

Title of Session: Issues in Special Education

Moderator: BJ Berquist

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Room: After School Online Room

BJ joined the room.

BJ waves hi to Paul and Dee

PaulL: all groups

PaulL: I do grades 1 to 4 at this time

DeeH: Dee waves back to BJ.

BJ: are you both here for the special ed discussion?

PaulL: my kids are mainly included in the regular class and are mixture of sld, ohi, and emotionally disturbed

PaulL: heya bj

PaulL: I am

DeeH: Paul, our special ed teacher has 1 SC in 3rd, 1 SC in 4th, 1 SC (BD) in 5th, and 1 SC in 7th. The resource students are in 1st, 4th, 5th, and 7th. You guys will have many jewels in your heavenly crowns.

JodyV joined the room.

BJ waves hi to Jody

PaulL: I have, I think, 17 kids at this time. I got two today

JodyV: Hi there!

PaulL: it can be nerve wracking

DeeH: Especially at evaluation time, I'm sure. All of the paperwork is time consuming.

PaulL: yep got one due tomorrow

PaulL: did one Tuesday

PaulL: hate the paperwork

PaulL: helps to be able to do the iep's on computer

DeeH: On top of the evaluations being due at this time, we had an accreditation team in Monday and Tuesday. The stress has been thick, but we did well.

PaulL: SACS? Our team was here Tuesday and Wednesday

DeeH: No, we have a little bit to go before we can do SACS. It was something else through the diocese, I can't remember what it was called.

JodyV: Do any of you work with students with Autism?

LeilaniC joined the room.

BJ waves hi to Leilani.

JodyV: Someone asked me if I had heard of the theory that there is a correlation between the rising number of Autistic children and vaccines. What have you heard?

BJ: what kind of vaccines?

ManjushriK joined the room.

DeeH: We have 1 student at the school that has a form of autism. I wouldn't have known that if I wasn't told by his teacher. I have heard that too, but I am not sure how valid that is.

JodyV: The common ones we get when we are born

PaulL: we have one identified autistic student and one with autistic tendencies

JodyV: Are they mainstreamed?

PaulL: they go out for various subjects, I'm not sure how many because they aren't my students

ManjushriK: In my knowledge u cannot diagnose autism until age 3

BJ: <http://www.autism-society.org/site/PageServer>

ManjushriK: 50% of them spend most of their time out side classroom

DeeH: The student that is at our school is in 7th grade. He is in a SC class, but does come to my class for computer enrichment and to Religion class. We are a Catholic school. He is good on the computer, I have to watch him. He is very curious. In the lab, the computers are very restricted. The computers in the classrooms that are not on the network are not. He brings things from home and installs them without permission.

JodyV: I do not have an extensive knowledge about Autism, but I had the opportunity to work with a 10 year old Autistic boy for 4 months. It really sparked my interest in the subject

PaulL: my knowledge of autism is limited too

ManjushriK: they have wide spectrum of disorder

BJ: <http://www.autism-society.org/site/PageServer?pagename=FAQ>

DeeH: Mine too.

JodyV: The wide variety of odd behaviors sparks my curiosity.

BJ: if you click on that link a new webpage will open for you

BJ: with some answers to your questions

JodyV: Thank you.

PaulL: nod

BJ: I should welcome you to this discussion on Special Needs

BJ: Heyentah, our discussion leader, isn't logged in yet...

ManjushriK: problem behaviors include self-injurious behaviors as Pica they eat all inedibles

BJ: but it looks like you all have some experience and some questions that we can discuss till she gets here

BJ: then, could we please start with introductions?

SusanR joined the room.

BJ: I'm an art teacher in a juvenile correctional facility in Pennsylvania and a helpdesk volunteer for Tapped In

BJ waves hi to Sue

SusanR: Hi Bj

PaulL: I teach a mixture of special ed students in grades 1 - 4 mainly in an inclusion setting

JodyV: I am a recent credential graduate who has been substitution for about a year while our profession is in a job slump

BJ: Sue, we're just starting with introductions

SusanR: I am a K to 8 Occasional Teacher from Canada

LeilaniC: I am working on my high school English credential in San Diego

JeffC joined the room.

DeeH: I am a computer enrichment teacher at a Catholic school in Louisiana that serves grades PreK-8th grade. I also serve as network administrator and technology coordinator.

BJ wonders how much prep preservice teachers get in recognizing special needs students.

ManjushriK: Hi BJ sorry forgot to say Hi, I am graduate student at U of Houston

BJ waves hi to Manjushri

ManjushriK: thx

PaulL: probably about a little less than how much they observe in a real class setting before they student teach I guess

JeffC: Education Technology Support Specialist in Oregon... I have about 30 special education links at <http://www.mybookmarks.com/public/coops/#current>

ManjushriK: has any body watched movie rain man

BJ: Thanks, Jeff

DeeH: My undergraduate studies required special education courses and observation hours. Since I began teaching, I have learned a great deal more from the teachers I interacted with. I make a lot of modifications in my classroom so that special needs students can participate.

JodyV: yes, I have seen Rain Man. My experience with Autism makes Rainman seem "normal"

PaulL: how realistic was that

ManjushriK: I think some of characteristics were very real

JeffC: I wouldn't think terribly realistic... although we all may want someone with autism to be an idiot-savant... the odds are what? fairly low I imagine. One thing I've noticed with the few autistic students I've worked with... computers help focus them and calm them down.

BJ: has anyone else gotten those results by using technology?

JodyV: It's amazing how wide the range is when it comes to Autism. Professionals I worked with say it is difficult to lump students under one label due to its diversity.

DeeH: While in high school, I served as a camp counselor at a camp for special needs children of all ages. I saw many different types of needs. One particular boy that stands out was autistic. He didn't talk. By the end of camp, my sister and I had him saying "jeep".

ManjushriK: I recently met a boy who is 16 year old and he is very good at maps and dates u can ask him how to go to some place he was able to give the shortest route

JodyV: Talking/communicating was a big goal in this particular program as well.

ManjushriK: yes because some of them are nonverbals too

BJ: Jody, how do you encourage communicating?

DeeH: The student at our school loves to be on the computers. His teacher uses computer time as a reward to positive behavior, completing assignments, etc. It works well with him.

JodyV: Also, self-regulation techniques.

SusanR: I have observed autistic students quite focused when on the computer

PaulL: Our one student who is identified as autistic came to our school like two years ago and was identified at that time. The difference from then to now is amazing, but my experience with autism is limited

ManjushriK: using visual images and music

SusanR: Are asperger students lumped under the autism label?

JodyV: Lots of patience, cuing the exact words, visual cues, and rewards.

ManjushriK: I think so

JodyV: not sure

BJ: one nice arts resource to use with special needs students is

<http://www.artslynx.org/heal/index.htm>

DeeH: This little boy's family told us that he liked jeeps. We road a bus with the students from our area to camp everyday. We passed a Jeep dealership going and coming. He would point to the jeeps and get excited. We started encouraging him to say the word. At the time, McD's was handing out matchbox cars in happy meals. I had gotten a jeep in one. We told him he could have it if he said the word. We kept working with him. He started mouthing it and then finally said it. We cried and gave him the jeep. He got off the bus, showed him mother the jeep, and said "jeep." It was a wonderful day.

PaulL: That moment in teaching where the light bulbs pops is so gratifying, especially in special needs students

BJ smiles. What a nice story, Dee

JodyV: Emotional and gratifying when the baby steps are taken isn't it.

DeeH: very

JeffC: I had a 7th grade student who read at 2nd grade level... they had her doing primers (Dick & Jane, etc.)... she came into the computer lab and I created an email account for her. She started writing back and forth to her mother. Within *two weeks* her sentence length doubled. Obvious lesson (to me anyways)... is don't patronize... teach to the needs... not to the "ability" level. The poor girl just needed context and relevance to get her going.

BJ: Paul, what do you find the most difficult thing you experience in a special ed classroom...besides the godawful paperwork?

RyanGst3 joined the room.

BJ: Hi, Ryan.

RyanGst3: hello

JodyV: I find that teaching to students needs benefits students of all levels.

DeeH: I think we sometimes forget that all students need that. One thing I have learned is that if you don't teach them how to use something, they don't see the need to learn it. It's all about relevance.

PaulL: scheduling

RyanGst3: what would u say the purpose of this chat

RyanGst3: is

PaulL: we are trying to do inclusion across the board and i have 4 grade levels I deal with

JodyV: I am saying goodbye and thank you for your input, I really appreciate you!

BJ: Ryan, we're discussing special ed in general...

BJ: special ed classrooms and mainstreamed classrooms

PaulL: you would think the levels and impairments of the students would be tough to deal with

BJ waves bye to Jody

JodyV left the room (signed off).

PaulL: but sometimes dealing with 4 grade level of teachers can be more frustrating

ManjushriK: In one of my class we had a presentation on autism we had an 8 year old boy and his family came to our class and that boy was so loving to his mother and I was amazed to see how patient and helping those parents were when dealing with their son

RyanGst3: ok, I'm joining this chat room for a college class, and I need some info on the chat leader

LeilaniC: I taught a class that had 10 inclusion students and 10 regular ed. It was my most successful class because I had to adjust for all students needs. They all benefited from the attention to differentiation.

DeeH: Scheduling is an issue with our teacher as well.

SusanR: I find meeting the needs of a variety of levels in the spec ed room a challenge

PaulL: a single inclusion class is the best way to go but we have only two teachers with about 30 kids so we don't have that luxury

SusanR: What strategies did you use Leilani?

ManjushriK: that's tough

BJ: is differentiated learning practical? Do you have aides?

PaulL: they give each teacher two aides if you are trying to do inclusion, but could I say I am meeting the needs of every child perfectly? no way

PaulL: I think inclusion is the best setting for the most part, but you gotta have the people to do it not like we do it now

LeilaniC: I did have a special education teacher in the classroom with me who was very devoted to the students. I tried a lot of visual strategies, videos, graphic organizers. I didn't lecture at them too much. Lot's of hands on activities.

PaulL: there is so much more content a student can get in the regular class

DeeH: Our teacher does not have an aide. The regular classroom teachers work closely with her for modifications for those students. I also help her with some of the resource students when my workload allows. These kids are a blessing.

ManjushriK: social stories can be used to predict activities and plan

LeilaniC: I definitely needed that extra help but it was worth the time and effort. Seeing these kids being successful in a regular ed English class was great.

PaulL: I can't see being anything but a special ed teacher

RyanGst3: who is the chat leader here?

BJ: can you give an example, Manjushri?

BJ: Ryan, the discussion leader hasn't arrived yet. I'm a facilitator for the discussion

RyanGst3: ok

BJ . o O (although everyone is doing just fine and needs me like a hole in the head!)

PaulL: hey without a few holes in the head we couldn't breath or eat

BJ grins...an ADDITIONAL hole in the head...better?

PaulL: hehe

DeeH: We need those holes. We are teachers. We must let off steam to continue enjoying what we do.

ManjushriK: teaching peer to write social stories that include all students, have small, gr , including the student revise and work out diff scenarios

PaulL: I had my fourth grade students write a group fairy tale...creative writing is like trying to feed them broccoli

PaulL: for a first effort they did ok

BJ: I had a similar experience this week, Paul. I had the kids close their eyes and imagine a favorite piece of music...they had to draw lines to show the rhythm of the music and use color to show the feelings of the words

DeeH: I have found that having students write from scratch is almost as bad as pulling teeth. Some have no problems, others want you to tell them what to write.

BJ: the lower kids really struggled

BJ: Dee, what would you provide for writing scaffolding?

SusanR: I have had reluctant students write a progressive story on computer...give them story starters and let them add to the story plot..progressing from one computer to the next

BJ: that would make an interesting station type assignment, too, Sue

DeeH: I had my 5th graders write a "news story" based on a picture. We talked about what was happening in the picture. I provided them with a template of leading questions. I used these questions in the discussion of the picture.

ManjushriK: meeting the need for these student collaboration is very imp

LeilaniC: Brainstorming and drafting was a key to the writing process with my special needs students. some needed a great deal of time and structure (once again graphic organizers) to set them up for success.

LeilaniC: Cooperative learning, reading groups structured according to mixed ability levels also worked.

DeeH: After reading rough drafts, I worked individually with the students to "pull out" more ideas. They really enjoyed it.

LeilaniC: I agree with Dee

BJ: sounds like you all do a wonderful job with your students! Do you feel that special ed teachers 'burn out' more quickly than regular teachers?

PaulL: pulling teeth : creative writing

PaulL: rather pull the teeth

PaulL: the emotional stress is the killer

BJ nods

DeeH: Right now, I have 4th graders creating book reports in PowerPoint. We have a 4th grader that is SC. He is working on the same template I have provided for the class, but he and I work together outside of class to make sure he is understanding what information is being requested. His SC teacher helped him pick out a book that he could read without getting frustrated.

PaulL: up until this year for the most part I have never had any emotionally disturbed students before

PaulL: never thought I would be able to have the patience

BJ . o O (sign of old age, Paul)

PaulL: ouch (looks at the gray)

ManjushriK: augmenting instruction for these kids is to add positive beh support, and trying to avoid situations that trigger their problem beh like when changing their schedule they should be prompted before hand by some signal

RyanGst3: I never did anything with pp when I was in grade school, let alone high school

DeeH: Our special ed teacher doesn't seem to burn out, but I am sure she does. She loves "her kids" and is very protective. She keeps all of the other teachers in line with "her kids" modifications.

PaulL: I wish I knew how to keep my "teachers" in line

BJ . o O (food works wonders)

PaulL: chocolate too

BJ nods solemnly

BJ: One of the great things about a discussion like this is that you get the chance to let off steam, discuss successes and failures with colleagues who know where you're coming from

PaulL: you gotta admit that our kids give us a lot more interesting things to talk about

DeeH: We are a small school and work closely together. We all feel for the job she has, especially this year with the BD student. At the beginning of the year, she rules with the iron fist until we are whipped into shape.

BJ: Hopefully, Heyentah will be here next month...but we'll still have a special ed discussion on the calendar. I hope you can all come back for it

PaulL: this year I have had to wrestle with one out of control student and had one bring a gun

DeeH: Do you still have the gun toter?

ManjushriK: is he a normal student

PaulL: no we just put him in the special school

PaulL: it wasn't loaded

ManjushriK: good for u

BJ: one more site I want to share..NAREN <http://www.atriskeducation.net/>

PaulL: the thing that got me mad was we were just getting to see some progress with him

PaulL: he brought it more to look cool

ManjushriK: how did he get it

PaulL: he said he found it at his grandmothers

PaulL: she didn't know where it came from

ManjushriK: cool grandmother

BJ . o O (grandmothers aren't like they used to be!)

JeffC: You know people... you can *project websites onto remote computers here*... think about that feature for a special needs class...

LeilaniC: that looks like a good web resource

TraceyP: Oh Paul, you are talking about the kid with the gun, huh.

PaulL: no they got to raise their grandkids

PaulL: yep Tracey

PaulL: I gotta say that the emotionally disturbed kids are starting to become my favorites

PaulL: I have no clue why

DeeH: I have enjoyed this discussion with you guys. BJ - thank you for the sites. I will share them with our angel of mercy. Keep up the good work and hang in there. We may be the one person to bring out the best in these kids.

BJ: Thanks, Dee

RyanWB: could u post the sites one more time

ManjushriK: BJ thanks for the web site

PaulL: yeah thanks bj

BJ: Anything else that you need to talk about before the GPBL group starts?

BJ: <http://www.atriskeducation.net/>

DeeH: Have a great evening. I am headed home.

BJ . o O (that was the last site I showed, Ryan)

SusanR: I find graphic organizers useful with spec ed students
http://www.eduplace.com/kids/hme/k_5/graphorg/
BJ waves goodnight.