

Title of Session: Special Education Forum
Moderator: Paul Bohac
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Room: Special Education Forum Group

BjB: Welcome to this month's Special Education Forum

BjB: Paul is our discussion leader. We usually start all Tapped In discussions with introductions.

BjB: please tell Paul what you teach or hope to teach and what interests you about the topic

JoanieP: Hello Paul

JadeRHB: I think I told you before I am interested in integrating the curriculum and best ways to assess through this method of teaching

PaulDB: That is a good reason for participating in this forum!

JoanieP: I am still a Student at the University. I plan on teaching High School English, but I am still indecisive in teaching ESL

PaulDB: Well Joanie, why not do both?

JoanieP: I am getting mixed signals of it in the area I live at

JoanieP: Many educators tell me not to.

PaulDB: The fact is that with the push for "inclusion" you are likely to have several different kinds of ESE kids in your regular classroom.

PaulDB: Where do you live?

JoanieP: McAllen Texas

JoanieP: Deep South Texas

BjB agrees with Paul. ESL will expand your employability options

JoanieP smiles

PaulDB: Most assuredly!!

PaulDB: Regardless of the area of your certification, acquiring the skills to be able to effectively communicate with students is essential.

JoanieP: Yes I can see that need for it.

PaulDB: If you can help the students learn how to communicate more effectively with their teachers, you have a win-win situation.

JadeRHB: very true

PaulDB: Here in Florida, there is a requirement that all teachers receive some sort of on-going training in ESL regardless of certification.

BjB . o O (should also include sped!)

BjB . o O (in my humble opinion ;-))

PaulDB: The increase in the number of immigrants has forced that kind of requirement.

JadeRHB: I teach in a trilingual school in Quebec, the students' first language is French, we teach in English they also have French and Spanish

PaulDB: I also agree with BJ that there should be some sort of requirement for training in the basic characteristics of the various ESE kids who are being mainstreamed.

DavidWe: Tres bien, Jade!

JadeRHB: Merci

PaulDB: Hello Susan

JoanieP: Yes I do agree, I study a bit of sign language just in case I needed it in the near future.

PaulDB: Let's talk a little bit about integrating curriculums.

PaulDB: Who wants to start?

JoanieP: and I have taken a few classes on Special Education on my own

JadeRHB: I've been reading about various methods of integration

PaulDB: See, you are already heading down the right path Joanie!

JadeRHB: I'm going to implement a practicum in the new year, and I'm trying to decide which approach to take

PaulDB: And what has your reading suggested Jade?

PaulDB: What approaches have you considered and why?

JadeRHB: I originally thought a thematic approach would be sufficient but now I'm not so sure

PaulDB: What are the advantages of a thematic approach?

JadeRHB: Well, it's a sure way to touch on every subject I want to but my concern is that it will be surface level learning

JadeRHB: I am leaning towards a transdisciplinary approach where the students are really involved in the decisions of how the unit will go

PaulDB: And what kind of instructional strategies are you planning to implement?

PaulDB: For example, are you planning to use a cooperative learning group?

JadeRHB: I thought to begin with I would have the students bring something to school that they learned or heard about over their summer, live earth or the advertising for the Olympics were two ideas that spring to mind

JadeRHB: From there, we would discuss the topics in teams and find out what we would like to know more about, the links within our communities and the world

PaulDB: And what instructional objectives are to be accomplished?

JadeRHB: I really want to have a global connection

JadeRHB: Well, I'm not that far ahead yet. essential skills such as information gathering and reporting are two obvious objectives

ChristinS4 joined the room.

PaulDB: Hello Christine

PaulDB: For what grade or age level?

ChristinS4: Hi!

ChristinS4: 5th Grade Inclusion

PaulDB: Well, you might want to consider the KWL as part of the starting process.

JadeRHB: Oh yes, that would come a little later when we've decided on our focus

JadeRHB: From there I want to have the students work in small groups and use the inquiry process to complete their...well, whatever we decide to do

PaulDB: Guess what I am trying to elicit from you is some idea of where you want the process to go.

JadeRHB: The latest reading I read talked about not planning ahead...that is a scary thought

BjB: there was an interesting global project posted to the Reception discussion board....please pardon the interruption, Paul

This summer for my master's degree I need to find teachers who want to participate in a networked project in junior high Geography. The project is about finding products from around the world and analyzing where most of the products are found. My website is - <http://students.ed.uiuc.edu/bjmoore2/products/productsaroundtheworld.html>

JadeRHB: My main goal is for the students to work cooperatively

JadeRHB: scaffolding each others learning'

PaulDB: Yes it would be Jade. But there has to be a pre-determined set of instructional objectives to guide you in your efforts.

ChristinS4: Working cooperatively doesn't always work the way you want it to, unless you have set instructions or jobs for each of the children in the group

JadeRHB: I am a bit unsure of how to not-plan but have pre-determined objectives

JadeRHB: That's another thing we'll be working on, working cooperatively

PaulDB: Okay, now based on what you have thus far presented, see if you can put it all together so that you can create a "picture" for yourself.

PaulDB: Many times the reference to "not plan" is a guide to the teacher as a way to avoid teacher direction instead of student focused learning.

PaulDB: As Christine said, planning for cooperative learning activities is essential for the approach to be successful.

JadeRHB: I know I want to have transactional writing links, math links and science links, it's hard to know where it will go without knowing what we are going to be

studying, I feel if I make those decisions now, I'll fall right back into teacher directed learning. I

PaulDB: How you organize the groups, how tasks within the group are structured, the setting of timeframes for completion of tasks and so on.

JadeRHB: In the first two weeks of school we focus closely on working together. I want to use this time to practice working together on activities like jigsaw activities

ChristinS4: Establish the links now, as resources but you have to consider what the final goal for the students will be and let them know what it is they have to ultimately accomplish

PaulDB: Well said Christine!

JadeRHB: Again, the readings I've read so far suggest that the students have input on all of these points....trust me, I'm worried about successfully letting go of the reins

ChristinS4: You're not totally letting go and allowing chaos

JadeRHB: I foresee a final presentation on certain aspects of the topic presented by each group

JadeRHB: I am also fortunate to have just 14 students

PaulDB: Well then maybe you could re-think the project, and focus on the process while leaving the product as a yet to be determined.

ChristinS4: Why don't you establish your lesson plan in a google doc, then next time we meet, invite us into the doc and we'll help you tweak it.

JadeRHB: The process is important as I discovered I wasn't teaching through cooperative learning as I thought I was

PaulDB: Since you want to promote cooperation then your evaluation would include measures to determine presence, absence or quality of individual cooperation.

JadeRHB: Yes, I expect to use peer and self evaluations as well as informal observations

JadeRHB: I thought about using journaling as a means of assessment

BjB: depends on what you're assessing

BjB: journaling requires a number of skills

ChristinS4: Journaling is a wonderful tool if the students are interested (and capable)

JadeRHB: Thanks Christine, that's a good idea...I'm not sure what you mean by a google.doc though

ChristinS4: You have to go into google - type google docs and play.. just like using Microsoft word

BjB : but the document is online

ChristinS4: Our students were not so excited about journaling until we started blogging

JoanieP: oh I did not know this exists.

JadeRHB: I'm expecting to teach writing skills at the same time so I should see progress

JadeRHB: Oh, thanks, I'll write that down

ChristinS4: and people besides us actually commented back.

ChristinS4: Us (being my co-teacher & I)

JadeRHB: That's a good idea

JadeRHB: where do the students keep their blogs

JadeRHB: do they have access at home and at school?

ChristinS4: Blogging was a good motivator b/c they had a reason for spelling words correctly, using correct punctuation, etc. At least 75 percent of the time LOL

ChristinS4: http://classblogmeister.com/blog.php?blogger_id=88116

JadeRHB: I didn't consider it, I really like the idea

JadeRHB: Thanks

JoanieP: Christine, do your students use a computer while in class or do you have a lab they attend?

BjB : another option is wiki. There is a K12 Teachers Wiki group here in Tapped In

BjB : wiki is more interactive

ChristinS4: We have computers in our classroom and a lap top cart

JoanieP: this is amazing

JadeRHB: lucky

ChristinS4: I'm going to try and play on tapped in next Saturday, so I can see how it works here

JoanieP: Our area is a poor area, we have labs, and they are tough to get into.

JoanieP: Sorry for getting out of topic

JadeRHB: we have a lab, it doesn't always get much use

ChristinS4: That's why I'm playing with the technology this summer so I know how to use the stuff

PaulDB: Joanie, access to the labs is not "out of topic" since such access is critical to the ability to implement what we have been discussing.

JadeRHB: I find it hard to monitor everything the students are doing

ChristinS4: We have to approve everything (on the blog site) before everything goes online

PaulDB: As an old prison teacher, I would suggest that you look at the physical arrangement of the monitors.

BjB: Jade, an option you might want to think about is creating a K-12 Student Group in Tapped in

ChristinS4: our school district also has a firewall and a lot of sites are blocked

BjB: . o O (it's a safe and secure place for your students)

ChristinS4: thanks BJ - I'm going to really try to visit this weekend to take the tour

BjB: if you'd like to learn more about the K-12 Student Campus, Jeff Cooper leads a discussion every Saturday

JoanieP: yes I was about to ask if your campus had any sites blocked since the students have access to the internet.

BjB: great, Christine

ChristinS4: I think technology is crucial for our classified students to be successful

DavidWe agrees

PaulDB: Yes!!

ChristinS4: <http://classroom20.ning.com/group/technologyinspecialeducation>

JadeRHB: Thanks I'll look into it

ChristinS4: I set up a group to discuss it in ning - but it doesn't really get too much action

JoanieP: Of course, we are in the technology age, and unfortunately many students do not know how to use or access it

PaulDB: Not only to facilitate learning but also to develop potential work skills for future employment opportunities.

ChristinS4: I agree

BjB nods to Paul

ChristinS4: This past year was the first year - I went tech crazy with my students

JoanieP smiles

ChristinS4: and to be honest - it really paid off

DavidWe wonders what "tech crazy" means

ChristinS4: Requiring students to get e-mail addresses

DavidWe smiles

ChristinS4: connecting to students & parents via our class web site

ChristinS4: blogging

JadeRHB: I used a lot of technology with my grade 2 class...and not so much with the following years grade 4

DavidWe congratulates Christine for getting "tech crazy"

ChristinS4: podcasting (super for working on fluency skills)

ChristinS4: Thanks David :)

JoanieP: when you got your students to get e-mail address, was it out of the school website or did they open one up with MSN or Hotmail?

DavidWe smiles

ChristinS4: next year - we're hoping to start video-conferencing with other classes

DavidWe . o O (get them google email (gmail.com) accounts)

JadeRHB: safety is so important, as is proper use

JoanieP: is that a secure site to use for e-mail in a classroom?

JoanieP: especially with young children to young adults?

DavidWe: secure in what way, Joanie?

ChristinS4: They all had different e-mail providers last year, but this year we're looking into common accounts via google or something else

SusanR: try epals for secure accounts

ChristinS4: Thanks for the tip

DavidWe agrees with Susan

ChristinS4: The technology engages the kids

PaulDB: And what is "epals"?

ChristinS4: The technology connects the students

DavidWe: <http://www.epals.org/>

JoanieP: Well, I am not much a computer person, and I do not want to put my class in any harms way, such as on line predators able to gain access to my students' accounts.

ChristinS4: That I can understand and I won't argue

JadeRHB: Our policy is if something pops up we x it and tell the teacher

ChristinS4: But my co-teacher and I have discussed it with the kids and the parents, and each other

JadeRHB: The students are pretty respectful

ChristinS4: that we're comfortable with using the tools

JadeRHB: most of them...

DavidWe: The trick is to teach students to behave "appropriately"

JoanieP: I kind of looked into what TI offers, and so far I am liking what I am seeing. I plan to use this once I start teaching

DavidWe: we teach driver education and a teenager can do a lot of damage with an automobile

ChristinS4: true

DavidWe smiles

JadeRHB: It comes back to the classroom society I think, if they treat each other and their learning with respect then they're more inclined to behave well

ChristinS4: technology in special education = success

JadeRHB: do you think it's possible to assess a science objective and a language arts objective in tandem?

DavidWe: YES!

JoanieP: Really Christine

DavidWe: writing about science is SO important - explaining technical subjects clearly

JoanieP: I have not see technology used in special ed. in our area. I would of never thought of it

BjB : I just posted a link on that topic in the science group and the art of storytelling group!

DavidWe smiles

ChristinS4: Graphic organizers in science are cool

DavidWe appreciates Bj's timely comment

JadeRHB: I'll take a look

PaulDB: Yes they are and they can be used for development of lesson plans or instructional activities that incorporates several lesson plans.

BjB : <http://serc.carleton.edu/teacherprep/resources/activities/storytelling.html>

ChristinS4 : Super!

BjB : this is going to be ugly, but it's the scout report that showed this link:

BjB : Science has many compelling and fascinating stories, and thinking about teaching science through the use of narratives can be a rewarding idea for educators. This particular classroom exercise was peer-reviewed by participants at the 2007 Preparing Teachers to Teach Earth Science Workshop at Carleton College, and was authored by B.R. Bickmore and D.A. Grandy of Brigham Young University. The exercise is designed to help students gain a more sophisticated conception of the nature of science as well as to help students become more able to critically and insightfully address science-religion conflict. The site contains further teaching notes and tips, learning goals, and the actual essay that is used in this particular exercise. [KMG]

ChristinS4 : What a great idea!

ChristinS4 : I'm sure we could blog science stories

PaulDB : There is an example of an integrated curriculum issue Jade.

ChristinS4 : I love it

JadeRHB : ooh, that's a good idea, I really need to get into this blogging business

PaulDB : Actually it is more like "virtual learning" if it is handled, structured, monitored and managed well.

BjB : this is a blog I use with my students <http://voicesfromloysville.blogspot.com/>

PaulDB : The role of the teacher is not diminished by the use of technology but is in fact greatly enhanced.

ChristinS4 : I agree

ChristinS4 : Don't be scared of the technology - play and learn (come to tapped in on July 25)

JadeRHB : There are so many possible avenues, I really need to decide on the approach I will take. I think planning the unit with less student input is less challenging and will possibly feel more successful for me but I really would like the challenge of increased power sharing

BjB looks at the clock on the wall

JadeRHB: I'll try and have made a final decision by the next conference, and perhaps I could trouble you all for more advice

JoanieP: LOL

PaulDB: Teachers structure the activities in which the students are encouraged to pursue.

BjB: The next SPED discussion will be on August 20

ChristinS4: Great chatting w/ you all :)

BjB: please join the group

JoanieP: This was really useful for me.

BjB: Thanks for all your eager participation!

JoanieP: Thank you all

PaulDB: It has certainly been informative this evening!

BjB: thanks for leading the discussion Paul

DavidWe: Thanks, Paul, for leading the discussion

ChristinS4: Super Duper - Special Education Teachers ROCK!

JadeRHB: Thanks to you all

JoanieP: Night you guys, I got to get off already,

JadeRHB: Have a good evening everyone

JoanieP: Thank you again

DavidWe waves bye

DavidWe: Ciao, folks

SusanR: thanks all

PaulDB: Thank you all for your participation this evening!!

PaulDB: Jade, we look forward to your participation next month.

PaulDB: By BJ thanks for keeping us on task this evening.

BjB waves bye to Paul. Take care and tell LaVaughn hi from me