

Title of Session: Alt/Correctional Ed Forum

Moderator: BJ Berquist

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Room: On Tap Cafe

BJ wonders if anyone here is involved in Correctional ed?

BJ: I know you're not, John-sun...what brings you to this discussion?

KellySu: Not involved but someone intrigued

BJ nods to Kelly.

MireyaM joined the room.

MireyaM: Correctional Ed?

BJ: I had set the topic for arts in corrections...did you want to talk about that or some other topic in correctional ed?

BJ nods to Mireya. Are you involved in correctional ed, Mireya?

JohnSunC: I wanted to see what people had to say about, behavioral problems

BJ nods to John-sun

MireyaM: No, I am a preservice teacher at the University of Houston.

JohnSunC: Often when students are sent to the office to speak to the assistance principal he allows them to draw the scenario

BJ: well, let's start with introductions and then see where we end up

BJ: I'm an art teacher in a male juvenile correctional facility

MireyaM: Although I am sure that I will have to work with correctional ed.

BJ . o O (in Pennsylvania)

KellySu: I'm a student working towards my certification at U of H

BJ: certification in what, Kelly?

JohnSunC: I too am a pre-service teacher, however I used to be a secretary to the assistant principal

KellySu: Teach Language Arts on the Jr. High Level

BJ: thanks, Kelly

JohnSunC: many, many times I could feel the same frustration that the students were going through.

BJ nods to John-sun.

BJ: Correctional ed is a bit different than public ed...

BJ: but we work with similar students

BJ: the correctional ed setting allows us to be a lot more structured

BJ: in what we offer and how we work with the children

MireyaM: How is it different?

JohnSunC: when students come into the office I am usually busy with office work so do not have time to chat with the students. Chatting with the students is also discouraged b/c they are supposed to be in punishment

BJ: there are smaller classes

JudyHi joined the room.

BJ: welcome, Judy.

JudyHi: thank you

BJ: We're just getting started.

MireyaM: John- Don't you have to chat with the students in order to solve problems?

JohnSunC: in regards to art, how can I lead a productive time for these students, especially b/c art assignments do not take much supervision to get started

BJ: we're talking about discipline and how it's handled in the correctional setting

BJ: o O (and comparing that to the public schools)

JohnSunC: I can easily get the supplies it is just that I am limited on instructional time. Often the students will sit and wait for more than 30 minutes - any lesson suggestions?

BJ: keep in mind that correctional ed teachers do their best to work with a child and get him ready to return to his home school

JudyHi: has anyone had any experience in teaching in the correctional setting?

JohnSunC: I know that art can have a very therapeutic effect,

BJ nods to Judy. I teach in a juvenile correctional facility

JudyHi: that is something that I would like to do

BJ: art can be used to achieve a lot of goals, John-sun

JohnSunC: in the same sense I have these students and I try to prepare them to integrate into the classroom

JudyHi: as a teacher I want to feel needed

MireyaM: I haven't.

JudyHi: I feel that there is a big need for me there

BJ nods to Judy...you do need to measure success in very tiny increments

MireyaM: Improvement is success, right?

BJ: Let me set the scenario for most of our residents to give you an idea of who we work with...

JohnSunC: sure,

BJ: our students are 11-18 years old

BJ: there are approximately 100 students in the school

JohnSunC: all "juvenile delinquents"?

BJ: they are court adjudicated...which means that they are there for felony convictions

JudyHi: students in these settings already have a mind set that teachers have given up on them and they cannot be taught

JohnSunC: right on,

JudyHi: I want to prove them wrong

JudyHi: all children can learn regardless of SES

BJ sighs...it's a little more complicated than that, Judy

BJ: one of the big things that is against us is time...

JohnSunC: not that we have to prove them wrong, but to show that people still care and that there are alternatives? Time elaborate?

JudyHi: time to teach or time until they are no longer eligible for services

JohnSunC: Or your time to interact and provide services is limited?

BJ: most of our kids have been in other placements before we get them

BJ: they are abused, or come from dysfunctional homes/families...

BJ: or have mental illnesses...

JudyHi: are you trying to teach them basic skills such as reading and writing skills

JudyHi: basic math?

BJ: or a zillion other things.

KellySu: It's hard for these kids to trust you

JudyHi: I see you point

BJ: What our school does is take a kid from entry to release in 6 to 9 months...

JohnSunC: so social and emotionally they have compensated in ways that manifest as antisocial

BJ: and increase their reading and math scores by 2 grade levels

KellySu: Wow that is not long at all

JohnSunC: well to a teen that time can be very influential,

BJ: and THEN most of the kids return to the same environment from which they came

BJ: o o (not a scenario for success)

JohnSunC: sure so how do you try to make a lasting impact?

JudyHi: Nancie Atwell wrote a book entitled In the Middle that teaches teacher to teach ten to fifteen minute minilessons about reading and writing

KellySu: Do you often see the same kids return to the correctional facility?

JudyHi: has the Dangerous Minds approach worked?

BJ: there is an 80% recidivism rate

JudyHi: approach

JohnSunC: so, you have to focus on the times you have success, the odds and pressures are stacked against you

JudyHi: teach them from what they know

JohnSunC: 80% whoa

KellySu: So lots of Positive Behavior Support

BJ: o o (that's the negative side)

BJ: on the POSITIVE side...

KellySu: Reinforce the good behavior

BJ: in that short amount of time, we (teachers) do develop a great deal of trust with the children

BJ: we teach them that they can learn

BJ: we teach them that they can succeed

JudyHi: positive praise for shown improvement

BJ: it has to be sincere praise, Judy

BJ: I teach art which is a great medium for the kids...

BJ: I try to integrate all of the other disciplines and...

MireyaM: You have to make a specific comment about the reason why you are praising them.

JudyHi: if they have increased a score from 40% to 48% they are still below average but they have shown improvement

BJ: I concentrate on helping them learn to communicate

JudyHi: this is positive praise

JohnSunC: do you see lots of talent that is underdeveloped?

JudyHi: communication through art

JudyHi: what types of art?

JohnSunC: Communication skills, are often what is lacking the greatest in trouble youth. Not being able to communicate the stresses of life compounds the situation

BJ: mostly graphic art...all materials have to be non toxic...and there is a major safety issue with scissors, etc

JudyHi: wow I never thought about that

JohnSunC: name an example of an art product please? Or an activity?

BJ thinks...

BJ: I use picture books a lot...they are a wonderful way to help emergent or struggling readers make connections between words and pictures

BJ . o O (and vs.)

BJ: most of the daily lessons I do focus on the elements of art...color, line, shape, shade, form and texture...

JudyHi: Eve Bunting is a wonderful picture book author that talks about real issues

JohnSunC: they are past the age for someone to comfortable read to them but as emergent readers that may be what they need.

BJ nods...she has several books that are great

BJ: right, John-sun

JohnSunC: So you focus on basic art principals and try to incorporate holistic learning

BJ nods...we talk about how color can be used to express emotions

JudyHi: Tommie De Paula is a great illustrator

BJ: how line can show movement

JohnSunC: how much time per week do you have with these students

BJ: then when we look at a picture book, we can discuss what the story is about without reading it...see if we can decode the illustrations

JudyHi: a book that sticks out in my mind the most is Eve Bunting's Smokey Night

JudyHi: the colors are so true to the words

BJ: one good book about color and emotion is Dr. Seuss's My Many Colored Days

BJ nods...Smokey Night is excellent

JudyHi: that's a good way to begin "picture walks"

BJ: You can do the same thing with a painting or print...

JohnSunC: how well do the students respond to the assignments? Or is it just nice for them to get out of their cells so they are excited?

BJ: Our kids aren't in cells. They are all expected to come to school every day and spend all day in school...a novel experience for many...

BJ: and they love school!

BJ: they also like art...even though many are a bit apprehensive at first

BJ: all students take art

BJ: they love school and they love art because they are successful

BJ: I lead the monthly discussions in Tapped In on Arts and Literacy...

BJ: and have some good resources for you if you are interested

JohnSunC: sure

JohnSunC: any web site that I can start with?

BJ: take a look at the arts and literacy folder at www.backflip.com/members/bjberquist

JohnSunC: nice "life on the streets" is that a student driven product?

BJ: yes

JudyHi: thanks

JohnSunC: suggest a thread to click

KellySu: Lots of links to lots of good websites

BJ: I'm looking, John-sun

JohnSunC: thanks

JohnSunC: I commend you, it is often too easy to retreat into the comfort of our lives and forget that there is so much work to be done.

BJ: a good connection for literature is Carol Hurst's Literature site

JohnSunC: k

BJ: she has a newsletter that is very good

BJ: and makes lots of cross curricular connections

JudyHi: I have explored that site earlier this year for another class I enjoyed it

JohnSunC: I can't find it Carol Hurst' lit site whereabouts was the thread?

JohnSunC: or can you paste the address?

BJ: let me get you the url, John

JohnSunC: cool <http://www.cedarnet.org/emig/children/exhibit.html>

BJ: <http://www.carolhurst.com/>

JudyHi: that's the one I used

BJ smiles...the Blanket the world with peace project is near and dear to my heart!

BJ . o O (that's related to the site John-sun entered...)

KellySu: Thank you BJ, I like the Carol Hurst site.

JohnSunC: thanks

BJ: thanks for joining the discussion John-sun and Judy

JudyHi: you're welcome

JohnSunC: Hey thanks a lot. This discussion reminds me just how much is left to be done. That I should not give up b/c there are so many other people who also care.

JohnSunC: good bye