

Title of Session: Special Education Forum

Moderator: BJ Berquist

Guest Speaker: LaVaughn Reed

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BJB2: we'll wait a couple more minutes to see if there are any late arrivals

JenniferP3: sounds good!

BJB2: while we wait, a reminder if you're new to Tapped In to click on the Actions menu in the top right of this chat window and then click on DETACH

TomT: Thank you

BJB2: We usually start all the discussions in Tapped In with introductions. Can you please tell us where you are located, what you teach and what brings you to this discussion?

LavaughnR joined the room.

BJB2: I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania. I teach in a male juvenile correctional facility with many special ed students

BJB2 waves hi to LaVaughn. We're just doing introductions.

BJB2 . o O (hoping that Paul will log in shortly)

LavaughnR: Hello everyone-

JenniferP3: HI! I'm an education student at the University of Regina, in Saskatchewan. This is my first time here... I'm just hoping to learn a few things

TomT: I am located in Queens, New York. I teach Physical Education and I am writing a paper on Full Inclusion for my masters class. I also have an autistic sister in Special Ed

BJB2 smiles. Good attitude, Jennifer!

BJB2: thanks, Tom. Sounds like you've got lots of experience to add to the discussion

TomT: I hope so!

BJB2: LaVaughn?

LavaughnR: I am a Special Learning Needs teacher for the Bureau of Prisons. I currently work in a housing unit as the "resident" teacher

BJB2: the topic of inclusion is a good one, Tom. Is everyone comfortable with that?

TomT: Certainly

BJB2: Jennifer, can you tell us if inclusion is used for special needs students in Canada?

Kou_hongH joined the room.

BJB2: welcome, Kou Hong.

Kou_hongH: hello

BJB2: Are you here for the Special Ed discussion?

Kou_hongH: yes

BJB2: great! Can you please tell us where you are located and what you teach?

BJB2: hmmm...we have some shy people

Kou_hongH: I just want to learn how to discuss online

BJB2: Tom, you're probably our resident expert on full inclusion

BJB2: are you in favor of full inclusion?

Kou_hongH: I still a student from Taiwan

TomT: No, I am not

BJB2: . o O (perhaps you could help Jennifer and Kou hong understand what is meant by full inclusion)

TomT: Full inclusion means that all disabled students, regardless of ability level, would be educated in the regular setting with general ed students.

Kou_hongH: what is full inclusion

TomT: It is quite controversial

BJB2 agrees. Why is it controversial, Tom?

TomT: I feel that there are students, like my sister, who would not benefit from that setting

BJB2 nods. Would she benefit from being in a classroom with other autistic children?

TomT: Absolutely. She thrives in the setting that she is in now.

BJB2: that's wonderful...it speaks well of the school she's attending!

TomT: It is a regular school, but she attends special classes.

BJB2: no mainstreamed classes?

LavaughnR: does she have someone with her at all times?

LavaughnR: how old is she?

TomT: Not personally, but I believe that there are at least two teachers

TomT: She will be 18 in two months

TomT: I believe she is mainstreamed into gym

TomT: But not quite capable for academic subjects

BJB2: Are you doing any research on transitioning from school to independent living, Tom?

TomT: No, but I'm sure that my parents are

BJB2 nods solemnly.

BJB2: is your sister taking vocational classes?

Kou_hongH . o O (nods)

BJB2: lifeskills classes?

TomT: I'm not sure

TomT: But for a while, she spent parts of some days on the Job Site

BJB2: what would the advantages be to mainstreaming a special needs child?

BJB2: is the Job Site a web site?

TomT: Well, it would help to promote understanding among non-disabled students

BJB2 agrees with Tom.

BJB2: Jennifer, any comments or questions?

TomT: No, the students actually were placed in a physical site where they actually had jobs to be done

BJB2: Kou hong, do you have special education students in your classes?

TomT: I think she was at a Payless shoe store for a while

LavaughnR: what type of job is she capable of doing?

BJB2: oh, cool. thanks, Tom

TomT: At the Job site, she worked in the stockroom and sometimes put prices on items

LavaughnR: okay, so she is capable of working without constant supervision, that is excellent!

BJB2: ok...let's generalize a little....

BJB2: where would you 'draw the line' on full inclusion of a special needs student?

BJB2: please give us some input Jennifer and Kou Hong

TomT: I would say that you would have to make sure that the student was benefiting from that setting

TomT: A profoundly mentally retarded person would not benefit from a regular high school setting

LavaughnR: what would be some of the benefits you would look for?

TomT: But a mildly retarded person might

TomT: I would say whether or not the student is learning and receiving an appropriate education

BJB2 . o O (poor Tom...you're really being put on the spot!)

BJB2: what about team work and collaboration?

LavaughnR: I think those are excellent benefits

Kou_hongH . o O (sorry, Tom! my English is very poor)

TomT: As with most things, it's usually a case by case basis

BJB2: many mildly disabled students would benefit from working with non-disabled students

TomT: It's so hard to generalize

BJB2 nods. You're right.

TomT: Absolutely

TomT: It would benefit non disabled students as well

TomT: By breaking down barriers and fostering understanding

LavaughnR: is parental support a factor?

BJB2 thinks parental support is crucial...as well as whole family support

TomT: Absolutely. My parents work to encourage my sister to her fullest ability

TomT: And my other sister and myself do the same-whole family support

BJB2: will your sister be able to live independently when she graduates?

TomT: Probably not. She'll still live with us for a while

BJB2: It looks like the school is already making connections with businesses in the community

BJB2: what about transportation to and from work?

TomT: When my parents can no longer take care of her, perhaps a group home might be the best setting

BJB2: is this something that is available in your area?

LavaughnR: How well do you think your sister will handle a group home?

TomT: I'm not sure about transportation, but she'll never be able to drive or take public transportation independently

TomT: Probably well. She is used to interacting with others at school

BJB2 nods. So that is something that has to be taken into consideration when you are working with special needs students

TomT: After a transitional period, of course

BJB2: what is the focus of your paper, Tom?

LavaughnR: are your parents reluctant to place her after graduation? I am sure that is a difficult decision to make at any time.

TomT: It is on the full inclusion movement. We must gather information, take a stance, and back it up

TomT: Well, she can remain in school until she is 21

TomT: And after that, I think she may live with them even after for a while

BJB2: what services do you feel are the most important to provide for students who are not so severely disabled?

LavaughnR: it sounds as though everyone has her long-term needs as a consideration and I really think that is so important. Many times, families feel guilty with any type of placement and put it off until it is almost too much for the person

TomT: They should be taught to be as independent as possible

TomT: It must be a tough decision for a parent to make

BJB2: Jennifer, you will probably have students in your future classroom who are special ed....do you have any questions?

BJB2: are you being given any courses in special ed?

JasonDe joined the room.

BJB2 waves hi to Jason

TomT: Hello Jason

LavaughnR: Obtaining as much independence as safely as possible has to be of a high priority-

Kou_hongH: Hello Jason

JasonDe: hello

BJB2: Our topic tonight is full inclusion of special needs students, Jason

BJB2: Tom is against full inclusion if the student will benefit more from separate courses.

BJB2: what is your opinion, Jason?

TomT: Are you familiar with the full inclusion movement, Jason?

BJB2: Jason teaches elementary, I believe

JasonDe: I think there are students who are able to work in a regular classroom and there are others who need a special classroom

LavaughnR: who do you feel needs a special classroom?

TomT: So then, you would be opposed to full inclusion as well

JasonDe: the problem from a teacher's standpoint is meeting the needs of those students and providing for the other students in our classes

TomT: Exactly. Many general ed teachers are unable to meet the needs of special ed students

JasonDe: so.....I support inclusion, with proper supports in place for both the student and teacher

TomT: I agree

BJB2 nods to Jason. Thanks

Kou_hongH Good bye everyone

BJB2: should there be more special ed courses for preservice teachers?

BJB2 bows to Kou hong

Kou_hongH left the room (signed off).

JasonDe: absolutely, I'm not sure that we do a very good job of that here in Canada

TomT: Special Ed Teachers should take advantage of as much professional development as possible

BJB2 isn't sure we do such a hot job in the US either.

BJB2: if you're discussing inclusion on any level, Tom, shouldn't the gen ed teachers also have prof dev?

BJB2: especially if they are expected to give input to the IEP team

TomT: Absolutely. In most cases, they would probably need it even more

BJB2: one other question I had about inclusion...

BJB2: a great deal of collaboration should occur between the spec ed teachers and the gen ed teachers. Do you feel gen ed teachers are open to suggestions from the spec ed teachers?

BJB2: . o O (and if not, what can be done to correct that?)

TomT: Maybe not always, but they certainly should be

BJB2: I know teachers just LOVE meetings

TomT: To correct that, maybe it would be a good idea for them to get together every so often and bounce ideas off each other

BJB2: and they have so much extra time in their day...how can we facilitate collaboration, Tom?

BJB2 agrees with the bouncing ideas suggestion

TomT: Not necessarily a meeting, but maybe just a discussion, like we are doing now

TomT: But in person

BJB2: ahhh...excellent suggestion. Informal meetings to check on progress and offer suggestions.

TomT: Each can benefit from the other's knowledge and ideas

BJB2 nods. Do you see this happening in your school, Jason?

LavaughnR: do any of you include the reg. ed teacher in your IEP meetings?

JasonDe: not nearly as much as it should.....lack of time is the big issue

JasonDe: always, here in Canada

BJB2: yes, we do, LaVaughn

TomT: I teach in Catholic school, so there is no special education there

BJB2: Tom, I think you've left us speechless!

BJB2 . o O (Catholics don't have special ed kids?)

TomT: No, it's not that

BJB2 chuckles. I'm just teasing

TomT: It's just that the schools don't have the programs

BJB2: they also don't have to admit the special needs students

JasonDe: Catholics, with spec. ed. children, send them to the public school system, where the support is provided

TomT: No, because they are private

BJB2 nods to Jason.

BJB2: In spite of our discussion leader not being here, I think we had a wonderful discussion. Probably didn't solve all the problems of the world, but we aired a few concerns

BJB2 . o O (and the hour flew!)

TomT: I agree. Will we receive a transcript

BJB2: yes, Tom. When you log out your transcript will automatically be emailed to you

TomT: Excellent. Are we done?

BJB2: Thanks for participating in the discussion. I hope we didn't make you feel uncomfortable

BJB2: Yes, we're done

TomT: Not at all

TomT: If you think of anything else

LavaughnR: goodnight everyone, thanks BJB, as always, you did a great job!

TomT: post it to the discussion board

BJB2: Tom, you've joined the special ed forum?

TomT: Yes

BJB2 blushes. Thanks, LaVaughn

TomT: Have a great night

BJB2: if you come across any resources you can add to the spec ed room, please do so

BJB2 . o O (so that others can benefit from what you've learned)

BJB2 waves goodnight

TomT left the room.

BJB2: thanks for helping out, LaVaughn