

Title of Session: Special Education Forum
Moderator: Paul Bohac
Title of File: 20050815sped
Date: August 15, 2005

Room: Special Education Group Room

RoseAH joined the room.

BjB: Hi, Rose. Welcome

RoseAH: waves hello

PaulDB: Hi Rose

RoseAH: Hi Paul and BJ

RoseAH: So...what are we going to discuss

PaulDB: That is a good question Rose.

PaulDB: What would you like to discuss?

BjB: Rose, Paul is the leader of this group. Let's wait a minute to see if anyone else is joining us...

BjB: and then start with introductions

RoseAH: That's fine

RoseAH: I'm just excited to have gotten in on the start of a session

BjB cheers for Rose. You're doing great!

RoseAH: big smile

MiguelB joined the room.

PaulDB: Hello Miguel

BjB waves to Mike. Good job!

MiguelB: Learning how....lol

BjB: welcome to tonight's Special Education Forum

MiguelB: Hello Paul

BjB: before we begin, let's introduce ourselves

RoseAH: waves to Miguel

MiguelB: Hello Rose

PaulDB: Ladies first BJ.

BjB: I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania and teach in a male juvenile correctional facility

RoseAH: I'm a computer teacher for 2, 3, and 4

PaulDB: Okay, I am a retired correctional special education teacher/administrator

MiguelB: I am a first time US History teacher and a college instructor at night

PaulDB: Rose, what is the focus of your computer instruction?

RoseAH: I taught 4th grade social studies the last two years and 2 grade before that for 16 years

RoseAH: keyboarding skills

PaulDB: Mike, my undergraduate degree is in History.

PaulDB: Ah, is that also a euphemism for spelling and writing?

RoseAH: I will also teach how to use software like Microsoft Word, Powerpoint, Kidspiration, and Inspiration

PaulDB: I am such a proponent of teaching or working with special education youth through the use of computers because of the expansion of skills it introduces.

MiguelB: I have been teaching Math for 16 years and have spent the last three in a credit recovery lab as a Social Studies instructor..

PaulDB: I would really like to explore how computers in the special education environment could be expanded and enhanced.

RoseAH: I saw first hand last year how much special education benefited from computer use

PaulDB: Seems to me that the use of word processing programs could go a long way towards helping kids avoid the difficulties of spelling and many of the grammatical difficulties.

PaulDB: Last month we were talking about the relationship between assessment instruments, educational standards and IEP's.

RoseAH: Yes and no, I don't find they apply the tools at their fingertips as much as they should

PaulDB: Well, but that may also be consistent with the difficulties they may have in the educational setting in general.

PaulDB: Mike, what kind of approach do you use in the credit recovery lab?

RoseAH: Can you give me a little more background of what you were talking about

LavaughnR joined the room.

MiguelB: Well unless there is a better program out there...the word program on computers doesn't really assist students all that well.

LavaughnR: hello everyone!

BjB: Hi, LaVaughn!

PaulDB: Hello LaVaughn

RoseAH: waves hi to LaVaughn

PaulDB: Getting some kids to try and commit to paper their ideas is difficult.

MiguelB: We had students come in to our lab because they were not successful in the regular classroom...we found out what class or classes they failed and we used programs that are installed in the computer to assist them in recovering credits...we used modifications for special education students.

PaulDB: With a word processing program that automatically corrects spelling and many grammatical errors means that the focus is on the thoughts not the process itself.

RoseAH: That's true, but you put a computer in front of them and they'll at least try a little

PaulDB: What kind of computer programs do you use? Are they integrated or independent?

MiguelB: One of my goals this year is to make the students read and write so they can be prepared for the exit level exam they will be taking...

PaulDB: Yes!! It is that "try a little" that excites me.

BjB: I agree to a point, Paul, but I also find that their keyboarding skills are a stumbling block

MiguelB: We use a program found on Nova Net

RoseAH: You're right, Paul. My favorite to start a writing project with is Kidspiration or Inspiration because they can create a graphic organizer and turn it into an outline to help with organizing their thoughts

PaulDB: Well BJ, I am not sure that it is any more of a stumbling block than learning how to hold a pencil or make letters.

MiguelB: One thing we found is that the attention span on special ed kids was very short and had to be on top of them consistently.

BjB just got inspiration last year and hasn't had an opportunity to use it yet

PaulDB: Let's talk about that Mike. I think Rose has had some experiences along those lines.

PaulDB: All kids, whether Special ed or not are a little reluctant initially.

MiguelB: I went to a training on Inspiration and found out we have it in our system...however with three computers in the classroom...won't get much of a chance to use it in the classroom setting.

RoseAH: I had a reward system in place, do this and you get 10 minutes of playing games, of course they were educational and the sites monitored

PaulDB: I bet you would even make it 5 minutes for some kids.

PaulDB: Mike, where are you located?

MiguelB: San Antonio, Texas

RoseAH: Yes, I had one child that was basically a non-reader, but could copy down the information correctly by himself

MiguelB: I had the pleasure of working with one of my kids with a third grade reading level...was quite a work out...

PaulDB: My reason for asking Mike was I was hoping you were in an area where there was the opportunity for you to be able to obtain more computers from local donations, but I know of none in Texas.

MiguelB: Well our classroom space isn't that abundant...can barely squeeze in three more computers....but I can if time permits take them to a computer lab...

RoseAH: beware of donations of used computers, we had a company that did that and the computers turned out to be more hassle than if we had gotten new ones

RoseAH: What about laptops

MiguelB: We have that already...these computers are very old and run quite slow...

MiguelB: We have a mobile lab but there are 14 teachers that share it...

RoseAH: That is what I'm using, I don't like traveling with them, but great for limited space in a classroom

PaulDB: Is the credit recovery program only for academic students or do you also serve vocational students?

RoseAH: I'm the only one that uses mine. The teacher's don't feel comfortable with them so they don't use them

MiguelB: Most of the kids there failed a course in the core area....Math, English, Social Studies, and Science.

MiguelB: Very few failed vocational areas...

RoseAH: Where they special ed, or just low to begin with

PaulDB: How is the schedule set up-1 hour per day or what?

PaulDB: Good question Rose.

RoseAH: oops, should have been teachers

MiguelB: Some kids are there 52 minutes a day...some 104 minutes a day...and we have had some there 300 minutes a day..

PaulDB: What is the basis for the scheduling?

RoseAH: Do you address the same student for several subjects each day if they failed, or just one a day

PaulDB: How is the scheduling and the instruction in your class related to the basic coursework in the students normally assigned class?

RoseAH: subjects I mean

MiguelB: Depending on availability of space in the lab....How many credits they need to make up and how many periods they can stay there..

MiguelB: We attempt to get the kids to work on an area per period....

PaulDB: So basically you are providing a kind of "in-school alternative education program"?

PaulDB: And you serve both Special Ed kids as well as non-Special ed kids?

MiguelB: Sort of...there are regulations to follow....if a child has not failed a course...he cannot come in to advance....

RoseAH: You're in Texas, I'm in LA--we have a new comprehensive curriculum in which all subjects are to be taught basically in cooperative groups, do you have that for these children, or is it traditional settings

PaulDB: Is placement in your class a part of an IEP?

MiguelB: Yes

MiguelB: with modifications to be followed if the child is considered special ed.

MiguelB: We use both...the regular setting and in cooperative groups.

PaulDB: Rose, what does cooperative group mean in your setting?

PaulDB: Is it by discipline or by youth grouping?

PaulDB: How often do you report progress Mike for the Special Ed kids you work with?

RoseAH: Children are put in groups with projects and the teacher acts as a guide to finding the answer or gaining new knowledge

RoseAH: Heavy on using technology to complete projects and do research

MiguelB: Well I am back in the classroom after being out for three years...we are required to send progress reports every three weeks....but parents can now go into our computer system and check up on their kids.

RoseAH: is part of this new curriculum

PaulDB: I would guess that kids of all ability levels are in each group Rose?

RoseAH: What do you mean they can go into computer system and check up--they can access the grades

PaulDB: Mike, if parents can check computers is there some way to restrict the files they have access to?

MiguelB: We have a new system in place where parents can log on and check up on their child's grades at any time.

MiguelB: All they can check up on is their grades and attendance...

DavidWe joined the room.

BjB waves to David

RoseAH: Yes, my belief is children learn from each other and have a more open mind to their peers, as well as having higher level model for lower level children

DavidWe waves

RoseAH: waves

PaulDB: Yes, I agree Rose.

MiguelB: Howdy David

PaulDB: Cooperative groups bring to mind the old one-room schoolhouse concept.

PaulDB: Such an approach not only helps academically but also socially.

PaulDB: Hello David.

DavidWe: Hi, Paul

PaulDB: If you could change what you are doing in the classroom Rose, what kind of changes would you propose?

PaulDB: My question arises from my belief that kids need to interact with one another and the use of technology should be seen as a tool.

RoseAH: Sometimes children that aren't great with math or reading have a strength in another area that they can shine in, example making a map,, a child may be able to draw it, another how to write the info, another how to interpret the info

DavidWe . o O (multiple intelligences)

RoseAH: That is right David

PaulDB: Do all students receive credit for the joint project or is there a rubric that assigns credit for group work and for individual contributions?

JeffC joined the room.

PaulDB: Hello Jeff

BjB: Hi, Jeff

MiguelB: Howdy Jeff

JeffC waves

RoseAH: I would love to have new desktop computers with flat screens, that is the major change I would like to make

DavidWe smiles

RoseAH: waves hi

DavidWe: that's one thing

PaulDB: I suspect that having functional equipment helps keep kids focused because there is a shorter time between action and response.

PaulDB: Could that be an issue with your kids as well Mike?

RoseAH: Rubrics are used for group work , but say it is a graphing assignment, then an individual rubric would be used

MiguelB: I would like to include access to high speed internet service....

PaulDB: You are making the transition from learning to application Mike!

MiguelB: Yes that would.

RoseAH: We have that, my lab is wireless

MiguelB: Well we have wireless access but ours is not high speed.

PaulDB: Do you use the Internet within defined parameters?

RoseAH: Just put in towers at the various schools to help with the internet highway overload

PaulDB: Mike if you and Rose have not been to the NCREL web-site, I would encourage you to visit it soon!!

RoseAH: Yes, we have an extra tight security in place--got a virus in the system last year and took weeks to finally get it fixed in the whole district

MiguelB: A virus got into our system and destroyed a lot of information....so since then, I keep a back up.

PaulDB: Is there a state technology plan in place?

RoseAH: Yes, and we have a parish one also

MiguelB: When I was with the Math department...we were all trained in using computers as an alternative method of teaching....and it was great....

DavidWe smiles

DavidWe: Well, you know, those math teachers are pretty cool

BjB nods solemnly

MiguelB: We were invited to present at national conferences with PBS...since most of the programs we used were created by teachers.

DavidWe slips out

DavidWe left the room.

RoseAH: My hat goes off to math teachers, that is not my favorite subject to teach, I love teaching English, especially poetry

PaulDB: Last month we talked briefly about "highly qualified teachers" but no where have I seen any indication that computer training and computer instructional use should be a part of teacher training programs.

PaulDB: It would seem to me that is an oversight.

MiguelB: That is the main focus at our school....they consistently push for integrating technology in the classroom....with three computers...

PaulDB: Jeff, you have been quiet.

RoseAH: I believe intro to computers is a requirement for the new college ed curriculum, all teachers have to be trained at Intech when they are hired, if they want to be rehired and get a computer too they have to attend this

PaulDB: Well, perhaps the state technology plan would be a source of assistance to you Mike.

MiguelB: All I keep hearing at the school level is that no money is available...

PaulDB: You have more current knowledge than I Rose, I have not seen such requirements in our state.

RoseAH: I have really been looking it over this summer, I am taking an EIT course in which we have to look at it often for our assignments, a plus for me since I have to include it in my lesson plans this year

BjB: Mike, you also could check the ISTE tech standards

PaulDB: Nor have I seen such requirements in either NCLB Act or IDEA.

RoseAH: Our preschool program is going to use Palms this year for assessment

BjB: we're almost at the end of the session....

BjB: before you all run off, Rose and Mike, have you joined the Special Ed group?

PaulDB: I hope you will take good notes Rose and post a review of that effort on-line!!

RoseAH: Well it may just be at the private college that a lot of our student teachers have been attending

BjB: . o O (another reason for you to join the group, Rose, so you can post to the discussion board)

MiguelB: No I haven't and like I told you...I won't be able to come in anymore after this week...

PaulDB: Why is that Mike?

RoseAH: I thought I had when I went to the group's room

MiguelB: I start teaching at the college next Monday...4 days a week up till 9 pm central time

BjB: the discussion board is a way to keep in touch, Mike

RoseAH: Still have much to learn about the Tapped In community

BjB: Rose, entering a group room doesn't automatically enroll you in the group

BjB: if you attach your chat window or find your web window...

RoseAH: I'd say that will leave you little time for chatting

PaulDB: Trust me Rose, there is more to learn than you realize!!

RoseAH: oh...

MiguelB: You said a mouthful Rose...I have been in and out for a long time and I still am special ed when it comes to Tapped In

BjB: look on the Welcome note for This is the group room for Special Education Forum

BjB: click on the green i

BjB: that will show you the group ID page

BjB: at the top of the page is a place to join the group

BjB . o O (just a simple click)

RoseAH: Do I leave here now to do that or can I wait until this discussion is over

BjB: you won't go anywhere, Rose

BjB . o O (and I think it's time to bring the discussion to closure, Paul)

MiguelB: Thank you Paul...it was quite interesting...

BjB: If you have any comments or thoughts or ideas on what was discussed today, please post them to the discussion board in this room

RoseAH: ok, I joined--I think

MiguelB: thanks Bj you did great like always.

PaulDB: If I may, I would like to continue a focus on the use of technology that we started tonight during the next session. It seems to me that it is a topic of value.

BjB: the next Special Ed meeting is September 19

LavaughnR: sorry that I didn't have much to comment on Mr. B. I will do better next time!

PaulDB: Yes BJ, as always you did well!!

BjB: sounds good, Paul. I got some great ideas at the digital storytelling institute

RoseAH: That sounds great to me, I have really enjoyed this session.

BjB blushes...thanks

PaulDB: Tell me about that!!

BjB: it was incredible...although it was very hot and steamy in Washington

BjB: learned how to use iMovie

PaulDB: Rose, I look forward to your participation next session as I think your experiences will be beneficial to all.

BjB: and each participant created a digital story

MiguelB: Come to Texas....and really feel hot and steamy...LOL

RoseAH: Hey then you'd do fine in N.O., it was 105 here today

BjB . o O (heat index was 112...that was the week the boy scouts were in Washington)

RoseAH: I want to learn to use iMovie

PaulDB: Where can I learn more about that BJ?

BjB: but the institute was amazing...the use of art in the classroom across the curriculum

BjB: more about iMovie?

RoseAH: Digital storytelling sounds great for all

BjB: or digital storytelling?

PaulDB: Yes, digital storytelling.

MiguelB: I did that some years back...in Michigan...with the iMovie...

BjB: www.storycenter.org

BjB: Joe Lambert was one of the leaders of the institute

RoseAH: Is that like ebooks

PaulDB: Can anyone use the information or does it require special software?

BjB: macs have iMovie

MiguelB: It's a program that Apple has

BjB: pc's have photostory

BjB: it's the concept that is important...combining images and spoken dialogue to tell a story

RoseAH: oh, I went to a session for that at NECC last summer, 2004

BjB: great, Rose. did you enjoy it?

RoseAH: photostory that is

PaulDB: Did you make use of the learning in the classroom Rose?

BjB: ahhhh

BjB: I have to jet...grandson is waiting for me to write in his journal

RoseAH: Yes, but since I didn't have it or the school I put it on the shelf to "check out in my free time"

BjB laughs. I have a shelf like that, Rose!

PaulDB: Bye BJ, and thanks!! Chocolate roses just for you!!

BjB: I downloaded photostory, but haven't played with it yet

BjB hugs...thanks, Paul

BjB waves goodnight

PaulDB: Where does one download photostory?

MiguelB: Goodnight Bj

RoseAH: yum, yum supper to calling--come and get it, so guess I'll sign off. Great meeting everyone, hope to "see" you all soon !

MiguelB: Bye Rose

PaulDB: Thanks Rose, it has been fun and interesting!!

BjB: Tapped In Tips and Tricks

RoseAH: waves to everyone as she runs for the food

BjB:

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/digitalphotography/photostory/default.msp>

BjB . o O (photostory 3)