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K-12 Online Conference

I found my chosen video in the K12 Online Conference Ning. It is titled "[Seeds to Success with Skype](#)" and was posted on October 27, 2010. The sixteen minute presentation is lead by two fourth grade teachers, one from Kansas and the other from New Orleans. They initially met through a Ning before they began connecting through Skype. The presentation includes videos from various Skype projects conducted between their classrooms beginning with a choral reading of a book and progressing to more complex and interactive collaborative tasks. Ideas for implementing Skype in the classroom beyond the video examples are given including connecting with parents and home-bound students. The presentation ends with five suggested goals for teachers interested in integrating Skype into their classroom.

The five goals are:

1. Setup a Skype account
2. Use Skype at home to become familiar with the software
3. Connect with another class
4. Do a mini-project with another class through Skype
5. Share you success with another teacher

A link to the presenters' website is included at the end of the presentation for audience members seeking more information.

The ideas presented in the session could be easily implemented and adapted to fit my library. I am currently investigating using Skype to communicate with authors, and by using the networking tools suggested in the presentation, I could connect with another librarian and begin the process of pairing up grade levels between our two libraries. Possibilities could include book clubs, read-alouds, and book talks, as well as professional collaboration with librarians outside of my geographical area.

An online conference has many advantages over traditional conferences. The biggest are time, cost, and location. As Professional Development funds shrink, online conferences become a way to receive professional development without the expenses of registration, travel, lodging, meals, and substitute teachers. The online conferences also allow teachers to customize their professional development and choose when they receive it. As teachers see a need for information and development, they can quickly and easily receive it without having to wait until the next annual conference or meeting. The K-12 online conference also archives presentations for future reference. If the need arises to review the presentation, it can be easily found and viewed again. Traditional conferences may offer handouts, but audience members have one chance to comprehend and remember most of the information given during the workshop. The

K-12 Conference not only benefits those who view it for the first time, but those who find they have a need for the information in the future. This shifts professional development from information presented "just in case" it is needed, to information that is delivered "just in time" when it is needed.

The presentation I viewed included the email addresses of the presenters and they invited audience members to contact them with further questions. It also included tools for connecting with other teachers interesting in communicating through Skype. Although this was a recorded online presentation, it encouraged social interaction with the presenters and other teachers. In fact, the entire focus of the presentation was interaction with other educators and classrooms. The K12 Online Ning is set up to facilitate social interaction beyond the recorded presentations and encourages teachers to investigate beyond the content of the presentation. A few people may have a chance to talk with a presenter after a live workshop, but the Ning allows anyone to contact K-12 Online Conference presenters and Ning participants with questions or requests for further information.