

Title of Session: Action Research

Moderator: Diane Painter

Title of File: 20100310ar

Date: March 10, 2010

Room: Action Research Group

BJB2: are you doing Action Research, Christy?

ChristyGr: I have to chat for an hour and my group normally meets tomorrow but I can't meet then so I was hoping for a chat here

BJB2 nods to Christy. What do you teach?

ChristyGr: Kinder

BJB2: ahhh...wonderful age, but keeps you really busy

BJB2: do you have full day kindergarten?

ChristyGr: and now the school has me coaching JR high again also so to say the least I'm very sleepy

ChristyGr: yes it is all day

BJB2 hands Christy a cup of coffee

BJB2: what do you coach?

ChristyGr: thanks gonna need it

ChristyGr: right now track

BJB2: cool!

BJB2 . o O (no wonder you're tired!)

BJB2: as a coach I assume you are always assessing your team and finding ways to help them to be better athletes

BJB2 . o O (which is a kind of simplified action research)

ChristyGr: this is the 1st year I haven't had to coach all the other sports but the new coach was too STRESSED out to do track.

ChristyGr: I try but you know JR kids just think it is all a social event.

BJB2 chuckles. yes...and for them it really is

BJB2: how long have you been teaching, Christy?

ChristyGr: some are there because mom and dad told them they had to do it and then some are there because their girlfriend or boy friend are in it.

BJB2 nods.

ChristyGr: 5 years 1 year of 9th grade English and 4 years in kinder

ChristyGr: loved the English

BJB2: quite a variety. Did you like teaching English because the children were older?

BJB2: or do you just prefer teaching that subject?

ChristyGr: yes I really like the older kids better but the small ones are growing on me.

ChristyGr: no it is the age

BJB2 smiles. You grow on them too. The little ones are so eager to learn

ChristyGr: yes they are like sponges.

ChristyGr: and I learn so much about their home life too;)

BJB2: I'll bet!

ChristyGr: you know they tell all

BJB2 nods solemnly

DavidW joined the room.

BJB2: do you teach all the subjects or focus on just a few?

BJB2 . o O (do they have music and art?)

BJB2 waves hi to David

ChristyGr: math, science ss and ela

JeffC joined the room.

DavidW: Hi, Christy

ChristyGr: hi

BJB2: I just came across a darling kinder activity involving sunflowers...let me see if I can find it

DavidW: . o O (darling?)

ChristyGr: that is good we do plants in 3 weeks

DavidW: hands out clementines while we are waiting

ChristyGr: will the online tell me if there is someone in zunker's office?

DavidW: yes

ChristyGr: thanks

DavidW: welcome

DianeDP: joined the room.

BJB2: yay!

BJB2: Hi, Diane

DianeDP: hello everyone- I just ran late with student advising. She had a 5 pm appt and came at 6:15!

ChristyGr: thanks I normally meet on Thursday but I can't meet with the group tomorrow

DianeDP: I am so sorry-

ChristyGr: I was hoping to join you guys

DianeDP: Can you fill me in? have you been talking about what you are doing in AR?

ChristyGr: I teach kinder

DavidW: Just chatting generally, Diane

DianeDP: are you new to AR?

ChristyGr: yes

DianeDP: If you look on the whiteboard you will see listed points I cover with people new to AR-

DavidW looks

DianeDP: My students at Shenandoah U are matching how they can collect data in the classroom to specific questions of inquiry.

DianeDP: I have one student who is interested in trying effective strategies for teaching students study skills and test-taking strategies.

DianeDP: I have a primary teacher looking at the use of Touch Math to help children learn basic math facts.

DianeDP: What are your interests?

DianeDP: Christy- what puzzles you about your kindergarten children's learning and/or your teaching?

DianeDP: David- what do you teach?

JeffC: David would be a good person to talk to about Touch Math

DavidW: I help math teachers use educational technology

DavidW was looking at something that described Touch Math

DianeDP: Tell me about that David- your connection to Touch math

DavidW: nothing more than reading about it just this week

ChristyGr left the room (signed off).

JeffC hoped that David had test piloted it.

DavidW: although, I was showing some middle school students an online tangram activity and they were excited about using the smartboard to move the digital tangram pieces around

DianeDP: So David- your interest may be along the line of effective uses of educational technology to support instruction- maybe assessment, too?

BJB2 . o O (whoops...what happend to Christy?!)

DavidW: not yet, Jeff

DavidW: well, I think there's always the assessment question

DianeDP: We looked at Virtual Manipulatives website last night- was that the one you used?

DavidW: yes, some of them are quite good

DavidW: were you looking at the NLVM? There are also some good interactive applets at shodor.org and the illuminations section of the NCTM web site

DianeDP: I once created a race game on the ActivBoard and showed kids how to plot points on a x and Y axis as they went around the track. One girl was not sure of how to plot points on paper but she got it using the interactive whiteboard. So a research question might be, "In what ways does an interactive whiteboard help students develop concepts related to mathematics?"

DianeDP: Yes, it was the NLVM site- I will have to check out the others you mentioned.

DianeDP: What is it about technology that interests you?

DavidW: Well, I was part of a group that developed one of the early web sites for math - the Geometry Forum, now Math Forum

JeffC: do interactive whiteboards have graphing capabilities?

BJB2: as an FYI, I recently posted this video to the Hub group room: How to Teach Math as a Social Activity | Edutopia: <http://bit.ly/mU0Ha>

DavidW: Was involved in a lot of teaching training workshops, encouraging teachers to think of ways of using the technology in math education

DavidW: You can use software that does graphing, Jeff - from Excel to more math specific things

DavidW: or even use drawing tools to get students to have some sense of what it means in a graph of distance versus time for the line to be sloping up, level, sloping down - interpreting the graph into words

ChristyGr joined the room.

JeffC: thanks David... rehi Christy

DavidW: welcome back, Christy

BJB2: wb, Christy

DavidW: That's an excellent video, BJ

ChristyGr: hi got signed off and just figured it out

BJB2 nods to David. I liked it too

DianeDP: Yes, that is right David- but I used the ActivBoard software to create my own ActivBoard lesson and the template was a graph sheet and drew an oval-type track on that. Students could move their race cars 0-1-2-or 3 on the x and the same on the y each time they took a turn. They tried blocking other cars to make them go around them so they could be the first to cross the finish line. But each time they moved, they had to state their coordinates. Transferring this skill to paper then made sense to that girl.

JeffC: gotta run... catch playing time with Owen

JeffC is afk

BJB2 waves to Jeff

DianeDP: Welcome back Christy

ChristyGr smiles

DianeDP: Christy- what interests you about your teaching or students' learning in Kindergarten?

DavidW: That's a good activity, Diane. There is a nice game on graph paper that is also a race, students can increase/decrease their x,y motions by +/- 1 each time -have to move around a track without crashing

ChristyGr: I really need to find new ways to teach phonics to one of my girls

DianeDP: David- do you see the Links part of our AR group? It is four items below welcome, on the left of the screen? Click on that and look for The Use of an Interactive Whiteboard

DianeDP: This is an action research study conducted by Diane Painter and others at Deer Park ES

BJB2: Christy, here's the link I was looking for with sunflowers...can be very cross discipline
<http://nurturestore.co.uk/planting-sunflower-seeds>

ChristyGr: thanks

BJB2 . o O (that will be in your transcript)

DianeDP: Have you looked into Orton-Gillingham approach, Christy?

ChristyGr: no we use the open court and I have tried others that I have found on line but I am running out of ideas that keep her interested.

DianeDP: David- when you find that study, it explains a bit about my game.

DavidW nods to Diane

DianeDP: Have you used a phonics software program?

DianeDP: If you two are interested in action research, please visit <http://gse.gmu.edu/research/tr/> to learn how it is done.

DavidW looks

DianeDP: Look for the Teacher Research Process link (http://gse.gmu.edu/research/tr/tr_process/)

DianeDP: There is also a link for project papers if you want to see some studies.

DavidW: just looking at some of the math projects

ChristyGr: we use starfall but the school does not have one for us

DavidW: oops, might be a blank page

DianeDP: We hope to get more studies added since both IET at GMU and I at SU are leading students through the process

DavidW: don't see any under math reflective practice either

DavidW will look at some of the other areas

DianeDP: Christy- Please take a look at http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/foundational_reading_phonics/system44/index.htm

DianeDP: I know the developer- Ted H and it is a real sound program

ChristyGr: thanks I will

DianeDP: I cannot recall any math studies being submitted, but I do have one student doing TouchMath, so if it is a good paper, we will consider submitting it.

ChristyGr left the room.

DavidW: good luck with that

DavidW . o O (oops, lost Christy again)

DavidW: What did the students gain in your study of smartboards at Deer Park ES, Diane - I'm just looking at the paper?

DianeDP: AERA has a SIG for Action Research and one for Teacher Research. I like the collaborative site of the AR Sig at <http://sites.google.com/site/aeaarsig/>

DianeDP: We were looking at several things. I wanted to see how the use of the board utilized effective teaching strategies. I give several examples of how students used the board and what happened as a result.

DavidW: Here's an image from a class using a smartboard with an online tangram activity - the students had already had some experience with real tangram pieces

DavidW: <http://grab.by/2YvM>

DianeDP: Yes- look at the engagement of the two students. active learning!

DavidW agrees

BJB2 looks at the clock on the wall

BJB2: Thanks so much for leading the discussion, Diane!

DavidW: Can you show that students in your class did measurably better in an assessment with the whiteboard?

DianeDP: Do you think you would like to do an AR project? Some states will allow a year-long project such as an action research project to be counted for re-certification. Our state does that.

BJB2: April session on April 14? (second Wednesday)

DavidW: I work mostly as a consultant in several school districts. I think one of the projects I'm working on could benefit from the focus an AR project might provide

DavidW is in New Jersey

DianeDP: In order to do that, I would have to run control group/intervention group and show a difference. I could do that but generally I ask what happens when question and investigate how students do with an intervention (action) taken. It is more qualitative than quantitative.

DianeDP: Many schools do AR as a part of a professional learning community initiative

DavidW: Do you think it's important to do quantitative research as well?

DavidW: Yes, I think doing it as part of PLC is VERY valuable

DianeDP: Depends on the question and what you are looking for...

DavidW: there's an effort at team-building in this one project, but it's not been well received - the project is an add-on to what else is going on in the school

DianeDP: If you are looking to inform your own teaching and look closely at students' learning as you implement an initiative, then you look at the data you can collect. In some cases pre and post tests are appropriate to use, as well as end of initiative standardize test, but you should also take anecdotal notes, structured observations and interviews, do work sample analyses, etc. to get a whole picture about the effects of the intervention or action taken.

DianeDP: Here is my take on it- if teachers did not initiate a project and were told to do it, they don't OWN it and you get little buy in if the teachers are not convinced it is something that benefits them and their kids

DavidW: As you know, in a lot of places, there is still a BIG PUSH for test preparation for states' high-stakes tests

DavidW: Yes, that's one of the problems - the teachers DO NOT own it and feel somewhat put upon

DianeDP: ONE MORE THING- that's what they say- just add on to the pile of things I have to do!

DavidW: indeed

BJB2 is REALLY glad Diane doesn't feel that way about leading the AR discussions!

DavidW: Thanks for the discussion, Diane

DianeDP: Again, I am sorry for being late tonight- I have been advising all day for summer term registrations so I need to call it a night. My email is dpainter@su.edu if you want to ask any further questions. I assume we will meet back here in April? BJB- I will be gone Apr 21-24 so that is not a good time.

BJB2: I have you scheduled for April 14, Diane

BJB2: does that work ok?

DianeDP: No, I like leading discussions!

BJB2 hugs Diane.

DavidW: No problem at all, Diane - we appreciate your efforts

BJB2 sends Diane off to get some R&R.

BJB2: see you in April

DianeDP: That should be fine. I will put it down.

DavidW . o O (and some dinner)

DianeDP: Yes- I am hungry. Good night! DP

BJB2 waves goodnight