

Region 6 Conference Call on Distance Learning 12/16/04

Present: Karen Anderson (Washington PAVE), Carla Hawks (EPU), Kat Foster-Dalmolin (LINKS), Vicki Schneider (OrPTI), Jeanne Bowman (Matrix), Ellie Baron-Druckrey (Matrix), Donna Dutton (Matrix).

1. What techniques/technologies are centers using now to reach families that are a considerable distance from their physical locations? How would you evaluate their success? Would you recommend them to other parent centers?

Washington PAVE is sending videos from their library to distant places, and is using parent advisors at satellite offices to train and meet with families in outlying areas.

EPU is using Power Point presentations on a laptop, and their web site. They have tried chat rooms but this is not working very well. Next year, they will be making some DVDs and audio CDs which include parent stories, in several languages. They hope to translate audio files into MP3 format, to store at their web site.

LINKS has an e-newsletter and an e-mailing list. They are looking for resources in their area to assist them.

OrPTI has lots of materials posted at their web site, including PowerPoint and pdf files, which they also can send out via email. (Vicki warns us to beware of problems you can run into with our internet service when you try to send emails en masse. You might be considered a spammer, or even something more sinister.) OrPTI is planning to begin video conferencing in conjunction with their Dept. of Education.

Matrix has tried a telephone conference with WebX and a web cam, for an Alliance phone conference. It was fun, but had its problems. Images were pixilated (broken up); Jeanne was sure when the picture shown was of her, or of other centers, since she could only see one image at a time; audio and video were not in synch.; and it wasn't really interactive. Jeanne thinks Sanja Boling in Alaska uses web cams effectively for virtual staff meetings. The government makes equipment available to people in their communities, so this is helpful. Matrix also has an e-newsletter, and posts PowerPoint and pdf files (created with Adobe Acrobat) at their web site.

Jeanne wants to make sure that everyone knows about the resources available at Tech Soup (www.techsoup.org/), including archived technical assistance and discounts on software.

2. Of the techniques/technologies that you are aware, what would you like to explore?

EPU: blogging features for the web. Some ISPs (Internet Service Providers) offer it. It can be done with someone who knows how to do CGI programming, so that people who go on line can interact and see a running account of what many have said on any given topic.

LINKS: web-based courses/trainings, interactive, possibly including verification that you have learned the content. (Perhaps Dick Zeller of WRRC might be a resource.)

OrPTI: video conferencing. They are just starting down this path with their Dept. of Ed.

Also: workshops on video and CD to mail out, along with print materials. (Vicki warns that video taping of presentations has caused discomfort.)

Matrix: blogging sounds very good, and might be a way to develop new leadership. A question arises: how do we bridge cultures as we use new technologies?

3. What technologies intrigued you at the regional conference in Denver or at national conference? About what would you like to hear more? Have you tried to set up, for example, video or audio streaming, or video conferencing? (This question was already somewhat answered above.)

Vicki of OrPTI hopes to see more on video conferencing at national.

Jeanne of Matrix says Roger Holt's presentation in Denver was her first exposure. Shw wnat's us to share as we go forward.

Ellie of Matrix wants to pursue the web cam meeting idea. She asks how we can offer new experiences without interrupting the flow of the meeting.

4. Who would you like to invite to be an expert "speaker" on a conference call we arrange for the future?

Ellie of Matrix: Sanja Boling on meetings with web cam.

Jeanne of Matrix: Dick Zeller of WRRC

5. Who would you like us to invite to speak at next summer's regional conference on this topic? On what topic?

Carla of EPU would like us to consider the question: how do you build community on a we site? How could you build parent profiles so people could

find matches and ways to connect, while bearing in mind the privacy issues?
She also wants to hear more on video conferencing.

Jeanne of Matrix wants us to cover the basics: what are the options and how do you use them?

Vicki of OrPTI wants us to be very careful about the hotel's capacity to provide the infrastructure we need for demonstrations.

Ellie of Matrix wants to hear more from Roger Holt, especially re: free or low cost services.

6. What days of the week or times are reasonable for you to meet in a future conference call? When shall we schedule the next one?

People agreed that we might meet every 2 or 3 months, possibly with updates more often. Late afternoon works. Everyone needs lots of lead time.