WAM NEXUS: An Online Mentoring Community for 6-12 Students in Writing, Art, and Music

WAM NEXUS participants document their experiences using an online mentoring community designed to encourage and support conversation and collaborations through Internet-based media and communication tools. In the WAM NEXUS, students, mentors, teachers, and facilitators create, share, and discuss works containing text, images, sound, slideshows, documents, and video.

In this document, WAM NEXUS participants share their experiences in an online mentoring community designed to encourage and support conversation and collaborations through sophisticated Internet-based media and communication tools. Students, teachers, mentors, and facilitators discuss examples of student work and discussions from the WAM NEXUS that made an impact on their learning. They describe how working in the NEXUS was important to them. They discuss the next steps for participation in the NEXUS, answer questions, and take suggestions from the audience.

The goal of the WAM NEXUS community is to demonstrate how network technologies can be used to foster collaboration and mentoring. To meet this goal, 6-12 grade student participants use the NEXUS Resource in the Northwestern University Collaboratory to interact with peers, teachers, and mentors. Students use a variety of media to communicate information and ideas effectively. By participating in the WAM NEXUS, teachers meet the National Educational Technology Standards for building learning environments. Internet-based collaboration tools used include messaging, text-based conferencing, discussion forums, and IP video conferencing.

The Collaboratory Project is a Northwestern University initiative funded by the Illinois State Board of Education. The Project provides consulting, training, technical advice to K-12 teachers and their students who are interested in using Collaboratory resources to advance education. The Collaboratory is an easy-to-use, web-based collaborative environment that teachers use to develop standards-aligned project-based activities. (http://collaboratory.nunet.net)

Bonnie Thurber is responsible for programs and professional development at the Northwestern University Collaboratory Project. She works with K-12 teachers and administrators to develop programs that support teachers as they create and manage engaging projects for their students in the Collaboratory. Before her work at Northwestern she was a tenured faculty member at National-Louis University where her primary responsibility was technology teacher for the K-8 Baker Demonstration School. Bonnie has presented at numerous conferences around the USA and in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, United Kingdom, Peru, and Brazil. She is also the current chair of the ISTE NECC committee.

To visit the Collaboratory Project and the Collaboratory, go to http://collaboratory.nunet.net/