

Title of Session: The Big6 - Moving Every Child Ahead

Moderator: Ferdi Serim

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Room: Arcade Conference Room

BJ: Ferdi, are you ready to start?

FerdiS: Sure (why wait for ready?)

BJ . o O (shall we do intros first?)

FerdiS: let's do Intros...I'm last ;->

BJ: I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania and a helpdesk volunteer for Tapped In

RebeccaF: I'm BJ's shadow tonight. My name is Becky and I'm a full-time student from Orlando FL. Prior to that, 20 years in the Public Schools.

FerdiS . o O (the shadow knows)

ArtW: I'm Ferdi's partner in crime in the Online Internet Institute. If Ferdi wasn't at his daughter's graduation, he would have been dancing at my daughters wedding.

FerdiS . o O (Art is still typing)

FerdiS: you betcha!

ArtW: LOL, you know my typing speed

FerdiS: I'm a music teacher in Santa Fe New Mexico....and the host of this monthly Big6 session called Moving Every Child Ahead

JoanFB: Hi, I'm a music teacher in Perth Amboy, NJ

RebeccaF confesses to 12 years teaching music, too

FerdiS: Way cool, Joan! I used to live in Kingston and taught music in several NJ shore communities

SusanR: I am a K to 8 occasional teacher from Ottawa Ontario Canada.

JoanFB: This is interesting. Why are music teachers here for No Child Left Behind?

FerdiS: HI Susan, I remember that "occasional" in CA is "itinerant" in the US

FerdiS: I think of it as theme and variation

FerdiS: It certainly is *not* an enharmonic change to move from NCLB to Moving Every Child Ahead

SusanR: Occasional is a fancy name for substitute!!

FerdiS: My next "need to know" question concerns the Big6....who has heard of it or is familiar with it?

ArtW: waves

RebeccaF waves

JoanFB: Do you have a specific topic for tonight's discussion. I have to write this up for a class and I'd like it to be focused.

SusanR raises her hand to indicate "YES"

FerdiS: I sure do have a specific topic...hold on to your hats....

JoanFB: I mean I haven't heard of the big 6

FerdiS: My topic tonight is "Flying Blind? Navigation Tools for 21st Century Learning"

FerdiS: And if you haven't heard of the Big6, no big deal...exploring the topic should make it clear to you by the end

ArtW: Joan, Be sure to check out Big6.com after the session tonight

FerdiS: The Big6 is a process for solving problems that are information-based....I challenge you to think of a problem that isn't ;->

FerdiS: There are 6 stages (hence Big6) that anyone goes through in solving a problem. You may not go through them in sequence, but by the time you've solved the problem, you've done each of them at least once.

FerdiS: So the problem I need to solve, since I'm presenting on this topic at NECC in two weeks, is how to get these concepts across. Hopefully we will both learn something tonight

JoanFB: What's NECC?

ArtW: National Education Computing Convention

BJ: Will you both be there?

ArtW: Yes, I will

FerdiS: What I'd like to do is talk a little bit about No Child Left Behind, and the demands it places on us for basing our decisions on information (that's in the rosy view of it....others call it "no child left untested")

FerdiS: So one might think with all this technology that schools have bought, we could get some help in finding the data we need to know how to better reach every kid....doesn't that seem reasonable?

JoanFB: It would be great

ArtW: In a sane world, ;->

FerdiS: At first, it seems like an overwhelming problem....the legislation is 1200 pages, the research is scattered all over the web....the systems in schools don't necessarily talk to each other

NelsonR: the uniqueness of individuals is what makes these things extremely difficult

FerdiS: That's where having a process for solving problems becomes so vital. That's why I'm using the Big6 to approach it

FerdiS: I agree, Nelson! But even if we were to settle on 8 or 10 approaches that would be 7 or 9 more than we use now (since mostly we still use lecture mode, assessed by canned tests, at least for NCLB purposes)

FerdiS: I have a couple ideas I'd like you to read and respond to, before I send you to a web page I created for this evening's session...is that OK?

RebeccaF nods

ArtW: nods

JoanFB: Sure

FerdiS: Here's the first: From the days of "barnstorming" pilots to the global transportation system now connecting our world, progress has required increasingly sophisticated navigational systems. Schools, however, are often flying blind, without comparable instrumentation to tell us where we are, where we're headed, and how to adjust our charted course for conditions that may imperil our journey.

NelsonR: I think the approaches are out there but the process of implementation is the area of concern

SusanR nods

FerdiS: Nelson, you anticipated my comments...it is about implementation! lots of choices, much need for guidance!

JoanFB: That's a sad commentary.

FerdiS: It may be sad, but it is neither inevitable or irrevocable

JoanFB: Aren't you making a big generalization?

NelsonR: But who will give us the needed guidance if the majority of us are "flying blind"?

FerdiS: OK, next part of my metaphor (big generalizations to provide context for detailed investigation): Experienced aviators rely on a variety of sophisticated tools, none of which are sufficient when used in isolation. Maps tell you where things are in relation to one another, but won't tell you where you are. A compass tells you which way you are headed, but not your speed or altitude. Radar pinpoints your location, but unless someone tracks your progress, your safe arrival is left to chance.

FerdiS: These practices evolved over time, to be sure, but with safety at risk, they evolved faster than we've seen similar efforts in schools. By contrast, education's over-reliance on mandated high-stakes testing for accountability may be a disaster waiting to happen. Only a multi-faceted system involving the proper tools and effective procedures, understood by all parties within a distributed team, can safely convey all of us from departure to destination.

FerdiS: This is the context for my task definition (Big6 stage one) which I summarize as a question: What technology-based tools and approaches can guide us to 21st century learning?

NelsonR: Looking for answers/suggestions?

JoanFB: Technology based approaches for teachers or students?

FerdiS: Yes, especially answers/suggestions that tie into a process that can be implemented. Both teachers and students ought to benefit from such an implementation

FerdiS: I'm going to paste a url: <http://www.oii.org/ferdi/flyingblindnecc2.htm>

FerdiS: Did everyone click on the link and get to the page?

RebeccaF nods

BJ nods

FerdiS: cool....let me explain what you're looking at

NelsonR: yes

FerdiS: on the left, we see the basic planning process for any successful implementation. pretty basic, eh?

FerdiS: who has a sample goal we can run through this cycle?

JoanFB: All children can learn to read by grade 3 as a sample goal

FerdiS: That is a goal that many of us share!

FerdiS: In doing that, there's a lot of information we'd need to know.....

FerdiS: You need different information when you are setting goals than you do when you are planning what to do to reach them, right? and then to see if your efforts are working, you need still different information. knowing why things are working for some kids and not others is still a different set of information....it is not "one size fits all"

FerdiS: Now, let's look at the images and text boxes on the right

FerdiS: What I did was go down the Big6, from top to bottom.

FerdiS: For stage 1, I defined my task

FerdiS: I want to know how tech can help kids and teachers (and parents for that matter)

FerdiS: Let's for the moment accept my task definition (I might change it later if I decide it's not on target or is impossible, that is part of the recursive nature of the Big6 process)

FerdiS: Given this task, stage 2 has me brainstorm and then narrow down my possible sources of information. To save you some time, I provided a link in the text box that will take you to CRESST (the fantastic assessment resource, not the toothpaste)

FerdiS: If you click on that link, you'll find several of their papers which give us lots of insight about what useful information consists of and how it ought to be used. But for stage 3, I narrowed it down to two sources

FerdiS: I didn't know that the one about Adequate Yearly Progress was there until I got ready for tonight's session....so this is a topic that is clearly "live"

FerdiS: Luckily, the links on this page are clickable so you can return to them any time you want

NelsonR: We are still on the Reading by grade 3, correct?

FerdiS: Yes

FerdiS: What other sources of information do you think you need, which might not be on the Internet at all, if you are going to get every child reading by grade 3?

ArtW: Where every student is when we start...

FerdiS: Yes! the starting point is absolutely necessary for navigation!

NatalieH: Basals, veteran teacher input, whole lang strategies

FerdiS: How much time are kids actually spending on each of these strategies/interventions?

NatalieH: Test scores -to determine what target areas to focus on when differentiating the instruction

FerdiS: up until now, if we said what we were doing, what we were using, we thought we were done

FerdiS: absolutely! performance data....and this is more than you can keep up with in your grade book!

FerdiS: NCLB is requiring schools to provide states with very specific data on each subgroup of kids who have been historically "left behind"....but that doesn't mean that teachers will get useful data from these systems....not unless they ask for it

FerdiS: because the systems can only do what they are designed to do....which is why our input into the planning process is so important...and most of us are new to thinking about data (information) in these ways

NelsonR: agreed

FerdiS: so here is the next page, a page of questions and resources (Q&R)

FerdiS: please click on this: <http://www.oii.org/ferdi/flyingblindqr.htm>

NatalieH: How can we expect students who don't even speak English to take these tests and be held accountable for the same standards as a students who have grown up in America?

FerdiS: well the first thing that I see is that some of the questions got cut off...I'll fix that and replace the file with the same name so you don't have to change your link

NelsonR: Ferdi, perhaps the standards may also be the problem

StanleGuest1: our schools dev. real goals and progressive standards.

NatalieH: I agree with the height of the standards, but not necessarily the capacity.

NelsonR: every child is unique and need to try and reach them all in different ways but sometimes the standards are not accessible

FerdiS: Educators would not hold non-English speakers to the same standard as their peers who've grown up in America, at least not until they had the time and instruction

they need to perform at similar levels....the requirements look good on paper, but there has not been commensurate thought on how (or whether) to provide the resources to get there

NatalieH: Our students i.e. spec. ed, biligual, etc are not prepared to be tested like this

StanleGuest1: maybe we should look into revamping our esl programs, some schools are progressive and some are not.

FerdiS: I can give you a plane ticket to any destination you'd like, but if I don't put jet fuel in the plane, it doesn't matter what your ticket says, or what navigation system you are using

NatalieH: Great analogy

NelsonR: agreed

NelsonR: so true

StanleGuest1: great....

NatalieH: So instead of complaining, what do we do????

FerdiS: My take on it is simple: Put up or shut up. We should get all the data we can, show what is working, show what resources are present when things are working for kids that are hard to reach, and then let society know what it takes

NelsonR: become effective administrators and make the necessary changes!

NatalieH: Amen!

StanleGuest1: we should do what we are trained to do as educators, work our asses off.....

RebeccaF: Politicians would be more influential!

FerdiS: We've been kept in the dark, when it comes to data...that has always been a "front office" concern, but now it ought to be right on our desktops

NatalieH: many politicians are lawyers, not teachers.

FerdiS: the salesperson at home depot knows more about your buying behaviors than we know about most (maybe any) of our students

JoanFB: That's what the testing is supposed to be about. Data driven instruction

NelsonR: not me

NelsonR: I know a great deal about my students because I ask and I care

FerdiS: well, Joan, I think that is a misconception...it's data driven decisions (about instruction on the basis of what works) and not about regurgitation for a canned test.....

NelsonR: or I just care to ask

RebeccaF: I think the point is you shouldn't have to ask for their test scores....you should get them.

FerdiS: Nelson, that is the key to being a great teacher...knowing each child

StanleGuest1: test are usually designed to show what the test makers want them to show..

NelsonR: spoken like a true guidance counselor

StanleGuest1: thanks.....

NelsonR: anytime

NatalieH: In our assessment course, we learned that if any given number of students get more than one answer correct then the question is replaced with another more complex.

NelsonR: I feel that being an effective teacher consists of being a great observer

NelsonR: just giving data without hearing and seeing what is around you and from the students is ineffective

StanleGuest1: I agree.

FerdiS: Yes, and much of what we observe isn't measured by the tests...that's what is so great about the CRESST report...it shows how "off" much of the assessment we're forced to live with is right now, and how it could be made better

NelsonR: I can assure you that some of the best educators may not be great test-takers

NatalieH: These tests are not designed to see if our students have learned what we have taught them, they are designed to sneak test them and twist questions to see if they can discover the answer taught them, they are designed to

NelsonR: they are measured by other means

FerdiS: We're just getting going now, and it is time to wrap up....as a musician, the bandstand is the only test...and it's what you can do tonight, not what you did last week

NatalieH: Wow! Time flies

FerdiS: I would like to direct your attention to one more resource....that backs up what you are saying

NelsonR: But you have to look at the entire process, not simply the outcome

NatalieH: Good night , Ferdi.

FerdiS: Here is a quote from the second web page:

FerdiS: "In addition to substantiating the anecdotal reports of participating teachers and staff," Adam Bickford explains, "the study was designed to validate our premise that how teachers taught was as important as what they taught or even as important as what tools they used."

FerdiS:

http://www.infotoday.com/MMSchools/oct02/bickford_tharp_mcfarling_beglau.htm

JoanFB: Thanks, Ferdi

NelsonR: Ferdi, I cannot access that site from your link!

FerdiS: The point of my session tonight is that there is no problem so big that the Big6 can't help you wrap your mind around it, determine what your choices are, and then decide what you want to do. I hope you've enjoyed it, I know I have enjoyed your comments!

RebeccaF: Ferdi - I like your analogy from the beginning of the discussion. I have one comment to regarding it. You said "education's over-reliance on high-stakes testing." I don't think educators do that. I believe it's politicians who do.

BJ: Thanks, Ferdi, for being here and presenting

NatalieH: Thanks BJ's

NelsonR: good point!

StanleGuest1: I have enjoyed the meaningful comments from all.....

FerdiS: Yes, Rebecca....it is a choice that has been forced on it, but there is momentum we can use to help better choices get considered

NelsonR: we are simply pawns in a chess match

BJ: Will you be doing the Big 6 again on July 15, Ferdi?

NelsonR: we are not making the decisions, just implementing them

FerdiS: Yes, I'm presenting this as a spotlight session on Weds at 8:30 AM at NECC, and yes, I'll be back on July 15

NelsonR: we need to work on the implementation!

FerdiS: Amen, Nelson!

FerdiS: G'night all!

NelsonR: It has been a pleasure Ferdi, good thoughts and ideas!

ArtW: Later, Ferdi

RebeccaF: Goodnight and thanks

BJ waves goodnight

ArtW: See you a NECC!

BJ: thanks everyone for joining the discussion tonight