

Title of Session: Teachers in Training - Play as Part of Learning

Moderator: Dianne Allen

Title of File: 20070712teachtrainhumor

Date: July 12, 2007

Room: Teachers in Training Group

DianneA: welcome to today's teachers- in-training session

CarolineKD: thanks

DianneA: while we wait to see if there are any more starters today ...

DianneA: can we set you up for a good experience here?

DianneA: see the Actions menu in the top right hand corner of your chat space ...

CarolineKD: yes

RhodonnaB: yes

DianneA: click on that and then click on larger text

DianneA: then click on actions again and scroll down and click on DETACH

CarolineKD: done

RhodonnaB: done

DianneA: you should then have a larger chat area so you can keep up with the conversation

DianneA: and in larger type to read it

DianneA: good

CarolineKD: much easier on the eyes

DianneA: our first step in any session is introductions ... so ...

DianneA: where are you from, and what is your current interest area of teaching?

CarolineKD: I am from San Clemente and I teach 9th grade English

CarolineKD: California!

DianneA: I am from Wollongong, NSW Australia, and I am interested in teaching teachers and learning about learning and learners

DianneA: thanks Caroline

RhodonnaB: I am from Southwest Louisiana, and am working on my certification in Elementary Ed, but I teach at a private alternative school

DianneA: thanks Rhodonna

RhodonnaB: Our students range from elementary to high school

DianneA: and can I ask ... what in particular has brought you to today's session?

CarolineKD: I am a relatively new teacher, year 3, and I'm taking an on-line course that has me learning how to use Tapped In as a resource

RhodonnaB: to have an opportunity to chat with new teachers like myself and maybe compare experiences in private and public schools

DianneA nods to Caroline

DianneA nods to Rhodonna

DianneA: so my topic for today may not be of much/particular interest to either of you?

CarolineKD: try me

DianneA . o O (I am flexible and can change)

BJB2 grins. Caroline is ready for anything!

DianneA: I can see that BJ

BJB2: and I KNOW Rhodonna loves humor...she has to have a sense of humor to work with her juveniles ;-)

DianneA: after 3 years in 9th grade English, that is no surprise!

CarolineKD smiles

RhodonnaB: you must have a sense of humor, not to mention juvenile delinquents

BJB2 winks at Rhodonna

BJB2 . o O (been working with them for 24 years!)

DianneA: OK, let me introduce you to some of the technicalities of Tapped In that helps us use it for between teacher discussions

DianneA: I have asked you to DETACH your chat space

DianneA: when I did that the main room view window got covered over a bit

DianneA: but it should still be available to you on your screen

CarolineKD: yes it is

DianneA: take your cursor into that window and scroll down until you display the Whiteboard ...

CarolineKD: ok

DianneA: check it out, and if you have anything to share please do ...

DianneA: meanwhile I am going to be quiet while I type my overall thesis for today's session ...

CarolineKD: My favorite way to play on a regular basis is with learning root words...

CarolineKD: the students are shown that week's roots on an overhead, but are not given the defs..

DianneA: that sounds interesting Caroline, can you please elaborate

CarolineKD: I'm a slow typer sorry

BJB2: we're not in a hurry, Caroline ;-)

CarolineKD: They have to work in their teams to look up potential anchor words in the dictionary...

CarolineKD: then once they have had time to look them up they guess at the Latin or Greek root def

CarolineKD: They have so much fun trying to guess correctly and they learn a lot about word etymology

RhodonnaB: it seems interesting for the students

CarolineKD: We also try to incorporate art and dance when appropriate, how about you?

RhodonnaB: it is hard to incorporate games in a lesson because we tend to do more disciplining than teaching

CarolineKD: yikes!

CarolineKD: what grade level exactly?

RhodonnaB: We have a high turnover rate, for instance a student may come and stay for a few weeks

RhodonnaB: students range primarily 4th through 10th grade

CarolineKD: you poor thing!

BJB2: Rhodonna, it gets easier. The turnover does create problems and you almost have to individualize the lessons

RhodonnaB: they are separated into three groups

BJB2: how do they differentiate the groups, Rhodonna?

BJB2: . o O (it's done by reading levels and math levels in my school)

RhodonnaB: the students take an entrance test and are separated by their grade level score

BJB2: . o O (I also work in a juvenile correctional facility, Caroline)

CarolineKD: you are special people

DianneA nods to Caroline

BJB2: I think the most important lesson we can give our students is to teach them that it's ok to make mistakes and we all do it...that's a great way to introduce humor

CarolineKD: I teach a SDAIE class that has 9-12th graders at all lang. acquisition levels

RhodonnaB: I agree

DianneA: so BJ ... when did you start having fun in your classes?

BJB2: ahhh...you have a plateful also, Caroline

CarolineKD: just one class!

DianneA . o O (wonders what SDAIE might be)

BJB2: when I stopped trying to be a sage on the stage and let the kids be in charge of their learning, Dianne.

DianneA nods to BJ

CarolineKD: they are my challenge, Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English

DianneA: It took me till I was 50 before I was prepared to be a bit of a fool in a group context, for the benefits of the learners there

DianneA nods to Caroline

BJB2 nods to Dianne. Experience helps.

DianneA: So Caroline has found a useful game for English language learning ..

CarolineKD: We have a strategy in my district, GLAD, that incorporates singing, chanting-things I'm a little nervous about

DianneA: what do you see as the advantages of 'play' in the classroom?

BJB2 smiles. You might want to participate in the Learning From Lyrics discussion next Monday, Caroline

SusanR joined the room.

DianneA: Hi Susan

DianneA: Susan we are having a bit of a discussion about using play as part of the classroom

CarolineKD: I think the advantages of play are that it captures their attention; it makes it different and fun

DianneA: as an important stimulus to learning

RhonnaB: yes

SusanR listens

DianneA: that sometimes in our seriousness about teaching we can lose sight of

RhonnaB: if students engage in something they enjoy they tend to do their best at it

BJB2 agrees with Rhodonna

CarolineKD: It is hard to make it fun all the time

DianneA: and if the 'play' risks the teacher's self-identity, or sense of being seen to be in control in the classroom, then play can get dropped out of the class experience

DianneA: should it be

CarolineKD: not everyone loves English, hard to believe I know

DianneA: 'fun all the time'?

DianneA: is life like that?

DianneA: and should it be serious all the time? Is life like that?

RhodonnaB: if play overrides a teacher's control of the classroom then it should be taken out for a certain period of time

CarolineKD: No I think it's hard work in my class, but holding their attention through some of the regular drills requires creativity and a set routine

DianneA: Susan you might check out the whiteboard ... and if you have something to add we would appreciate it

RhodonnaB: once the students get into the routine it seems to flow

CarolineKD: I have the advantage of a relatively low turn over rate, so the kids know how we operate in the class

DianneA: one of the points I was wanting to make today and later on in Festival is ...

DianneA: My basic thesis is a result of engaging with some clinical psychology trainees. There, it was pointed out that some professionals are energised by their professional activities, while others, in similar circumstances become 'burned out'. The presenter then encouraged the students to work at 'looking for the fun' in the professional life, and celebrating it. The presenter also encouraged a focus on 'celebrating success'. Without those two things in place we risk being burned out because we are so engaged in a giving profession, and we need to work at things that rejuvenate ourselves.

SusanR: at the grade 1 and 2 levels my students use to think all learning was play

DianneA nods to Susan

DianneA: and all play was learning?

DianneA: when does that stop being the case?

SusanR: vice versa

CarolineKD: One of my mentor said that the students should be exhausted at the end of the day, not the teacher

SusanR: so true

DianneA nods to Caroline

RhodonnaB: I have not experienced that yet

CarolineKD: I have my students work collaboratively as much as possible and try to set up lessons so that they are doing the learning and searching and working through problems

DianneA: Rhodonna, what have you not experienced yet?

DianneA nods to Caroline that is a useful strategy for load sharing

RhodonnaB: the students being exhausted not the teacher at the end of the day I am exhausted

DianneA: and for learning from one another and being less reliant on the teacher

DianneA nods to Rhodonna

DianneA and looks to Bj and Susan ...

CarolineKD: I agree with BJ, not to be the sage on the stage

DianneA: what about you two and being exhausted at the end of the day?

BJB2: sometimes that exhaustion is emotional rather than physical

RhodonnaB: right

DianneA nods to BJ

CarolineKD: Sometimes, I haven't had a chance in 3 years to work out all my unit planning, but more and more the load is on them

DianneA: can you elaborate for me about the difference between emotional exhaustion and physical exhaustion?

BJB2: if you spend all your time on discipline, your energy is sucked right out of you

DianneA: after all Caroline they are the learners, aren't they?

DianneA: and Rhodonna, there is something about real engagement in learning that means you don't need to worry so much about control in the class

BJB2: and some of the kids are very needy, constantly demanding attention, either in a positive or negative way

RhodonnaB: we have a retired educator at our facility and she often state you must tame before you can teach at this school

CarolineKD: If you don't have classroom management under control you can't effectively teach

BJB2: you also have to provide opportunities where the students are going to be successful in their learning...

BJB2: because many have not been successful in the public setting

CarolineKD: I try to have a very structured classroom, but one that is still warm and inviting

BJB2: once they experience this, they are more open to school and to learning

RhodonnaB: we are there to prepare them to enter into a public setting again

SusanR . o O (structured play and learning)

CarolineKD: Sounds like an oxymoron I know

DianneA: ahh success ... does that take us to play again? ... when we are playing what amounts to 'success'? ... and if so what about games and the difference between cooperative games and competitive games?

BJB2: focus on strengths and build on them...in whatever discipline works for the individuals...some can communicated better using art, technology, songs

DianneA listens to Caroline's oxymoron

SusanR: every student has a strength or strengths and teach/learn to those strengths

DianneA . o O (I think I must have missed Caroline's point)

CarolineKD: I think that in play, structured and managed, we create an environment that allows those who learn differently (tactile, etc.) a chance they don't normally get in the traditional style

DianneA nods to Caroline

BJB2 nods to Caroline...nicely phrased

CarolineKD: The oxymoron was structured play-am I lame?

DianneA: diversity allows for greater chance of success

CarolineKD: I agree

RhodonnaB: I agree

CarolineKD: Not every student learns the same way and if we can provide more opportunities to learn the same material we have a better chance at reaching all our students

RhodonnaB: you are absolutely right

DianneA: so Caroline .. you are arguing for drama and .. that you mentioned before, but which you are uncertain about how you will manage to teach it ...

DianneA: what is it that you are uncertain about?

CarolineKD: I'm thinking of my EL (SDAIE) class, they come from all backgrounds, I think that if I can find different teaching methods that help them understand the material I should do those things even if I have to go outside of my comfort zone

DianneA: and singing and dancing?

DianneA: what is it about that that makes you nervous?

CarolineKD: I need to find a way to make them my own

CarolineKD: I have a horrible voice!

DianneA: OK ... any suggestions anyone else?

DianneA: how have you made singing and dancing etc part of your teaching practice?

BJB2: what about assigning the students to do the singing and dancing focusing on their ethnicity?

CarolineKD: if I can tie it to curriculum

DianneA: BJ goes cooperative and delegates again!

CarolineKD: We dance when we do Romeo and Juliet

CarolineKD: How do you use "play"?

BJB2: diversity in the classroom...teaches multiculturalism respect for other cultures

BJB2 wonders how many versions of Romeo and Juliet there are?

BJB2: what about using West Side Story?

SusanR . o O (wonders if teachers still use Bloom's Taxonomy..I know it has been revised..and as a substitute I see them posted in many classrooms)

DianneA: one for every Capulet and Montague BJ!

CarolineKD: Can't- must do Shakespeare

BJB2 nods to Dianne.

BJB2: I'm not saying to not use Shakespeare, Caroline...

BJB2: just make the story relate to the kids' lives

DianneA: see if they can see and make the linkages

BJB2: otherwise it won't make any sense to them.

RhodonnaB: right

CarolineKD: Time is a big issue-unfortunately there's not a lot of time for depth

DianneA: isn't there a more recent R&J ?

BJB2 sighs about the time issue

CarolineKD: we watch that one (Leonardo & Claire Danes)

DianneA . o O (... it has been mentioned in my hearing in the last week or so, but I can't quite recall ...)

DianneA: I mean the same story in slightly different clothes

DianneA: no, now I remember ...

CarolineKD: We do a lot of comprehension checks and storyboarding

DianneA: the discussion was that BJ, and Susan and my generation will probably be the last to be able to read and understand Shakespeare ...

CarolineKD: They get the love/hate theme

CarolineKD: in any language-I love Shakespeare!

BJB2: <http://www.rsc.org.uk/romeo/teachers/reinventing.html>

DianneA: and it has something to do with the loss of the King James Version of the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer as the church liturgy .. so the 'language' of Shakespeare is being lost

DianneA: and the current generation are learning to 'read' pictorial material

SusanR . o O (grade 6 students have been putting on Shakespeare's plays the last few years.)

SusanR: modified versions of course

SusanR: they seem to love the language

BJB2: I just read a book by a teacher that does that, Sue

BJB2 tries to think of the author

CarolineKD: My students video their own modern interpretations, but must use the language

BJB2: <http://www.amazon.com/Teach-Like-Your-Hairs-Fire/dp/0670038156>

SusanR: On Broadway in New York..saw the complete works of Shakespeare in 2 hours
LOL

BJB2: this is a wonderful book, Caroline.

CarolineKD: I'll check it out

BJB2 . o O (Rafe Esquith, Teach Like Your Hair's On Fire)

DianneA: Two excellent resources BJ, thanks

CarolineKD: thanks

DianneA remembers spending all one senior year on Julius Caesar ... not 2 hours on Broadway!!!

DianneA: speaking of time ...

CarolineKD: Time for me to go, thanks for the input (baby's awake!)

BJB2: oh, here's another resource...just a sec

DianneA: you might like to join us all as we play on 25 July

BJB2: from flocabulary

DianneA: at the Festival

SusanR: reach them with food and have a Shakespearean feast
<http://www.teachersfirst.com/lessons/shak-feast.htm>

DianneA: can you give us the link please BJ?

BJB2: <http://www.flocabulary.com/>

CarolineKD: thanks everyone!

BJB2: check out Shakespeare hip hop

CarolineKD left the room (signed off).

BJB2: Thanks for leading the discussion, Dianne

RhodonnaB: thanks

DianneA nods to BJ

BJB2: Rhodonna, you also may find that flocabulary link useful

DianneA: any good ideas Rhodonna

BJB2: it's fun

DianneA: that you think you can use?

RhodonnaB: not off hand

BJB2: sometimes it takes a while to digest all the information that has been discussed,
Dianne

BJB2 . o O (that is why the transcripts are so useful)

DianneA nods to BJ

DianneA: I usually need a day or so to do that kind of processing

DianneA: thanks for the reminder BJ

BJB2: Rhodonna, I hope you'll join us again next Thursday for the Alt/Correctional
Ed discussion

RhodonnaB: I plan to

BJB2: and don't forget the festival!

BJB2 smiles...great!

RhodonnaB: ok

BJB2: who is your instructor, Rhodonna?

RhodonnaB: Dr. Adrienne Hunt

BJB2 wonders if she met her at CEA

BJB2: doesn't ring a bell

BJB2: but there were 600 people registered

SusanR: Thanks all. Interesting chat!

BJB2 waves goodnight.

RhodonnaB: thanks again