

Title of Session: Special Education Forum

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Room: Special Ed Forum Group

BJB2: Welcome to tonight's Special Education Forum.

BJB2: the topic is new SPED teachers in the classroom

BJB2: we usually start all the discussions with introductions. Please let Paul know who his audience is...where you are located and what you teach

BJB2: I'm a teacher in a juvenile correctional facility in Pennsylvania

KarenGo: I am a computer resource teacher in Pasadena CA

PaulDB: I am a retired Correctional Education teacher and administrator.

PaulDB: What is a computer resource teacher Karen?

BJB2 wonders if Karen consults with SPED teachers?

KarenGo: I write and implement computer curriculum for a K-6 school

JeffC used to be a computer resource teacher.

BJB2 waves hi to Sue. We're just finishing up intros

JeffC: My job was supporting the 40 educators and 972 students at a middle school and support two labs.

PaulDB: Do you have much contact with SPED teachers or students?

SusanR used to be Computer Contact Teacher for my school; after that Educational Technology Integrator

KarenGo: We have one SPED class and will add another next year, so I want to plan the best lessons for those classes

PaulDB: So Susan, Jeff and Karen are involved in integrated programming?

BJB2: Alison, can you please introduce yourself to the group?

SusanR nods

PaulDB: By that I mean that software is being developed that integrates across the various classroom activities?

AlisonR: I am a teacher in a self contained class for kids with Autism. My kids are VERY motivated by the computer but I am not using it to its potential.

KarenGo: I don't do programming, I just plan integration lessons

PaulDB: And what do you think is missing from your computer use Alison?

SusanR: I had a student in my lab class last week..he was autistic I believe..had his own Teaching Assistant

SusanR: o O (seemed too be quite engaged)

PaulDB: What resources do you have as part of the planning process Karen?

KarenGo: lots of internet searches

KarenGo: this is my first year and now I am looking to build on what I have done so far

PaulDB: So you have access to the Internet at your site?

PaulDB: Alison, do you have Internet access?

KarenGo: yes, we have internet access in my lab

PaulDB: Is yours open to the students as well as the teachers?

KarenGo: yes

AlisonR: I do - I had 6 computers for 4 kids at the start of hte year but nos I have 4 computers for 5 kids. My trouble is my kids are functioning from basic matching to a grade 2/3 level and trying to find appropriate stuff for such a wide range of skills.

PaulDB: And what kind of security programs are in place?

PaulDB: Karen, what would you suggest to Alison as a source for material?

KarenGo: I just search the internet for the specific topic and grade level

KarenGo: many of the math textbooks have great site with great practice

PaulDB: There is a site identified in the "discussion" section of this forum about material for autistic children.

PaulDB: So you would suggest that each of the textbooks be reviewed to identify possible web sites Karen?

PaulDB: And what is it you want to do in preparation for the next year?

KarenGo: I want to find ways to meet the individual needs of my students using the computer as a tool

PaulDB: Susan, what role did the Teaching Assistant for the child in your lab assume when working on the computer?

PaulDB: What kind of tool Karen?

JeffC: As a computer resource teacher, I created email accounts for the students. One SPED student read at second grade level, and the work they had her doing was from a BASAL reader which she was not interested in. By having her write to her mother (and her mother back), the girl really improved in a short time, because what she was doing was relevant to her life.

AlisonR: hmmm - that is a good idea

PaulDB: I like that Jeff!!

JeffC: That's what you need to find out for your students Karen... the same goes with a severely autistic kid... he was violent... until he was set down in front of a computer.

SusanR left the room (signed off).

JeffC: Well... it's absurd to have a 7th grader working out of a second grader's BASAL reader.

PaulDB: I take it the computer kept his attention?

JeffC: yes Paul

SusanR joined the room.

PaulDB: What kind of program were you using?

PaulDB: Did it require reading or did it have an auditory element?

PaulDB: Could the student look at the screen and hear the instructions regarding the task to be performed?

JeffC: no audio

JeffC: this was a few years ago

JeffC: but the student had an aide.

JeffC: nowadays, yes... I'd recommend using something with audio... and/or something 3D perhaps...

JeffC: there are several ways to go with 3D worlds.

AlisonR: 3D worlds???

PaulDB: Okay, explain one for me please.

JeffC: Yes... <http://sketchup.google.com/>

JeffC: try that on for size

JeffC: have your kids make their own 3D world.

JeffC: Of course, it means you're able to download and install on a school computer... not always an easy task.

PaulDB: Is that a site where the teacher can develop his/her own activity?

JeffC: I haven't run it yet Paul, but I think that is one of the possibilities.

JeffC: I think it's a building program... to create your own... then there is Harvard's MUVEE project.

PaulDB: It would seem to me that using something such as Power Point to create a lesson that could be run on the computer makes good sense. But Power Point is a little passé.

JeffC thinks PowerPoint may be used well... but for the most part is presentational, and what you want is something interactive, right?

JeffC: Although there are ways to make PP interactive, there's a program called "Schoolkit" that does that. <http://www.schoolkit.com>

PaulDB: ASCD just came out with a brief summary of the problems being experienced in the teaching of social studies.

BJB2 . o O (or use iMovie)

BJB2: yes, I read that also, Paul.

BJB2: . o O (NCLB a "thief of time")

PaulDB: I would think that an interactive program would go a long way towards integrating reading, math and social studies.

AlisonR: That is what I am looking for - a way to make things interactive

PaulDB: So Jeff, you have offered two web sites, will they encourage development of interactive programming?

JeffC: well... edclass at schoolkit will

PaulDB: Smithsonian offers a good web site about history, science etc.

JeffC: basically they have constructivist lessons that interact with MS Office...

JeffC: you need Office, and a PC (not Mac)

JeffC: I think it's \$55 for a single license per year, or \$1800 for an entire district... don't quote me on that though.

PaulDB: But a single license is for a single computer or for a single person?

JeffC: I recommend it... especially since most teachers really don't know how to use Word, Powerpoint and Excel (except in very limited ways). So... you get great lessons K-12 on top of improving tech skills. Single computer

JeffC: Either way... they're very flexible and cool there.

JeffC: 1800 for a district sounds like a bargain for a software that you can use for all K-12.

PaulDB: I would agree with that!!

AlisonR: I am in a MAC classroom and I find that so many things are not MAC friendly BUT I also don't know much about MAC as I have Windows at home. Any ideas for MACs?

PaulDB: I have no familiarity with the MAC

BJB2: Mac's have iMovie, Alison

BJB2: which is great for digital storytelling

PaulDB: Is there a site for that BJ?

BJB2: you can combine voice and still pictures or video to create a story.

BJB2 gets a site for digital storytelling

PaulDB: Alison, trying to switch back and forth between two different platforms must be difficult!

SusanR: iphoto as well

SusanR: Garageband for podcasts

PaulDB: And where does one learn about iphoto Susan?

SusanR: the Apple site

AlisonR: I have learned that - it is also difficult as 2 computers are running OS 8.6 and the others are 9.2 so I am finding it difficult to find software. I am just starting my laptop to see if I have iMovie or iPhoto on it.

SusanR: must be running Mac OS X

BJB2: <http://www.storycenter.org/>

BJB2: there is a storytelling group here, Alison. Great resources in the group room

SusanR: Appleworks is quite versatile

BJB2: Storytelling meets on the second Wednesday of the month.

PaulDB: Jeff, what other resources are out there for interactive program development?

JeffC: for special ed in particular or in general?

AlisonR: I am new to Tapped In can you be more specific about this storytelling group.

PaulDB: Special ed in particular, but I would think a general ed site could be used for both.

JeffC: There are a lot of interactive sites... for younger grades, I'd recommend <http://www.pbskids.org> and <http://www.starfall.com>

JeffC: but then I move into nefarious areas like <http://www.neopets.com>

PaulDB: Are the lessons in place or are the elements to be combined?

JeffC: that site can be huge, but most districts filter it because they think the kids "are just playing games."

JeffC: well... when you talk interactive, you push the envelope into the realm of games.

JeffC: and for some reason... educators can't get over the idea that if something is fun... it can't be educational.

PaulDB: Yes, I would think so.

JeffC: yet my son has a stock portfolio that he manages at neopets.

JeffC: where else is he going to learn about managing portfolios? certainly not from school... and certainly not from me!

PaulDB: That gets at the point raised earlier regarding finding what interests the student.

PaulDB: If we can use the interest as the basis for teaching, especially with a computer, much can be achieved.

PaulDB: BJ, can you provide Alison with information about the storytelling group?

JeffC: well... I think that games are what kids want to play... and if they can be made educational... more power to it... try Quest Atlantis some time... although getting an account might be a little tough.

PaulDB: I used to use word find cards that listed specific events in American History. Students would find the events and then were to organize the events chronologically for extra credit.

PaulDB: Not the same thing, but it was a "game" for them.

JeffC: I used to play Jeopardy in History class in 8th grade... loved it... now of course you could use Powerpoint to create a Jeopardy game (templates are available online).

PaulDB: I like that!!

PaulDB: We are a TV society so using that format has a built in comfort level.

PaulDB: In a similar fashion, using the computer with its one-on-one relationship tends to create a little more of that comfort as well.

PaulDB: Alison, have we helped you with some of this discussion?

JeffC: http://www.graves.k12.ky.us/tech/jeopardy_instructions.htm

PaulDB: Thanks!!

JeffC: there's the link to one Jeopardy template with instructions

PaulDB: One could use that format for virtually any of the disciplines.

PaulDB: Vocabulary words in a vocational class, math functions or calculations, science concepts, events in World or American history, etc.

BJB2: our time is about up. Thanks, Paul for leading this discussion!

BJB2: the next SPED will be June 19

BJB2: questions? comments?

SusanR: <http://www.teachers.net/lessons/posts/1895.html>

PaulDB: I have enjoyed this, Jeff you have been a real resource!

JeffC: thanks Paul

AlisonR: Thanks for the help I appreciate hearing the ideas - most are far beyond us but I can bring them down to the level they need to be at.

PaulDB: Susan, will that site give us some interactive development help?

SusanR: precomputer activity

PaulDB: Alison, that might be a good one for your use!

PaulDB: I hope Karen gets that information even though she has already left us.

PaulDB: I look forward to the next forum meeting. I want to learn more about the various web sites that can be used to help teachers develop lessons using computers.

AlisonR: Thanks for an interesting chat, have a lovely evening everyone.

PaulDB: Given the federal governments focus on NCLB and the indicators that all is not going well, maybe it is about time for teachers to take a more active role in determining what should be taught in the classroom.

JeffC: doubtful

PaulDB: Using computers may be the edge we need!

JeffC: I've posted on the NEA Forums about just that Paul... almost *no one responds*.

JeffC: You'd think with 90% of teachers against it, that there'd be an outcry.

PaulDB: Perhaps there is but it is just not very well organized.