Incorporating Web 2.0 Technologies into a Problem-Based Classroom
Teacher Planning Notes

Before You Start

6 Months before the Project:

- Use Google News (http://news.google.com/) to monitor news papers, periodicals, and news stations about current events.
- Use Google Blog Search (http://blogsearch.google.com/) to see if there is anyone out their blogging on the issues.
- Use Netvibes.com (http://www.netvibes.com) or Pageflakes.com, and create a start page to bring together all of the news feeds, podcasts, and blogs on the topics you find interesting. As you read and listen, topics of interest will surface over and over again.
- Consider creating a concept map (http://www.gliffy.com) , showing how these topics are related. Digg.com (http://www.digg.com/) is a great resource for showing how news articles are related based on relevance and common interest.
- Create an account in Twitter (http://www.twitter.com/) and search for other teachers. It's a great place to learn about what other teachers who use Web 2.0 tools are doing in their classroom. If you find an interesting article send them a tweet and see what their opinion is. Over time you will build the relationships.
- Use Amazon.com, NY Times Book Review, NPR's Arts and Culture pages (or other sites you trust) to find books on your topic of interest.
- Create a blog using Blogger.com (http://www.blogger.com/) or Edublogs.com. Use the blog to take notes as you read. Consider searching Technocharti.com (http://www.technocharti.com/) to see if the author has a blog.
- If you want to blog from your mobile phone, then consider signing up for a Jott.com (http://www.jott.com/). Twitter can also be run from your mobile phone.

3 Months before the Project:

- Choose a governing research topic for your class based on common themes in the news, your general interests, the concept map you created, and topics that promote global awareness.
- Create an approved book list for the project. If there are books that have questionable material, create permission slips for parents to sign. You can see a sample on one of my project wikis (http://ourlostchildren.wikispaces.com/coursedocs).
- Decide on the objectives you want to cover. I like to include a mixture of objectives from technology, social studies, math (especially statistics) and science and engineering. You can get objectives for disciplines that you don't teach from your colleagues. This is a great chance to see if any of them want to participate in the project. You can also poll your friends, "tweets", on Twitter.com.
- Develop a 1-2 page proposal and get permission from your administration and/or department head to do the project. A general outline to follow: Title, Contact Information, Overview, Course Objectives, Projects, General Timeline, Technology Use, Outcomes, and a Working Bibliography. Get our administrator's/department head's approval for the project.
- Use the Internet to research organizations that deal with these topics. Contact them and let them know about the project you are doing. Ask them if there are any individuals who might want to act as subject experts.
- Contact other schools to see if there are any other teachers who might want to do the project. You can also advertise to teachers on Twitter.com

1 Month before the Project:

- Create a social networking group in Ning.com for everyone to join. Create your profile, create an introductory message to participants, and upload the documents that will be needed for the project.
- Join Wikispaces.com or another wiki, and reserve a space to host the final project.
- Contact the organizations you have been researching and set up possible speakers that could participate in your social network, or participate in online interviews using Eluminate.com (http://www.eluminate.com/). I aim for 3 within a semester.
- Arrange for field trips to document key aspects of the project.   I like to have at least 1 per quarter.
- Check with your network administrator to make sure you have access to the technology you will need. You will need to discuss hardware, software, and Internet connection speed.
- If you are not a one to one school, then reserve time in the computer lab for your project. I would reserve at least 2 days a week for this project.
- Keep on monitoring your RSS feeds throughout the entire project. I am always finding new articles, videos, podcasts, and meeting professionals in the field.