1-6

1. Computer basics
2. Storage and memory
3. Operating Systems
4. Local Area Networking
5. Wide Area Networking
6. The Internet
Modules 7-12

7. Multimedia and podcasting
8. Exploring Spaces: Going Places
9. Video game design
10. Finding Books to Read
11. Connecting Children with Books
12. Ethical Issues
Findings

- Each community has its own ethics, habits, community readiness, and facilities; different visions of technology
- Pedagogy, & contextualization strongly influence youth response
- Trust depends on how the program matches community values
- Physical facilities and legal concerns place limitations on activities (field trips; Macs v PCs)
- Increased motivation, usage, skills, and material access to ICTs across community borders can facilitate social reform
- ICTs can fit into existing social structures, but their use simultaneously transforms these structures
Conclusion

* Students ...
  * connect the individual and the social by creating based on their experiences
  * reflect on the nature of their interests, strengths, loyalties, social networks
  * develop material, cause, and direction in the development of a critical consciousness of their social heritage and social roles
  * The community is the theory