

Title of Session: Special Education Forum

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Room: Special Education Forum Group

PaulDB: So what is the difference between Canadian special education programs and US programs?

SusanR thinks

PaulDB: There are a number of researchers in the field of juvenile special education programming from Canada.

PaulDB: I have been reading some of their work as part of my dissertation research.

SusanR: I am only familiar with Spec ed in the primary junior grades

SusanR: and the program is in transition

PaulDB: Okay, now you got me. What are the primary junior grades?

SusanR: the current model of withdrawal has not been successful

SusanR: Grades 1 to 6

PaulDB: Thanks.

PaulDB: What seems to be the problem with the transition approach?

SusanR: inclusion is the ideal at the moment with support from the spec ed teacher

PaulDB: That is a successful program if itinerant teaching is used.

SusanR: however, the classes are too large I believe

PaulDB: The advantage of itinerant teaching is that services can be highly individualized.

SusanR: 16 or so students sometimes in a class

PaulDB: How many students in the classroom?

BJB2: all special needs, Sue?

SusanR: yes

MaureenB joined the room.

BJB2: welcome, Maureen

PaulDB: Are they grouped by age/grade or handicapping condition?

PaulDB: Hello Maureen.

SusanR: grouped by age

MaureenB Waves to all

SusanR: and grade level

DavidWe: Hi, Maureen

MaureenB: hi all

PaulDB: Any sort of pre-school (kindergarten) program in place?

BJB2: do you teach special ed, Maureen?

MaureenB: I am a regular teacher in a collaborative program

PaulDB: How do you practice collaboration?

MaureenB: not well (oops sorry taking my frustration out)

MaureenB: co teach with a SpEd teacher half day and with an aide the other half

PaulDB: Honesty is a virtue!!

PaulDB: Divide the curriculum between you and the teacher?

BJB2: this is a very stressful time of the year for all educators...and especially for SPED

MaureenB: that's the way I do it with this partner I do reading and she does writing

PaulDB: The time between the start and end of the Holiday Season has an effect on learning and retention.

MaureenB: the students' goals are mostly in these areas

DavidWe: In what way, Paul?

PaulDB: There is a need for structure, consistency, re-enforcement of learning in order to promote retention. A two-week period where no academic learning occurs interferes with the structure, consistency and re-enforcement established.

DavidWe: Any ways to deal with that - given that most people take a holiday at this time of year?

PaulDB: There is then a need to review and re-learn that follows the return to school.

MaureenB: and in NY we throw in the ELA assessment the 2nd week back

PaulDB: I personally think that every special education youth ought to be provided with some sort of academic activity to be completed during the break. The lessons to be completed daily and signed off by the parents.

PaulDB: For some kids it will work. Especially those kids whose parents are involved.

DavidWe: Isn't that possible to set up in advance - ESPECIALLY with the parents?

MaureenB: that is the key parent involvement

PaulDB: Every child needs to be provided the opportunity. Not every child will take advantage, but for those that do/will, we owe them that chance.

MaureenB: the student that I have this year the parents have their limits

PaulDB: I am of the opinion that such an approach could be incorporated into the IEP at the time of development.

PaulDB: The IEP serves as the guide for the instructional programming.

PaulDB: There is always the opportunity to include reference to supplemental instruction when a student is absent or out for approved reasons. I could see the break as an "excused" absence for this purpose.

SusanR listens intently

PaulDB: In the broadest possible sense, the absence from the school program could be considered a "change of placement".

PaulDB: What would we do if the child was confined to a hospital or to his/her home due to illness?

MaureenB: they would get tutoring at home or in hospital

PaulDB: We would provide additional supplemental material that paralleled what was going on in the classroom during the absence.

MaureenB: less time than school

PaulDB: That is why I am suggesting that we involve the parents.

DavidWe: This may sound naive, but don't the parents HAVE to be involved?

PaulDB: Well there is "involved" and there is involvement.

DavidWe nods

PaulDB: Where we sometimes lose out is we fail to ensure that the parents understand what we are doing with their child in the classroom.

PaulDB: Sometimes we forget what it is we are trying to do in the classroom.

PaulDB: Maureen is correct when she talks about tutoring albeit less time. But parents have a unique opportunity to interact with their child.

BJB2: often, parents are overwhelmed by the sped procedures and jargon

PaulDB: Yes!!

BJB2 . o O (and dealing with siblings and working and survival skills)

PaulDB: But that is our fault for not taking the time or making the effort to avoid obfuscating the process.

MaureenB: I have gotten myself in trouble with admin because I have explained the procedures, jargon and the flat out reality

PaulDB: All we want is for the youth to read. It matters not what he reads but that he reads.

PaulDB: We want him to learn his math facts, are there not some things we could provide to help both the child and his/her parents to improve their math skills?

MaureenB: the fun thing like song and games

PaulDB: Maureen has a half day with a teacher and a half day with an aide. She cannot do everything that she wants to do, feels she ought to do, or believes needs to be done.

PaulDB: Parents can do much to enhance what goes on in the classroom.

PaulDB: Songs and games are a great way to involve a number of people at the same time.

MaureenB: that is the feeling school wide. There is so much reading and writing in the content areas and all content areas are now tested

PaulDB: It is a form of re-enforcement.

PaulDB: That is the bugaboo. We respect what we inspect(test).

PaulDB: For special education kids it is more about getting along and surviving than demonstrated performance on a test.

MaureenB: I accept that reality but NCLB does not

PaulDB: So the question becomes how do we blend the two?

MaureenB: elect a new president and maybe some new state regents

BJB2: re-evaluate how to assess the child?

PaulDB: I like the way you think!!

DavidWe smiles

MaureenB: BJ for president

BJB2: blech..no thanks!

PaulDB: Assessment is central to the entire process.

DavidWe didn't think Bj would go for the security detail

PaulDB: Paul agrees

BJB2 agrees with Paul

BJB2 . o O (about assessment)

BJB2: There is a Classroom Assessment discussion on the second Thursday of the month...it's pretty good

BJB2: I'm not sure if special needs are included, but we could suggest that

PaulDB: The type of assessment used to identify the educationally handicapping condition and the type of assessment used to measure learning also dictate the type of learning opportunities provided.

BJB2: or perhaps you would like to make assessment a topic for the January discussion, Paul?

PaulDB: That would be good!!

PaulDB: Is it that time already?

BJB2 nods sadly

BJB2: The next SPED discussion will be January 15

PaulDB: We didn't talk about technology this time but I hope the discussion has been interesting.

PaulDB: I have enjoyed. it.

DavidWe: yes, Paul, it has been interesting

BJB2: your discussions are always interesting, Paul

MaureenB: would like to hear more about technology next time. Thanks for listening to my frustrations

PaulDB: Susan, I hope you and Maureen will be with us in January.

MaureenB: I'll put it on my calendar now

BJB2: Maureen, it's important to be able to share frustrations! We all experience that from time to time

SusanR: I will be away during the latter part of the month.

BJB2: sharing is an important part of a community

BJB2 waves goodnight. I'll see you in January, Paul

DavidWe: Thanks, Paul

SusanR: Thanks Paul

BJB2: best wishes for the holidays and happy new year

SusanR: . This was beneficial

PaulDB: Yes you will as long as the creek doesn't rise and nothing happens to either of us in the interim.

SusanR: Holiday wishes to all and to all a good night

PaulDB: To you and yours as well!!

BJB2 hands Paul an inflatable raft