

Title of Session: Special Education Forum

Moderator: Paul Bohac

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Room: Special Education Group

BJB2: Welcome to tonight's Special Ed Forum. We usually start all discussions with introductions

BJB2: please introduce yourself to the group. Tell us where you are located and what you teach or hope to teach

BJB2: . o O (and what you hope to learn from the discussion)

DavidWe joined the room.

BJB2: I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania and work with a special ed population.

PaulDB: Hello David

DavidWe: Hi, Paul

TamikaE: My name is Tamika. I am currently completing my student teaching in Alief ISD in Houston. I plan to teach resource, preferably middle or high school.

BJB2: just in time for introductions, David

HeatherES: Hello, my name is Heather. I am currently a student teacher. I decided to join this discussion because I hope to pursue a masters in Special Education

MaryFT joined the room.

BJB2: welcome, Mary

TamikaE: Hi, Mary.

DavidWe: I'm David Weksler. I'm in New Jersey, near New York City. I help teachers learn more about educational technology

MaryFT waves

TeresaE: I am Teresa E. and I from UH in Houston, TX I hope to teach Special Education Resource and I hope to pick up as much information as possible to help me on this wonderful journey of teaching to Special populations

CandyC: I am in my student teaching semester teaching 1st grade all content areas, I would like to teach 3rd grade but I am open to anything

DavidWe waves to Mary

BJB2: we're doing introductions, Mary

PaulDB: I am a retired Correctional Education Administrator and Special Education teacher.

TeresaE: I am presently serving as Associate teacher in the Houston ISD

MaryFT: Mary Thompson, preservice teacher educator at the University of Houston. I teach technology.

PaulDB: Hello Mary

MaryFT: Hi

HeatherES: Hey Mary

CandyC: hi Mary

TeresaE: Hi Mary

MaryFT is feeling popular tonight

DavidWe smiles

TeresaE: yeah for Mary

DavidWe gives Mary a bowl of chili

CandyC: GO Mary

PaulDB: She ought to since her area of expertise should contribute much to this discussion!!

BJB2: Mary leads the Teachers in Training group, Paul. The topic for her next group discussion is grants for the classroom

TeresaE: this sounds exciting

HeatherES: yeah

PaulDB: Very much so!!

CandyC: I agree

MaryFT: ty

CandyC: Are we discussing how to effectively use technology with special education students?

TeresaE: please do

BJB2: Paul, did you have a topic for tonight or did you want to discuss the post Dale made to the discussion board?

TamikaE: yes, help please!

BJB2 . o O (there is a post to the discussion board about a grant writing workshop if anyone has the time and \$ to attend)

PaulDB: I have been dealing with some medical problems so I am REALLY open for any topic of interest to the group.

BJB2: how about if we take a look at the discussion board then

BJB2: if you've detached your chat window...

TeresaE: how do I do that? and I have

BJB2: overlap your two Tapped In screens or attach

BJB2 . o O (go to actions and attach)

BJB2: then click on DISCUSSION on the blue menu above this chat window on the left

BJB2: and read New Student Transition

BJB2 . o O (Dale has his work cut out for him!)

PaulDB: I wonder what he meant by "restrain"?

BJB2 nods...I was also wondering that, Paul. Kind of young for that

BJB2 . o O (PA is trying to get a 0 restraint policy passed)

PaulDB: If he meant physically, then it would appear that he could consider some alteration of the classroom layout.

BJB2: Dale also doesn't mention if he has an aid

MaryFT: my suggestion for Dale would be structure, structure, etc.

PaulDB: His idea of creating "centers" has a lot going for it.

MaryFT: I think the current students will feel more comfortable knowing the routine will not be disrupted

TeresaE: are you thinking that possibly the aide can help to transition the present student to the new student(s) that may be coming, I agree

HeatherES: I would suggest introducing one center at a time

HeatherES: let the students get comfortable with the activity before introducing them to another one

MaryFT: and the new students would understand the expectations

PaulDB: Change is good but it must be managed.

CandyC: creating centers always creates some type of organization and routine, so I think that's great

PaulDB: Another part of that effort is to re-direct the kids from the new members to a new system.

PaulDB: It is kind of tricky though.

TeresaE: yes and make sure that they are clear on group expectations while in group activities, you think?

PaulDB: Most assuredly!

MaryFT: I am surprised that the school is adding 4 new students in one week...seems like a lot

BJB2: Dale doesn't mention what kind of emotional disabilities the students have. Paul mentioned classroom layout. What kind of distractions are in the classroom? are students seated by the door, windows? too much clutter?

PaulDB: Good for you BJ.

TeresaE: yes, good insight and considerations of what is presently in place

TamikaE: Depending on the severity of the disabilities, with no aide, 4 new students would be a lot.

PaulDB: It would also be helpful if Dale had some idea of the characteristics of the new students.

MaryFT: yes

CandyC: I wonder what his consequences would consist of since the students are not on the same emotional level as a regular student, something like a color change chart wouldn't be effective I don't think

TeresaE: I was thinking that the children would be added gradually, say a week at a time

MaryFT: he seemed to imply that they would all be coming next week

TamikaE: No a color chart wouldn't work, but if he had some type of reward system, that could work.

BJB2 agrees that Dale needs to know more about the students...they may be emotionally disturbed, but where do they function academically

HeatherES: yeah, four children coming in all at once is a bit overwhelming for anyone

BJB2: K to 2 is a big age spread

PaulDB: While it is possible to make some assumptions given the shared "label", there is something unique about each of the new students.

TamikaE: Maybe he should consider a staffing or briefing on all the students prior to them coming to the school.

MaryFT: would he get their IEPs before they join?

TeresaE: to assimilate four children from four different backgrounds into a single classroom is a quite a bit much, Dale will definitely need some assistance

PaulDB: I like that Tamika.

MaryFT: good idea Tamika

TamikaE: thanks!

PaulDB: Even with the IEP, direct interaction with each youth is beneficial.

CandyC: I definitely think assistance is needed too

TeresaE: The IEP'S should precede the children well before introduction of the children

PaulDB: Wait a minute, the youth he already has will have some skills in place.

TamikaE: About the IEP's it would probably depend on what school they were coming from. And like Paul said, direct interaction with the child is very beneficial.

TamikaE: true, but wouldn't the distractions throw them off?

PaulDB: Dale needs to be clear with the youth already in his classroom and ask them to help assimilate the new students.

MaryFT: great idea Paul

TamikaE: That's a good idea, then they would not feel as though he was not paying attention to them.

TeresaE: Yes so a good idea would be to review the skills of the child presently there and remind him that changes will come

PaulDB: All of us have had new students enter the classroom unexpectedly.

BJB2: what about giving the children already in the classroom jobs to help make the new students feel welcomed

MaryFT: maybe let them come up with ways to introduce the new students to the classroom?

PaulDB: Now we are talking about proactive efforts that acknowledge the potential of the students in the class.

MaryFT: yay us

BJB2 smiles

TeresaE: I agree and we all have to review with students clear expectations for the classroom environment and how to model them for any new students

TamikaE: that's true.

CandyC: yeah, maybe he could assign buddies throughout the week to work with closely for adjustment

HeatherES: I like that idea

MaryFT: he could almost pair each new student with an existing class member/buddy

PaulDB: What makes us "professionals" is the capacity to make professional judgments.

CandyC: the teacher maybe could even have a buddy since there is an odd amount of students

MaryFT: good idea Candy

PaulDB: We are part of a partnership in the classroom.

MaryFT: I like that comment Paul

TeresaE: sounds like a plan and allows the previous children some leeway in collaboratively reinforcing classroom management

PaulDB: New kids affect both the teacher and the students.

PaulDB: Yes Teresa!!

TeresaE: thanks

CandyC: I agree

PaulDB: The simple introduction of new students is an excellent learning experience.

TamikaE: Yes, for students and the teacher.

PaulDB: We may delay some of the "academics" for the "social" aspects of the classroom.

PaulDB: It allows for a sense of sharing.

TeresaE: never hurt anyone to be introduced, yes social skills is a must and most always a fun activity, sort of an icebreaker

TamikaE: I agree because we want the students to be able to socialize appropriately with one another.

PaulDB: Exactly.

TeresaE: yes Tamika

PaulDB: If they learn to socialize appropriately, there will also be a reduction in classroom behavior problems.

CandyC: Spring Branch uses a great discipline and communication system called TRIBES, which will be great to use I think, it offers games to the teachers that teach students things like MUTUAL RESPECT, ATTENTIVE LISTENING, EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS, etc, all these attributes are practiced in the form of GAMES

PaulDB: And, I think that was Dale's concern initially.

PaulDB: Describe that a little more Candy please.

TeresaE: that sounds like something that I as a preservice teacher would want to learn more about, is it available to the public and to other districts

HeatherES: to help with the community environment, the teacher could have a tub with several pieces of paper. On each paper could have something about one of the students- "I like pizza!" The teacher could read these sentences out to the class and whomever agrees with the statement could stand-up. This could form a sense of bonding for the entire group

BJB2: <http://www.tribes.com/>

PaulDB: Games are an essential part of learning.

HeatherES: I heart tribes

TeresaE: thanks BJ

TamikaE: Any ideas on incorporating technology in the resource class for struggling readers?

PaulDB: Hi-tech, low-tech or just anything Tamika?

TamikaE: anything

PaulDB: What do you have in the classroom?

CandyC: Each teacher gets like a kit in the start of the year that has a box full of suggestions for games to teach things like respect. Example: We played one last week where the students form a circle and the teacher throws a ball in the circle but first calls the student's name she is throwing the ball to, the students must remember to call the students name before throwing the ball, each round the teacher adds in a new ball, (up to like 4 balls) the students have to be paying attention, listening and showing respect all at the same time

TamikaE: I have some students that I am really concerned with. they are 4th grade but the reading level is pre-k. I need something more interesting than the repetitive books that they are reading.

PaulDB: Thanks Candy.

BJB2: allowing special needs students to use a keyboard for word processing is good, Tamika

TamikaE: writing is on pre-k level as well.

CandyC: No problem

BJB2: have them write stories

PaulDB: Do you have a tape recorder?

TamikaE: yes

TeresaE: yes why not use the software that translates spoken language into text, or even having the children tell you a story and you serve as dictator, and using the master reader for recording the stories dictated by the children

PaulDB: Good Teresa!!

TamikaE: that's good, I will see if we have a program like that.

MaryFT: you may be able to download a trial version of DragonSpeak or find a similar trial program

TamikaE: would the master reader be the child that is more fluent in the class?

PaulDB: You could also "read" a story onto a tape and have the student "read along" with the tape.

TamikaE: thanks, Mary.

CandyC: Mary isn't there some type of hard ware we learned about that provides a special keyboard, that was located in the citelab room for disabled students?

TeresaE: no it is easy for you to record spoken text and the child could then feed the master reader one card at a time and repeat as necessary

PaulDB: If you have a "language Master" you could develop a package of vocabulary words.

TamikaE: it is, but I think the schools have to have it or it has to be noted on the IEP before the child could use it.

TamikaE: oh, ok. we use that with another student in the other class.

PaulDB: I am not sure that is correct Tamika.

MaryFT: we did have some specialized equipment but I'm not remembering the name of it

PaulDB: I think that if the use of the machine is considered essential to the youth that it is recorded on the IEP.

TamikaE: oh, is it something that sped teachers can request?

TeresaE: yes the language master and very effective as the child can repeat as necessary and he can use headphones so as not to disturb nearby students

CandyC: oh, ok, because that would be a great tool to have in the class

PaulDB: However, as part of a lesson, such is not needed on the IEP. It is considered a lesson activity within the context of general classroom instruction.

TeresaE: the children could also listen as a group and share the language master, the language master should be included in the school's library inventory, you may want to check it out

TamikaE: would this be a tool that the teacher would buy from the budget or get from AT if not specified on the IEP and not used with any other students?

TeresaE: we had the cards for the language master and they are recyclable, they are recordable

PaulDB: But the same is also true of a tape recorder as well. Especially if there is a listening center available.

MaryFT: Think has a lesson plan for Struggling Readers that focuses on Word Sorts

TamikaE: ok, I will look at it.

MaryFT: sorry...Read-Write-Think lesson plan:
http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=795

TamikaE: thanks, Mary

PaulDB: Tamika, Language Masters are also favorite devices in non-special education reading, math and speech.

MaryFT: features an interactive web activity on Word Families:
<http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/wordfamily/>

TamikaE: thanks too, Paul. I am going to inquire about the software.

TeresaE: yes and the tapes can be ordered from the school's secretary

PaulDB: Mary, I look forward to checking out the web sites you have identified!!

HeatherES: me too

TeresaE: so am I

PaulDB: Now that we have discussed the "lo-tech" approach, what about some "hi-tech" approaches?

MaryFT: I'm a huge fan of Marco Polo resources...Read-Write-Think is one of those

PaulDB: Yes, I agree.

PaulDB: They have much to offer across a broad spectrum.

PaulDB: What is your favorite?

TeresaE: since I am a beginning teacher I would like to hear about some of those

TamikaE: I would too.

CandyC: me too

MaryFT: I like all of them because they offer doable lesson plans with built-in assessment strategies

PaulDB: I have never had the chance to use their material so I have no experience, just perceptions

BJB2: <http://www.marcopolo-education.org/home.aspx>

MaryFT: all have some web resource attached

TamikaE: thanks, BJ

MaryFT: some are interactive, others are reproducibles, videos, or other classroom activities

PaulDB: Mary, talk about the assessment strategies!!

MaryFT: still, it narrows down the amount of searching that teachers have to do to find hi-quality info

TeresaE: we need that

MaryFT: rubrics, checklists, observation suggestions, etc. are all included as integral parts of the lesson

PaulDB: I also like the fact that it serves as a "stand alone" or the material can be expanded to incorporate other content according to the teaching/learning activity.

MaryFT: yes...you can teach a whole lesson plan or pick and choose pieces based on time constraints

MaryFT: they also link you to lessons on the same topic or theme so you can keep going

PaulDB: The good thing is also that the material need not be a "one-time" use.

MaryFT: also, all lessons are associated with National Standards

PaulDB: And would therefore most likely meet the local standards as well.

MaryFT: Tamika...the students in your classroom...what is their main area of trouble? Letter recognition, comprehension, etc?

HeatherES: sounds fantastic Mary

TamikaE: letter recognition.

MaryFT: definitely Paul...makes it easier to match to the state standards too

MaryFT: okay...so they're really needing some extra supports

TeresaE: Mary, I like what I've heard thus far and look forward to checking out the site

TamikaE: yes, but it is hard to do in the class with the Language program being so strict. The other kids are grasping and moving, and they are still in the same place.

MaryFT: the word families lesson wouldn't be too basic and it might be different enough to be engaging

TamikaE: I will look at it and try it.

CandyC: In my guided reading group I have two students that don't know the letter sounds in the first grade, so they can barely do the class work because they can't read, any suggestions on success for them in the class

MaryFT: sounds like assessment is needed. If the existing program is not working then it may not be effective for these students

MaryFT: Candy...I would strongly suggest a fun letter sounds center

MaryFT: maybe something you create in PowerPoint

MaryFT: make reviewing those letter sounds something that all kids want to do and it may peak the interest of your students that are having trouble

TamikaE: well, right now the teacher is gathering some materials for the students to use at home, so we can try to make progress, so we will see it helps.

TeresaE: so what other strategies have they tried to implement. "Around the world " would be a engaging game to try

CandyC: yeah I will try that, I really like using power point, I would also like to know more of how you get your voice recorded on it if possibly, something like what you do Mary when you give us tutorials on something

TamikaE: we kind of do that as a review at the beginning of the class and they are involved, but when it is time for independent work, reading or writing, it's like they shut down and just make things up to make it seem like they are doing the work.

PaulDB: Yeah, assessment is necessary.

TamikaE: I will suggest it to the teacher and see what we can work out.

PaulDB: If they do well with the review, maybe it is because they are getting support from their peers.

PaulDB: On their own, they lack such support.

BridgetM joined the room.

PaulDB: Hi Bridget.

CandyC: hi Bridget

TamikaE: so should I work with them during the activities to see if they improve?

BJB2: and would like a reminder about the next meeting

CandyC: Thanks for all the information guys

BJB2: go to the welcome screen above this chat window

TamikaE: yes, thanks again.

HeatherES: this was also very informative

BJB2: scroll down to THIS IS THE GROUP ROOM FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION FORUM

BJB2: click on the green i and JOIN THIS GROUP

HeatherES: thank you for all the new and helpful information

BJB2 . o O (that information will be in your transcripts)

TeresaE: thanks so much for this opportunity, enjoyed it and thanks to all for the good information

BJB2: Thanks, Paul. Hope the medical problems are sorted out

PaulDB: I sometimes think the transcript are just as valuable as the Sessions!!

CandyC: yeah Paul , feel better

TeresaE: yes get well soon Paul and a yes to that

PaulDB: They provide a detailed review of the discussions.

TeresaE: waves

BJB2: The next SPED Forum is on March 20

CandyC: Candy waves, bye ya'll

HeatherES: bye

MaryFT: Tamika...here are some other links for online games related to letter recognition

TamikaE: thanks, Mary

MaryFT: <http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/picturematch/>

BJB2 waves goodnight

TeresaE: I'll mark it on my calendar, thanks Mary

MaryFT: beginning letter sounds, short vowels, and long vowels

BJB2: check out the k to 3 resource room too for lots of great resources

TamikaE: that is great. I will start using that this week. tomorrow is the SDAA test.

TeresaE: sure is I wish them the best and TAKS is tomorrow also

TeresaE: will do

PaulDB: Thanks BJ what a great Session!!

BJB2 smiles. Yes, it was good, Paul

MaryFT: bye y'all

BJB2: thanks for being our fearless leader!

BJB2 hugs Mary goodnight

PaulDB: Bye Mary it was really good to have you with us this evening!!

MaryFT: thanx Paul...great topic...lots of help needed for new teachers in this area

PaulDB: By the way Bridget, when do you do your presentation?

BridgetM: march 20

PaulDB: That means you won't be with us next session?

BridgetM: daytime 10 am.

BridgetM: I get to go to the conference

PaulDB: Well, I wish you the best of luck!!

BridgetM: thanks!

PaulDB: Can you send me a copy of your written remarks after you return?

BridgetM: BJ, we picked a movie to watch until just before 9:00 Freida

BJB2: ahh...did you like it?

BridgetM: hey Paul. I downloaded Snag It to make some screen captures for the presentation

BJB2 . o O (haven't seen Frieda)

PaulDB: I will have to look into that!

BridgetM: oo it was great. Mexican artist

BJB2 nods. Frieda Kahlo

BJB2 . o O (wife of Diego Rivera)

BridgetM: right

PaulDB: Well, I am leaving but glad we had this time together.