

Title of Session: Alt/Correctional Ed Forum

Moderator: BJ Berquist

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Room: Tapped In Reception

MiguelB: Isn't there a session going on today at 8 central?

BjB: Hi, Mike. No one has logged in for it yet

BjB: I didn't have anything special planned, so it's not a big deal

MiguelB: Oh Okay...so I guess no one is here....well just came in to check if there was anyone else interested...

MiguelB: Okay...

BjB: how are the classes going?

MiguelB: Well so far I have some students who are failing because they have been absent and some who failed to follow directions and failed my short test today...

MiguelB: But otherwise okay...

BjB: yikes...already in the first week!?

BjB: hopefully it is a wake up call for the students

MiguelB: I don't think so...most of these kids have failed before so they really don't care....I have a great deal of athletes...and they are going have to explain to the coach why they are failing...

BjB: you have kids who are programmed for failure. If they don't try they don't have to worry about failing

BjB: the key for these kids is to have them experience success in school

BjB: . o O (not always an easy task for you)

MiguelB: Well I gave them the answers to the first lesson to get them started...then I asked them to read...but they just sat there and chatted...

BjB: assigned seats?

MiguelB: So maybe the wake up call will come...have to get the quiz signed by parents and returned by Monday...or then I will call.

BjB: were they to read silently or orally?

MiguelB: Am giving them the opportunity to make their own decisions...but will have a seating chart by Monday if they didn't get it...

BjB nods

MiguelB: They were to read silently...they need to get used to the idea of independent reading...4 hours in order to take the exit level exam

BjB . o O (now picture teaching a whole class of those students. Fortunately, the classes are 8-12 students each)

MiguelB: Well mine are 14 and larger...and they are all considered at risk...

MiguelB: I even have some that already have two absences in 4 days...

BjB: ahhh...so you could use an alt/correctional ed discussion!

MiguelB: Yep

BjB: absences you can't do much about. At least my kids come to school every day.

MiguelB: But I need for them to understand that they need to pass my class and pass that exit exam to graduate....

BjB: do you have reading assessments on the kids...they may not be able to read. Do you have access to other problems that exist..like family structure, etc?

BjB . o O (if they're backs are against the wall, they'll just drop out when they're 16 so graduating isn't a big deal)

MiguelB: Well I have only met these kids for the first time and don't know much about them except that they had a teacher that was quite a pain...if you know what I mean...last year

BjB nods to Mike. That doesn't help. You have to build a classroom where the students feel safe to both succeed and fail and know that failure is something you can recover from

MiguelB: Well I have them write tomorrow...as a lesson...

BjB: keep the lessons short...write for 10 minutes or less and move to something else...then go back to writing or editing what they've written

BjB: when you get a match, click on Marsha's name

MiguelB: Well this is a practice on writing so they can get used to the writing part of the exit level exam...

BjB nods to Mike

MiguelB: So will be graded on content and not on punctuation or spelling...that is later...

BjB: but, remember that you also want to have them succeed...and some won't be able to write (or read)

BjB: kids aren't at risk for no reason...but the reason can be very complicated

MiguelB: That I know...but they need to learn....and last year....so I need to help them get ready..

BjB: are they learning disabled, emotionally abused, etc

BjB: do they have IEPs?

MiguelB: Well some have not passed the ninth grade....but have been moved up so have to get them ready...anyway I can...

MiguelB: I have not received any yet...

MiguelB: I know of at least three who are sp ed....and one who is deaf...

BjB: being deaf is a big challenge...does she have an aide?

MiguelB: Yes she does...so I am going to be careful when presenting...

BjB: auditory discrimination is also a possibility with other students in the class

MiguelB: Well I have a strong voice so there is no way that they can't hear me....LOL

BjB chuckles....it's not a matter of hearing, but decoding what is being said

BjB: be sure to be facing the students when you are talking

MiguelB: Yes that I know...always talk and try to walk around the class....

BjB nods...good

BjB: this is the class on history, right?

BjB: . o O (pilgrims?)

MiguelB: Hey I got one right....

MiguelB: yes

BjB: try using art and music...multisensory and multiple intelligences

BjB: what kind of music would be played...or would the pilgrims have allowed music?

BjB: what would they think of a society that banned music?

MiguelB: I tried using a scene I found on the internet about the pilgrims and their voyage....but they seemed to blow it off....

BjB: they can't relate it to their lives

MiguelB: the person was talking and there was some music associated with it...

BjB: ask them to role play...they can't take a shower for months, there are no flush toilets, and no deodorant

BjB: and water was rationed...would they have the guts to survive?

BjB: . o O (maybe make it into a 'survivor' series)

BjB: . o O (don't tell them it's pilgrims)

MiguelB: I know...I made that clear during the first lesson...I told them that I had the pleasure of visiting a replica of one ship and told them there were no bathrooms and that they slept in closed quarters....

MiguelB: When they saw a section of a ship that brought slaves to the US....it seemed to call to them...

BjB: interesting

MiguelB: So I know I reached some of them...but again...I am trying all of these different techniques and trying to find the best one that works...

BjB: there has been some publicity on current slavery...which also might intrigue them

BjB: sounds like you're doing great, Mike! I gave the same lesson 10 times in the past two days and the last lesson was totally different from the first time I did it

MiguelB: Well we are having trouble with our internet this week so can't get logged on...I always look for sites that I found interesting...

MiguelB: Then I put them on a screen with my lightware unit....

BjB: not familiar with lightware

BjB: does it project the computer image to a screen?

MiguelB: You can hook it up to your computer and the screen appears on the projection screen.

BjB nods

MiguelB: That is what I used to show the first scene...Stories of a Surviving Nation...but I also had problems with the sound portion....kept skipping every so often.

BjB . o O (probably not as compelling as MTV to an adolescent)

BjB: do you have a reward system?

MiguelB: Like I said...I used that as an intro and then had them create a set of rules by which they need to live on and survive my class...

BjB: ah, yes, I do remember that clever plan

MiguelB: Right now...all I have is a reward if they all have 95% attendance, I will let them bring their CD players and listen to music...

BjB: pass out tic tacs at the beginning of class and tell them that studies have shown that peppermints help you learn more easily and keep you alert.

BjB: welcome back

MiguelB: Sounds good ...will try that..

BjB: I'm not sure if there are resources in the Alt/Correctional Ed group, but you can join that group and take a look

BjB: it really does sound like you're doing a great job, Mike...just remember that with these kids you have to measure success in small increments

BjB: once you're headed in the right direction, the success will increase exponentially

BjB . o O (had to get some math in there for you)

MiguelB: Well all I hope for is that I can reach them and that they understand that all I am trying to do is to get them to succeed....

BjB: in a normal world 14 sucks...in their world, success may be something different than what you have in mind

MiguelB: Well I need to get back to my exercises....y'all take care and I will come in whenever I can...

BjB hugs...it's been wonderful chatting with you, Mike. Thanks for stopping by.

BjB waves goodnight