Title of Session: Special Education Forum
Moderator: Paul Bohac
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Room: Special Education Forum

BJB2: Welcome to tonight's Special Ed Forum!

PaulDB: Shall we do introductions?

BJB2: we usually start our discussions with introductions...as Paul points out

PaulDB: I was hoping LaVaughn would join us tonight.

BJB2: please share where you are located, what you teach and what brings you to the discussion, Jennifer.

BJB2: that would have been great....maybe she'll log in later

BJB2 . o O (hope she's well)

BJB2: I'm an art teacher in a male juvenile correctional facility in Pennsylvania, Jennifer

JenniferMP: Great! I teach students with a Learning Disability in Northern VA. I am in my 6th year of teaching. I'm working on my Admin. degree and am currently a summer school principal (I'm going to the dark side).

JenniferMP: Impressive! I taught ED for 4 years and loved it!!

BJB2 chuckles. I'll keep that in mind

PaulDB: I am a retired Correctional Educator/Administrator w/Special Education certification.

JenniferBo joined the room.

BJB2: hi, JenniferB! Glad you could join us!

BJB2: we're just doing introductions

PaulDB: Hello JenniferB

JenniferMP: Hi. Welcome. I'm guessing you all aren't rookies at this...

PaulDB: Where are you located and what do you teach JenniferB?

BJB2: a reminder, Jennifer, to click on the Actions menu in the top right of the chat window and click on DETACH

BJB2: I'm in my 22nd year, JenniferP

JenniferMP: To make it easier, I can be 'Jen' tonight.

PaulDB: That works!!

BJB2 smiles. Thanks!

JenniferMP: 22 years-WOW!

BJB2 hopes Jennifer speaks up or she'll hurt our feelings!

JenniferBo: my computer is cranky tonight

PaulDB: Isn't technology wonderful?!?

BJB2: Paul, perhaps you can give us a basic idea of what this group is trying to accomplish?

PaulDB: Our objective is to review, discuss and share ideas, techniques, strategies or "what works" in the classroom with all varieties of Special Education eligible youth.

BJB2 . o O (and some youth who haven't been labeled SPED, but sure fit the description)

PaulDB: I would like to think that we share a common belief that our kids can succeed if we adopt a child-centered approach.

PaulDB: However, we can also explore issues of concern of our participants and collectively attempt to address any topic that is raised.

JenniferMP: Absolutely. It's amazing what a child can accomplish when the instruction truly focuses on their needs.

JeremyB joined the room.

JenniferMP: Hi Jeremy.

JeremyB: Hi

BJB2 waves to Jeremy...glad you could make it

PaulDB: Hello Jeremy

JeremyB: Hi everyone

BJB2: Jeremy, can you please tell us where you are located and what you teach?

JeremyB: I am in Maryland

JeremyB: I teach 3rd and 4th grade students with Asperger's Syndrome

PaulDB: That must be interesting Jeremy.

BJB2: how many students in a class?

JeremyB: yes it is...it's actually a brand new program that starts in September

JeremyB: 8 students in each class..1 class is 3rd & 4th...1 class is 5th & 6th

PaulDB: So where did they pull the student population for the class?

JeremyB: it's at a private special education school

JeremyB: so the students are coming from several school districts or homeschool environments

PaulDB: So you will have a self-contained classroom?

JeremyB: yes

JenniferMP: That's interesting. I'm in NOVA and we don't have any private SPED schools (that I know of).

JeremyB: with 1 teacher and 2 assistant teachers per class

JeremyB: I'm actually one of the Assistant Teachers as well as the Technology Consultant for the program

JenniferMP: Now I'm jealous. What a great ratio!

PaulDB: That makes for a great staff:student ratio!!

JeremyB: yes it does

JeremyB: it will allow us to really serve the students well and differentiate instruction

PaulDB: So what kind of "technology" are you looking at for use in the classroom?

JeremyB: Technology is actually going to be a significant component of the program

JeremyB: Each student will have their own laptop

JeffC joined the room.

JeremyB: We have a SMART Board and wireless projector in each classroom

JeremyB: the teachers each have Tablet PCs

JenniferMP: SMART boards are big here too. I'm in anew building so we're working on building up our technology.

JeremyB: right now I'm trying to figure out what software we need to purchase

JeremyB: yeah..the teachers are all excited about the SmartBoards

PaulDB: Is the technology to provide instruction or is it to supplement the instruction?

JeremyB: the ones we bought are wireless so any of the laptops can interact with it

JeremyB: it's to serve both purposes, Paul

JenniferMP: Let me recommend going to some public schools websites. Visit their Instructional Technology page. Lots of software recommendations.

JeremyB: I am having trouble finding great software for science/social studies

JeremyB: I have great ELA and Math software

JenniferMP: Good point. Lots out there for LA and Math.

JeremyB: the only good science I have found is Science Court from Tom Snyder but there are limited titles in that series

JeremyB: we are striving for everything to be research-based and easily track student progress so that kind of limits my options

PaulDB: Are you looking for general social studies or specific topics?

JeremyB: at this point..general social studies

BJB2: will you have web access?

JeremyB: yes

BJB2: lots of good webquests

JeremyB: all student and teacher laptops will have wireless

JeremyB: yeah we are going to really use MarcoPolo

PaulDB: National Geographic and Smithsonian have excellent web sites.

BJB2: www.webquest.org

PaulDB: Perhaps a bit advanced but could serve as resource for supplemental sources.

JeremyB: k...I'll add that to my resource list to share in my training sessions in August

JeremyB: how about science?

JeffC: We have a Science Resources group here.

JeremyB: cool. I will have to check that out

JeremyB: I just started using Tapped In..have had it in my bookmarks but just started using it

BJB2: oh, and a NASA and NOAA group room in the student campus!

BJB2: those group rooms are going to be introduced on Wednesday during the Tapped In festival

JeremyB: so I can access them after that?

BJB2: they are for teacher and student research and resources

BJB2: you can access them now

JeremyB: cool

BJB2: Jeremy, do you know how to find the calendar?

JeremyB: not yet..really new to the site

BJB2: clcik on the Tapped In tab at the top of your screen

BJB2: and then click on the subtab CALENDAR

BJB2: your calendar is set to your time zone

BJB2: all the events on the calendar are real time text chats

JeremyB: neat

SusanR joined the room.

BJB2: Nuts About nature is a wonderful environmental science discussion scheduled for tomorrow

PaulDB: Perhaps you may want to look at www.goals.com/ if you are looking for a Global Online Adventure Learning Site as a part of your social studies program.

BJB2: ack...dropping like flies!

JeremyB: awesome..definitely will take a look

BJB2: on that webquest page I showed you you can search for webquests by subject and grade

JeremyB: yes..the matrix on that site is helpful

BJB2: Bernie Dodge, the father of WQ's leads discussions here in tapped In occasionally

JeremyB: awesome

PaulDB: Hello Susan

JeremyB: those must be great discussions

BJB2: Paul, did you want to discuss ideas for future SPED discussions?

BJB2 . o O (archived transcripts are at www.tappedin.org/transcipts)

PaulDB: We have been looking at technology in the Special Education classroom.

PaulDB: That seems to be an important topic.

PaulDB: But I would like to spend some time talking about "inclusion".

JeremyB: that's also a very interesting topic

SusanR listens

PaulDB: In part because that seems to be an issue that goes beyond the special education teacher.

JeremyB: we are trying to wrap our heads around how we can do that for our population of students since they are high functioning but struggle with the social skills

PaulDB: There is a teacher shortage nationwide.

PaulDB: A number of initiatives have been advanced to bring more teachers into the system.

PaulDB: The colleges and Universities cannot keep up with the demand.

PaulDB: College graduates from all fields are being recruited into the teaching profession.

JeremyB: yeah but there never seems to be enough of us to meet the needs

PaulDB: As they enter the profession, they are being faced with special education youth in their classrooms.

PaulDB: We all know that teaching in any school system is difficult.

KatherinLH joined the room.

BJB2 . o O ("highly Qualified" is also causing some really great teachers to bail)

BJB2: Hi, Katherine.

KatherinLH: Hi! How are you?

PaulDB: Those of us who have been professionally prepared to work with exceptional students have a role to play in helping prepare new teachers.

BJB2: we're discussing the current and future teacher shortage, Katherine...

PaulDB: The issue of "Highly qualified" has made the problem acute.

BJB2: and how it affects sped

BJB2 agrees with Paul.

KatherinLH: Important issue and growing

PaulDB: It seems to me that new teachers, whether those who have graduated with teaching credentials or those who enter the teaching profession through other means are being faced with some very difficult situations.

BJB2: in my situation I am certified el ed, but I teach Art. ...

KatherinLH left the room.

BJB2: fortunately, my admin was able to re-classify me as remedial communication

BJB2 . o O (which needs el ed cert.)

BJB2: and lets me keep doing exactly what I'm doing...but what a waste of time!

BJB2 . o O (I was hoping I could retire   )

PaulDB: If we could spend some time discussing inclusion, techniques to make that happen, what is needed from the administration and how to interpret and then apply the federal requirements so that we can move towards a true inclusive classroom, we should give some thought to that subject.

PaulDB: I didn't mean to get so carried away.

PaulDB: What do the rest of you think?

BJB2: do we look at inclusion as teaching multiple intelligences?

PaulDB: A good leader figures out where the group is going and then runs around to get in front.

BJB2 needs a better definition of what inclusion involves

BJB2 laughs and hands Paul his track shoes

PaulDB: For me it is teaching every student in the classroom without regard to tags or labels.

PaulDB: I am a believer in the "one-room schoolhouse".

BJB2 agrees

PaulDB: All special education does is provide specific kinds of help to children, youth and young adults so that learning can take place.

SusanR agrees

PaulDB: Yes, the idea of multiple intelligences is a very important component.

BJB2: I would love to see more collaboration between sped teachers and regular classroom teachers...

BJB2: and have the sped students take a more proactive role in their IEPs

PaulDB: If for no other reason that it provides us with a way of helping each student learn how to learn.

PaulDB: It is that collaboration that I want to promote.

PaulDB: If not us then who? If not now then when?

BJB2: hear hear!

BJB2: Our time is about up, Paul. I have one month before I go back to school....

PaulDB: I am sorry that Jen left us. As a summer school principal she would be in a position to provide an "administrative" perception.

BJB2: I'm looking forward to some inspiration

BJB2: hopefully she will return for a future discussion

PaulDB: And I have two months before I start teaching at the community college.

SusanR: Students need to discover their best learning styles and strategies for success

BJB2: they also have to have a reason for learning!

PaulDB: Susan, how wonderfully accurate a statement.

PaulDB: And to do that, teachers need to be cognizant of the variety of student learning styles in their classroom.

SusanR: exactly

BJB2: thanks, Paul, for being here tonight and leading the discussion. Looks like we're going to have a challenging series of SPED discussions this year!

PaulDB: I think that special education teachers have more exposure to what constitutes a "learning style" than do subject/discipline teachers.

PaulDB: I hope so BJ. This past year has been very interesting.

BJB2 waves goodnight. Another busy day tomorrow! See you all at the festival on Wednesday

SusanR: Thanks Paul.

PaulDB: I plan to be there for at least one session.

SusanR left the room.

PaulDB: Well, thanks to all and I hope everyone has a good evening!!

JeffC: Thanks for the session Paul.

BJB2 left the room (signed off).