

Title of Session: Alt/Correctional Education Forum

Moderator: BJ Berquist

Title of File: 20070719altcorrectionaled

Date: July 19, 2007

Room: Alt/Correctional Ed Forum Group

BJB2: We usually start all Tapped In discussions with introductions. Please tell me where you are located and what you teach and if you are involved in alternative or correctional ed

BJB2: I teach in a male juvenile correctional facility in Pennsylvania

BJB2: . o O (and if you haven't figured it out, I'm leading this discussion ;-))

PattyGst1: I live in WV, I teach in a very small school, Sand Fork Elementary, regular ed. I am here because of a class assignment...I am working on my master's in technology intergr. instruction

BJB2: do you have inclusion in your classes, Patty?

PattyGst1: yes... full inclusion

BJB2: ok...so that might be a connection to alternative ed

PattyGst1: the school is a PreK-sixth grade

BarryJ: I'm in Palmer, Alaska. Principal of a brand new school for former residential students, SED students too extreme for their current program and long term suspended kids w/ disabilities. K-12

BJB2: most important grades for identifying at risk students, Patty

PattyGst1: the earlier the better...

BJB2: thanks, Barry. You can probably teach us a thing or three!

PattyGst1: we start working with at risk students in preschool

BJB2: great, Patty. Do you find a lot of parental involvement?

PattyGst1: actually we have a birth to three program that addresses this also

BJB2: wonders if Barry does any work with parents or families

BarryJ: It's a start up program for our district - we're going for it!

PattyGst1: yes,

BJB2: great...I have a super resource for you, Barry, that I got some information from at the CEA conference

PattyGst1: the birthstart program requires parents/caregivers to bring the child to the school twice a month

BJB2: Are your teachers members of CEA, Barry?

JeffC: cool Patty, do you have a url for that?

PattyGst1: for what

BarryJ: CEA? more info

JeffC: birthstart program

BJB2: CEA = Correctional Education Association

PattyGst1: it was a grant that was written for our county.. but I will have some resources for you later... that is what I am doing my capstone assessment on

JeffC: excellent!

PattyGst1: early intervention for econ. disadvantaged children

BarryJ: Thanks. Re: CEA, Not yet, but I have Anchorage area contact and will probably join.

PattyGst1: Jeff where do you work

BJB2: good, Barry.

BJB2: maybe you can be a guest speaker for this discussion in the future, Patty ;-)

PattyGst1: Barry, and BJ did either of you ever work in regular ed

BJB2: Barry, take a look at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/titlepartd/index.html>

JeffC: I don't know how long I can stay today... but I wanted to throw in my own little project (which I'm in the foundation stage of getting participants). In a nutshell: Speech to text and text to speech in K-6, SPED, ESL, visual/audio impaired and yes, correctional ed classrooms. I'd like to put together a professional team and go for a Gates foundation

grant to see the impact of regularly using that (either through the Vista interface, or Dragon Naturally Speaking) and see the impact on motivation, production, etc.

PattyGst1: ask me in December and you have a deal...

BJB2: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youths Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At Risk

PattyGst1: is there a link to this

BJB2: one of the programs that was highlighted during the CEA Conference was family involvement

BJB2: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/titleipartd/index.html>

BarryJ: I taught 3rd grade for 4 yrs - loved it.

PattyGst1: thanks... I can use this for Capstone

PattyGst1: why did you make the switch

BJB2: here's the resources page... <http://www.ed.gov/programs/titleipartd/resources.html>

BJB2: they have a listserv that you might want to subscribe to

BJB2: what switch, Patty?

PattyGst1: thanks....

PattyGst1: again... got confused... sorry...

PattyGst1: I need to pay attention Adult ADD

JeffC: There is a group here for that Patty.

JeffC: actually several.

PattyGst1: I lost the H this week...I could use the hyper part now..

JeffC: AALPD is one, and GED-Projects is another.

JeffC: Anyhow... I have to run... hungry children.

BarryJ: Started as sped teacher in 82, took a break between '96 and 2000 to do reg ed (had the degree). Good job opened up back in sped that I wanted.

JeffC: Nice meeting you all>>> I hope you register here Patty and come back often.

PattyGst1: nice meeting you Jeff

BJB2: great, Barry. There is a good SPED group in Tapped In also...

JeffC is afk (please consider becoming involved with Speech to Text... I'll be meeting this Saturday from 10-11a.m).

BJB2: led by a former correctional educator...

BJB2: Paul's perspective is in the latest Tapped In newsletter

PattyGst1: if you become a member do you have access to the newsletter

BJB2: yes, Patty

BJB2: it is emailed to you

PattyGst1: okay

JacquiS joined the room.

BJB2: however, you can also access the newsletters from the Tapped In homepage at www.tappedin.org

BJB2 waves hi to Jacqui

BJB2: Barry, one last piece of advice for you...seek out Rhea Bowman

BJB2: she's in Alaska and is very active in CEA

BarryJ: She's the Anch contact..

BJB2 . o O (I know Alaska is a very big state)

BJB2: oh, cool!

BJB2: perfect.

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

BJB2: Patty is here for a course requirement and Barry is principal at a new alternative school in Alaska

JacquiS: Sure! I am a school administrator at an adult male facility in the state of Ohio

BJB2 . o O (did I get that correct, Barry?)

BarryJ: Right, and I'm supposed to tell Bj that I'm a friend of Leo LaBarge

JacquiS: BJ, is there anyone you don't know in the field?

BJB2 grins...any friend of Leo's is a friend of mine, Barry!

BJB2: lots of people, Jacqui ;-)

BJB2: but I've been doing stuff in Tapped In for almost 10 years and been involved in CEA for 24 years...

BJB2: and both communities are pretty finite

JacquiS: Patty, what type of requirement are you here for?

BJB2 . o O (you keep running into the same people)

BJB2 wonders if Patty fell asleep at the keyboard?

PattyGst1: I needed to observe a on line community and write a summary on it purpose, how you become involved...etch

JacquiS: May I ask for what school?

PattyGst1: Salem Un. West Virginia

BJB2: so, since Patty works for a public elementary school, we had focused the early part of the discussion on identifying at risk students

JacquiS: That's how I became familiar with this site. I'm taking the same course!

BJB2 smiles...another small world example!

PattyGst1: how many other hours do you have this semester

JacquiS: We also deal with at risk students at my facility

JacquiS: this summer I am taking 18

JacquiS: I'm crazy!!!

PattyGst1: altogether I have 41

BJB2: as adults, Jacqui? or do you bring in juveniles?

PattyGst1: I am the crazy one

JacquiS: Strictly adults. There was a case a few years ago where we had a 17 year old sentenced as an adult

JacquiS: Patty, what program are you studying?

BJB2 nods. Kind of late to identify that person as at risk!

PattyGst1: Administration and Technol. interg.

BJB2: Barry, you work with juveniles?

JacquiS: I think more focus needs to be placed on the identification of the at risk students. At this point we only service those below the age of 22. Once they reach 22, they receive no additional services. That wonderful funding thing again!

BarryJ: yes, but part of my school works with 19-22 YO students - community based

PattyGst1: once they turn 22 then what...

JacquiS: Do you get to go out into the community or just contact within your institution, Barry?

BJB2: great, Barry. I firmly believe that more needs to be done at Patty's end...preschool and elementary

JacquiS: Suddenly they're free of their disability! An overnight cure!

BJB2: that's the age where an at risk child will start to fall through the cracks

PattyGst1: like you... limited funds... we don't even have a counselor

BJB2 smiles sadly at the miracle cure

JacquiS: We share two counselors with 36 institutions

PattyGst1: I bet that works well....right??

BarryJ: Hopefully they're in contact w/ support agencies and in a good living situation - but we really can't force anything.

JacquiS: Fortunately, I have a special ed teacher on staff who does go above and beyond to assist even those he technically isn't required to assist

BJB2: just as it takes a village to raise a child...it takes more than counselors to help at risk children and adults

JacquiS: I also try to find educated offenders to work with these students within their housing units.

BJB2: you have to have the collaboration of all adults in the student's life...family, teachers, vocational ed

PattyGst1: we do the same thing.... the staff has certain students that each of us take a special interest in... check in with them... ask them about their day....small things... but it is the little things that count

BJB2: great, Jacqui

JacquiS: There is only so much that can be done during the day and it seems like evenings and week-ends allows for more time for the students to gain skills

BJB2 agrees with Patty...sometimes just showing that there is someone who cares can help

BJB2: Barry, what does your institution focus on? Education, rehab? lifeskills?

PattyGst1: we are a small school, 135 kids... we can stay in close contact

JacquiS: It's the same in the public. Only so much a teacher or counselor can do in the day. You have to pray the parents see the benefit of education

JacquiS: Patty, I bet that is a great working environment!

PattyGst1: it is...

BarryJ: Behavioral/social skills. Academics are not as important

PattyGst1: very few problems...

BJB2 nods to Barry.

JacquiS: BJ, what do you do in your institution to identify the at risk students?

BJB2: I think that many correctional educators underestimate the power of being a positive role model

JacquiS: Please don't say academics are not important, but maybe not the primary focus...

BJB2: Jacqui, once the students enter our institution, they are no longer at risk...they done been locked up!

BarryJ: BJ, what qualities do you look for in employees for at risk kids?

BJB2 adjusts her new bifocals

BJB2: positive role models who strive to show the student how to be successful in an educational setting

PattyGst1: it goes back to survival... kids need the basic needs before education can take place

BJB2: yes, Patty, that is true (Masland's Hierarchy?)

BarryJ: Please understand - academics are important, but secondary to the behaviors and therapeutic interventions

BJB2: but social skills are an issue too...especially when parents are not available or are locked up themselves

BJB2 nods to Barry

JacquiS: Today we were training tutors to work within our classrooms to assist students individually. One trainee spoke up saying how he thought he could act as a role model to the younger students who do not see a need for an education. He said this because he is a violent offender at the age of 22 (gang member). He spent most of his life in a juvenile facility, saw no need for an education and decided one day that his way wasn't working so he thought he'd try it ours. He ended up getting his GED

JacquiS: He was released, did nothing with it, now he's incarcerated as an adult.

BJB2: recidivism is a major problem...

PattyGst1: do you ever feel like you are in an endless cycle?

JacquiS: Now he is working on the behavioral and social aspect and he believes he can do this by learning how to work with others.

BJB2: part of the problem starts when the individual is returned to the same environment from which he came...

BarryJ: We get that

JacquiS : So I guess my point is, that sometimes the academics come easier and they see that as an accomplishment and that becomes the foundation for the behavioral aspect

BJB2: and part of the problem is that even with vocational training or job skills and GED, the transition aspect is not in place

JacquiS : I am very big on accomplishments. most of our offenders have not had many in their lives and have little to be proud of.

PattyGst1: thank you for letting me be a part of the discussion... I will be back.. I am going to join.. I believe this community has a lot of resources and advise that will help me...

BJB2: I see your point, Jacqui...the education is very important, if for no other reason than to prove that the individual can learn and change

JacquiS : I try to celebrate what they have changed and what they can do rather than what they need to do...they already know their faults

BJB2: great, Patty! Nice meeting you

PattyGst1: nice meeting all of you...

JacquiS : see you in class!

BJB2: knowing your weaknesses doesn't always mean that you can overcome them by yourself

PattyGst1: okay

JacquiS : exactly!

BarryJ: I'm new here too - want to stay in touch with this.

BJB2: Transition/Reentry is a big buzzword in corrections

BJB2: Barry, did you join this group?

BarryJ: Yes, I'm a member

BJB2 . o O (joining a group subscribes you to the discussion board)

JacquiS : That's what correctional employees need to realize (not just the educational employees) they need to be a support system, not just a disciplinarian!

BJB2: so you'll get reminders of the discussions...If I remember to post them ;-)

JacquiS: I have really started to hate that word...Re-Entry!!!

BJB2 nods solemnly to Jacqui

JacquiS: I feel it's talked about more than implemented!

BJB2: Jacqui, there is a new CEA Special Ed group that was created at the international conference

JacquiS: go on...

BJB2: lots of discussion...as a matter of fact, I screened the documentary A Hard Straight as one of the workshops

BJB2: and then we had a terrific discussion on what we as correctional educators can do

JacquiS: It's probably a way to get more state and federal funding (sarcasm)

BJB2 rolls her eyes....many of the aftercare support comes from faith based organizations

JacquiS: That's how we get most of our community support!

JacquiS: Do you have community circles?

BJB2: you have to get the community involved...because the inmates will be returning to those communities

BJB2: not familiar with community circles...please say more

BarryJ: My 2 19-22 year old programs are based out of churches - no other facilities available.

BJB2: churches are very supportive...thank goodness!

JacquiS: Some of our more metropolitan areas have them. I think it's easier for them to get the community involvement. When you are in a rural area, the community doesn't want to help the offenders. They just want to be as far away from them as possible. Ignorance plays a huge role in that. Community circles are finding community partnerships for the inmate to rely on when he is released. It's a support system he becomes familiar with toward the end of this incarceration and can continue meeting with monthly to help assist him in his "re-entry"

BJB2: that sounds great, Jacqui

JacquiS: It may have someone in a faith based community, someone to assist with jobs and housing, someone to assist with familial aspects, if he has a drug or alcohol problem, someone to assist there...whatever areas he needs support is what makes up the circle

BJB2 cheers for Jacqui..yes, it is a circle of support that is needed

BJB2 . o O (if we don't want to serve as a revolving door for our residents...)

BJB2: although some people are not able to survive on their own...anyone familiar with A Hard Straight?

JacquiS: What is your recidivism rate?

BJB2 . o O (great documentary to share with inmates or residents to start a dialogue)

JacquiS: No. Can you give a brief overview?

BJB2 gets a url

BJB2: <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/hardstraight/>

BJB2: that site gives a good overview

BarryJ: newbie question- does this discussion stay posted for a bit?

BJB2: the director of the documentary, Goro Toshima, was a guest speaker during one of these Alt/correctional Ed discussions

BJB2: Barry, when you log out you will get a transcript of our text chat in your email

BarryJ: perfect

BJB2: and all events on the calendar are edited and archived at www.tappedin.org/transcripts

JacquiS: We have had representatives from Parents of Murdered Children, MADD, and other organizations come and speak to the inmates. Very tough...

BJB2: that would be tougher on me than on our students, I think

BJB2: something that I can not quite comprehend, even after all these years...is that our students do not think as we do...

JacquiS: It is. I just sat there and cried at the last group who came in and spoke. But it's important for an offender to see the results of his crime.

BJB2: they have had completely different life experiences

BarryJ: Very true -

JacquiS: Yes, they have and they can't comprehend our lives any more than we can comprehend theirs

BJB2: the gang issue is a piece of the puzzle that is also difficult to deal with

JacquiS: However, if we can instill that they need to make a change...maybe they will

JacquiS: I think a lot of it just goes back to poverty

JacquiS: and the need for acceptance

BJB2: if we can give them a reason to make a change..not just a need to make a change

JacquiS: Some of the offenders had no acceptance by a parent or family member and seek that tie wherever they can find it

JacquiS: That's why gangs become so powerful

BJB2: why would a dealer who makes tons of money want to get some kind of minimum wage job?

JacquiS: Because he learns quickly to hate the lifestyle of a prison

BarryJ: I'm working against environmental and psychological factors for the most part

JacquiS: Can't make any money while incarcerated

BJB2: ok...Jacqui and Barry...you've brought up a lot of stuff that there is no way we can resolve in a one hour discussion...

JacquiS: I'm sorry, in Ohio they make \$18/mth, but now court costs and child support are being deducted from that

BJB2: one thing we can always do is point out why our residents fail...

BarryJ: Been great! Thanks for the forum!

BJB2: I'd like to work on what makes our residents successful and what helps us to survive the emotional stress

JacquiS: that's a good one!

BJB2: Our next discussion is on August 16

JacquiS: Sounds good!

BarryJ: So what time next month?

BJB2: I hope you can join us then and we'll tackle some of those issues. 9pm EDT/6pm PDT

BJB2: is that a good time for you, Barry?

JacquiS: I'll see you again soon! I am so glad I found out about tapped in!

JacquiS: Have a good night everyone!

BJB2 smiles. Great, Jacqui! I'm glad too

BarryJ: Yep, works good

BJB2: good, Barry. Thanks for your input ...excellent

BJB2 waves goodnight.

BarryJ: goodnight

BJB2: hopefully the new CEA lists will be up by then I can show them to you