

Title of Session: Action Research

Moderator: BJ Berquist

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DON'T FORGET BOLD NAMES

BjB waves hi to Jennifer

BjB : Here for the Action Research discussion?

JenniferWo: hello

JenniferWo: yup

JenniferWo: I hope more people come

BjB : great! Now we just need Diane!

BjB : I hope so too, but it's been a quiet day.

BjB . o O (everyone is outside playing)

JenniferWo: yea I saw that not many people are on

JenniferWo: it is a good day for it

BjB : Yes! I'm in Pennsylvania....lovely day

BjB : have you participated in the Action Research discussions before?

JenniferWo: in Virginia, and very nice too

JenniferWo: No, but I'm taking an action research class

BjB : with Diane?

JenniferWo: no I have Diane for an Education Technology class online

BjB : ahhh, cool!

JenniferWo: yup

BjB : I would think that being a reading specialist would be perfect for action research

BjB . o O (I read your profile)

JenniferWo: it is, right now my topic is on vocabulary instruction in content areas

BjB : how long have you been doing the research?

JenniferWo: actually, I just decided on my problem and question last night in class, we have only had 4 weeks of class so far

BjB : ahhhh....so you might have a little more to do ;-)

JenniferWo: we have until the end of June to come up with our proposal

JenniferWo: oh I have a lot more to do

BjB : yikes...that really isn't that far away!

JenniferWo: the literature review will be the hardest part

JenniferWo: I know! and the class has just started!

BjB : how is action research different from assessment?

BjB . o O (I only know what I've learned from participating in Diane's sessions...not much!)

JenniferWo: well in action research, you are taking something in your classroom (usually) that you think is a problem, it doesn't have to be a negative, something that just could be improved on

BjB nods

JenniferWo: and you to come up with a strategy to make it better

JenniferWo: its very reflective of your own classroom

BjB : how do you measure "better"?

JenniferWo: well I guess it has a lot to do with your problem or question

JenniferWo: if you want to improve students motivation in reading, you may give them a survey at the beginning, then after you have implemented your proposed strategy to see any difference

JenniferWo: and sometimes, it might not work

JenniferWo: you can do field observations

JenniferWo: record student behaviors, things like that

BjB nods

JenniferWo: it doesn't always have to be with students either

JenniferWo: action research is very qualitative

JenniferWo: you give a lot of your opinions

BjB: so improving vocab would be measured several ways?

JenniferWo: well what my main focus is on is teaching students with MR content vocabulary for the state assessment, so I'm going to try two different strategies and see if they grasp concepts better using multimodal methods

JenniferWo: as opposed to word maps or something like that

BjB: recording podcasts?

BjB: have you looked at www.makebeliefscomix.com ?

JenniferWo: so I will probably teach two lessons, one with the new strategies, one without and see which way worked best for them

JenniferWo: no I've never heard of it

BjB: using comic strips to write vocab might be kind of cool

BjB: Bill Zimmerman, who does the site did a presentation last week...great ideas

JenniferWo: actually I might try that

JenniferWo: that would be a neat way to do vocabulary

BjB: and it would be visual

JenniferWo: very much so

JenniferWo: thanks!

BjB: there are printables on the site also if you don't have computer access for everyone...

BjB : and Bill suggested using a projector or smartboard and have the class come up with the vocab for the comix

JenniferWo : oh wow this is great

JenniferWo : definitely

JenniferWo : the LCD projector would work great for this and the students could take turns typing it in

BjB : yep

BjB : one benefit to doing a daily or weekly strip...

BjB : would be that you could save them all and make a mini graphic novel for the class

JenniferWo : oh yea, that would be a great way to keep track of all the words we learned

BjB smiles...yep! Almost like a word wall, but more fun and organized

JenniferWo : yes I love it. I'm really excited, thank you

BjB : You're welcome :-)

JenniferWo : wow, what a great resource to use

BjB : I should send you the transcript from Bill's discussion

JenniferWo : that would be awesome!

JenniferWo : thank you!

BjB : I'd love to hear how your research goes using the comix, Jen.

BjB : did you think of other modes to include?

JenniferWo : Yea I will definitely try it

JenniferWo : well I want to do more acting out of words, animated pictures to describe words

BjB : what about movies of the kiddos acting out the words?

BjB : or even photos that you could make into a ppt slide show?

BjB . o O (my feeling is that the more input the child has in the lesson, the more it sticks)

JenniferWo: definitely good thinking

JenniferWo: I bought a flip video this year and have used it a lot to record the students

JenniferWo: that is a great idea

JenniferWo: to do with vocabulary words

JenniferWo: I have done it a lot with reader's theater

JenniferWo: (sorry for keeping you waiting, I got distracted with the comic site

BjB: even if the kids just hold up the vocab word on a large card

BjB: no problem!

BjB: then make sentences using the photo

JenniferWo: that would be neat too, and if we act it out we can make a movie of all the vocabulary for each unit

BjB nods...sounds like fun! And fun makes learning a lot easier

JenniferWo: it really does! Wow, I'm really excited, you have great ideas!

BjB blushes. Thanks!

BjB: most of what I've learned has been from participating in Tapped In discussions

JenniferWo: I felt like I do a lot of effective vocabulary instruction, but this will definitely make it more fun and meaningful for my students

BjB: then your research will reveal if fun and meaningful improve vocab!

JenniferWo: well there isn't a lot of research on vocabulary instruction for students with mr

BjB: yes...and middle school age is tough to begin with

JenniferWo: we are required to teach our lower functioning students very difficult content based on our state standards and they really do have such a hard time because of their cognitive level

JenniferWo: it's very difficult

BjB: those tests are such a farce...it's a shame. I taught in a correctional facility for male juveniles....and they had to take the tests....

BjB: the home districts didn't like it because the scores drove down their progress levels...

JenniferWo: well my students are on an alternate assessment path in which we assemble portfolios of their work, they don't take the state test

BjB: yet they sent us kids that were usually well below grade level

JenniferWo: but it is very ridiculous, my students need much more functional instruction and practice with life skills

BjB: I agree

BjB: and then there is the whole transition thing...what do they do when they're out of school?

JenniferWo: I did my student teaching in PA, and they had a much better means for assessing students with MR. it was much more functional, it was called the PASA

JenniferWo: it may have changed though

BjB: I think we currently have the PSSA

BjB: . o O (alphabet soup)

JenniferWo: yea that is for those on the regular track, but for students that are lower functioning, their alternate assessment is the PASA

BjB: perhaps there is a functional level that is a cutoff...I don't think our kids were ever able to take alt assessment

JenniferWo: yea there is a cut off, it's students with IQs under 50

BjB: I think if an IQ was below 50 the child was sent to a different facility

BjB: well, I think we can assume that Diane forgot or had a sudden conflict and was not able to log in

JenniferWo: probably, some public schools have separate programs in a regular school

JenniferWo: yes I think it is safe to assume that

BjB : I did enjoy the discussion with you and you taught me a lot!

JenniferWo: I don't know if I taught you much of anything, but you definitely gave me a lot of useful tips and ideas!

BjB : you have a tough job...plus going to school! I admire you very much ;-)

BjB : your students are fortunate

JenniferWo: Aww well thank you,, I appreciate it. I just hope that I'm helping them, I really do hate the standards I have to teach

JenniferWo: Thank you for joining me in this chat and for all the wonderful ideas!

BjB : NO ONE likes the standards.. they're limiting

BjB : good luck with your class and with your teaching...hope to see you in TI again soon :-)

JenniferWo: I know! everyone feels that way

JenniferWo: thanks you too!

BjB : Heads for Math Transformers and Rubrics

BjB waves goodnight