

Title of Session: Alternative/Correctional Ed Forum

Moderator: BJ Berquist

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Room: After School Online Room

BJ: welcome to the Alt/Correctional Ed discussion

BJ: are you all ready to sound off?!

RyanCF: This is my first time participating in an online discussion of this sort

BJ: Ryan, we'll be gentle

RyanCF: hahah, thank you:-)

MichelleM: this is my first online discussion at Tapped In

BJ: before we go any further....go to the actions menu in the top right of your chat window and click on DETACH

EveSu: Thank you for inviting me, BJ. You suggested that this might be a good place to present my ideas for adapting my math kit, One-Day Math, for use in correctional education. I'll wait until it's the right time for that discussion.

BJ: glad you could join us, Eve!

BJ: we usually start the TI discussions with introductions...

RyanCF: I'll go first

BJ: so let's do that. I'm an art teacher in a male juvenile correctional facility in Pennsylvania

BJ waits for Ryan

RyanCF: My name is Ryan Foley, I am a 22 year old elementary education student at Montana State University

RyanCF: Specializing in science

BJ smiles...a baby!

BJ . o O (I can say that cause I'm a grandmother, Ryan.)

MichelleM: My name is Michelle and I am a student at the University of Akron studying to be a middle school teacher specializing in math and social studies

RyanCF: yes, I will be graduating next year!

RyanCF: is that in Ohio?

BJ: thanks, Michelle and Ryan. Eve?

MichelleM: Yes

EveSu: I teach GED and Adult Basic Skills at Palo Alto Adult School.

RyanCF: I use to live in Huber Heights, outside of Dayton...just a quick note

MichelleM: I live about two hours from Dayton

BJ: although Michelle and Ryan hope to teach in a regular school setting....

BJ: you will still need to work with mainstreamed special ed children

RyanCF: of course

BJ . o O (most correctional ed students are special ed)

RyanCF: are we talking about e.d. students

BJ: so the information I have to share may serve you down the road. Eve also has some information to share with you about a Math program she has developed

BJ: all the alphabet soup, Ryan...ED, MH, BD

RyanCF: aaa, thank you

BJ: My primary concern is that reg ed teachers don't get enough special ed training to spot at risk kids

MichelleM: I agree

RyanCF: I would agree

BJ . o O (the ones who end up falling through the cracks and end up in institutions like mine)

RyanCF: I am in my methods courses, and we have no training, unless you are getting an option in special education

BJ nods to Ryan.

BJ: Eve, why don't you share your program with us, please

BJ wonders if Eve is still with us?

EveSu: Thank you. I developed an audio cassette course that uses 4x6" lesson cards (one lesson on each side of 12 cards), colored photos/graphics, and 6 colored dice. The tapes lead the student through various math activities, some on paper and some that are hands-on using materials in the kit and simple objects found at home (eg, dimes and pennies, paper plates, etc.) to progress through the K-8 curriculum.

BJ . o O (in text chat it's better to enter a few lines at a time, Eve...or we'll think you abandoned us!)

EveSu: No problem! Anyway, I wanted to know how easily the kit could be used in a correctional facility, with audio tapes or CDs.

RyanCF: sounds like a good way to approach math teaching through a constructivist view

MichelleM: I like your lesson plan because a child could work independently without the teacher looking over his/her shoulder.

BJ: the main problem I think you'll have with correctional ed is the dice

EveSu: Yes, it's good for independent study. My main audience is teens and adults who need a quick review for GED, CBEST, SAT, etc.

EveSu: The dice were my first question...

BJ . o O (in a correctional setting the first thing you have to consider is gambling)

BJ: both for juveniles and adults

EveSu: What about the pennies and dimes? I assume it's not allowed to have cash.

BJ: tokens would be better

MichelleM: You could make plastic money

EveSu: The dice are in 6 colors, so they are not "Las Vegas" dice, but I do understand the problems about gambling. Could students use a spinner to generate random numbers?

BJ: would you be able to substitute a spinner for the die?

EveSu: I think I could make a correctional version of the kit using plastic coins/tokens and spinners.

RyanCF: even if gambling was an immediate issue, how big of a problem would it pose in a correctional facility?

EveSu: What hands-on materials COULD be used? Do your facilities allow students to use scissors to cut a paper into circles?

BJ: Ryan, EVERYTHING is a problem in a correctional facility!

BJ: some do under supervision, but many don't. I presented a project that used newspapers and masking tape and was told that some institutions won't allow the tape

MichelleM: so what do you teach with?

BJ: I'm in the fortunate position where I can use scissors, but some places only can use texts and software...and even then, they're not allowed to bring in CDs

MichelleM: Wow what a challenging job

BJ: it's a challenging population to teach

BJ: what you might try, Eve...

EveSu: That starts to answer one other question--Could I abandon the idea of a kit, and simply have you download the course from the internet? Could you have audio (headphones) and "click" on dice to roll them?

BJ: hmmm...that might be a solution.

RyanCF: good idea Eve (if computers are allowed)

BJ: computers are allowed...just not online

BJ: but the teacher could download at home

EveSu: So, to echo Michelle, what do you teach with?

BJ: lots of worksheets

BJ: . o O (not the best learning situation)

EveSu: Is there any workable solution that would be better?

BJ: and one of the most needed skills for our population is math

RyanCF: what levels of math are being covered?

MichelleM: Worksheets do not always help in math -- in my opinion

BJ: I like the software idea.

BJ agrees with Michelle...although they have their place

EveSu: What do you (and other correctional facilities) have most often? Worksheets? Books? Stand-alone software?

BJ: our math classes use workbooks

BJ: and texts

BJ: and the math classes have stand alone computers

BJ: with math games

BJ . o O (which are digital worksheets....just more fun)

EveSu: I'm brainstorming here... which of these materials would be acceptable for games or activities? Cotton balls, beans, erasers, cardboard discs, plastic tokens, ???

BJ: I really think you might have problems with all of them, Eve...they would provide a security risk

RyanCF: what about soft koosh balls, or tennis balls?

BJ . o O (stuffed into locks)

BJ: Eve, why don't you join the CEA JUV listserv and post your information?

MichelleM: did someone tell you all the problems these items might cause or have you learned from experience

BJ . o O (it's a free list and you would be reaching a lot of juvenile facilities)

EveSu: Thanks for the listserv idea. Backing up a bit... What is your general opinion of the math instructors? Do they need a review, or are they okay?

BJ: Much is from experience, Michelle. We just got an email today telling us no canned drinks were allowed on campus...only plastic bottles

RyanCF: BJ: Do you feel you are always watching your actions and what you present to your students

BJ: the kids in our school usually advance one and sometimes two grades in math during the 6-9 months they are with us, Eve

BJ: Ryan, that is true of all teachers. We are role models

EveSu: Wow! That's good teaching!

RyanCF: well I agree

BJ: our kids actually enjoy coming to school...they are successful in learning...many for the first time

BJ . o O (not all schools or correctional facilities are like that)

MichelleM: what is the ratio of students to teacher in your school

BJ: approx 10 students in a class

BJ: and 10 classes.

RyanCF: what kind of atmosphere do you teach in, BJ?

BJ: if you walked into my classroom, or any classroom in our school, you see little difference from the public schools.

BJ: Eve, tell us about your students

BJ . o O (I'm assuming they are much like mine...they want to learn and they want to succeed)

BJ . o O (and much like all students)

EveSu: I have a very small GED/Basic skills class--we are across the street from Stanford University, in a town where 43% of all adults have advanced degrees--but yes, they all do want to learn.

RyanCF: wow, that might be a very intimidating environment for those individuals

TobyR joined the room.

EveSu: I also teach CBEST prep (California Basic Educational Skills Test) for new or renewing teachers--some of them are in my GED class, too, just for extra help.

BJ: hi, Toby. Welcome to the Alternative/Correctional Ed discussion

TobyR left the room (signed off).

EveSu: Now THAT's like my GED/Basic Skills class--open entry, open exit, and a lot of one-time students!

BJ chuckles

EveSu: I get students from every state and many countries, and it's amazing how many have trouble with math.

BJ . o O (you'll find that razor wire makes for a wonderful captive audience)

BJ: you also have to deal with ESL...as do many teachers

EveSu: Yes, many of my kids are ESL.

RyanCF: what is ESL

BJ: do you detect many learning difficulties?

BJ: English as a Second Language

RyanCF: aaa

BJ . o O (alphabet soup, Ryan)

EveSu: Yes, almost everyone (even the prospective teachers) confesses some kind of learning disability, fear, math anxiety, etc.

RyanCF: Living in Montana, that is something educators don't run into very often. Unless of course, you are teaching on the reservations

EveSu: Our school draws from neighboring districts as well, including some poor areas nearby.

BJ nods to Eve. It's pretty sad what we put some of our young people through

BJ: Reservations have their own set of problems, Ryan!

RyanCF: I am aware of that

BJ: we're having a lovely discussion, but I'm wondering if what we're discussing is useful to Ryan and Michelle?

EveSu: On the other hand, some of my students (dropped from regular high school) are not falling through the cracks--they use a pickax to make new cracks! They are trying every alternative in the "alternative ed" universe.

MichelleM: Eve do you have any advice for dealing with ESL Students or how to help them

EveSu: Speak slowly and clearly, with a minimum of accent. Choose simple texts, like Language Exercises for Adults and the Number Power series.

MichelleM: This summer I am taking a class called Diversity of Learners and I will be paired with an ESL Student to work with

BJ: Michelle, using visual learning is very important....

BJ: picture books are good for ESL...and any language learner

EveSu: That's a good start. I'd encourage you to keep seeking out other ESL learners, with different backgrounds, for a wide range of practice.

MichelleM: I agree with you

EveSu: Before I forget--I'd be happy to have any of you, or any of your students or teacher-friends check out my math kit and give me comments.

MichelleM: I am planning on moving out of Ohio to either the south or southwest so I am sure I will need the experience with these special learners

MichelleM: Do you have a website or place to send my friends who are already teaching to view your math kit

RyanCF: I am in the same boat Michelle. As soon as I graduate, I will most likely leave the comforts of Montana. At times I honestly feel under prepared about the diversity I will be facing.

EveSu: www.cyberstars.com/onedaymath (I can mail a kit to you if I get your postal address)

EveSu: Ryan, diversity is almost an understatement in many parts of the USA.

BJ nods solemnly

BJ: this is one place where I think Tapped In is very helpful

EveSu: It helps if you study another language (Spanish is usually a good start).

RyanCF: I agree

BJ: it gives you the opportunity to talk with many teachers from many disciplines...and years of experience

RyanCF -)

BJ: you also might want to access the transcript archives at www.tappedin.org/transcripts

BJ: Eve, you can find the CEA JUVSIG at www.ceanational.org

EveSu: If you move to California, you can join CATESOL: California Association of Teachers of Second or Other Languages (as in, some students learn English as a Third or Fourth language).

EveSu: Thanks, BJ.

BJ . o O (look at discussion groups on the left menu)

EveSu: Will do.

RyanCF: Eve, are you bilingual?

EveSu: Mas or menos.

EveSu: Sorry--Mas o menos.

BJ: I'm bilingual...English and Pig Latin

RyanCF: ok haha:-)

BJ: I have really enjoyed this discussion...we've already been talking for an hour!

EveSu: I find it helps to know a little bit of this and that language--French, German, whatever you can get--just to help students register for class and understand basic instructions.

BJ: any closing comments, questions?

RyanCF: I have one

BJ: good advice, Eve, in our multicultural society

BJ listens to Ryan

RyanCF: it concerns mainstreaming

RyanCF: as I will become a first year teacher soon, do you have any advice on dealing with mainstreaming

BJ: primary advice is to work closely with the special ed teacher, read the IEPs and help the child to work as independently as possible

BJ . o O (some aides are a bit overly helpful)

RyanCF: thank you

MichelleM: Thanks BJ for having this discussion. I enjoyed talking with everyone.

EveSu: In addition to everything else, I've been working as a student attendant (grades K-5) to mainstream special ed kids, sitting with them in a regular classroom (one kid at a time). It's good experience.

BJ: do you agree with what I suggested to Ryan, Eve?

BJ: thanks, Michelle. Glad you could join us.

RyanCF: There is a young boy with autism in my fifth grade classroom that I am doing my paraprofessional experience in. It seems to be a really positive experience for everyone in the class.

EveSu: I agree. I work mostly with Asperger's/Autism kids "on the spectrum" and a few with learning disabilities. Tutoring privately also gives good experience.

BJ: that is up to the teacher to make it so, Ryan....and everyone benefits, as you said

RyanCF: BJ, is your comment about agreeing specifically related back to (aides are a bit overly helpful)?

BJ: I was agreeing with your comment on the autistic child and the class both benefiting from mainstreaming

RyanCF: ooo

RyanCF: ok

BJ: good luck to you, Ryan and Michelle on your future teaching careers

RyanCF: thank you BJ

BJ: you sound like caring individuals and I'm sure you'll both do well

EveSu: In my experience, the learning disabled/dyslexic kids, and the Asperger's kids, are really bright! They can have a good sense of humor, so enjoy them!~

RyanCF: Have a wonderful Thursday evening everyone! Audios

BJ smiles...what wonderful advice, Eve. Thanks

EveSu: Thanks to you all, for a good hour!

BJ waves goodnight. Thanks again for joining the discussion.