

Title of Session: Alt/Correctional Ed Forum

Moderator: BJ Berquist

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Room: Alt/Correctional Ed Group

BJB2: what interested you in this discussion, Maria?

MariaPa: well, I don't know what do you mean by alternate/correctional education is it for at risk students?

BJB2: yes, it's for at risk students

MariaPa: that's what I thought. I would like to know what works with these students since so many children come from different situations and they can be helped if you only know how, I think.

BJB2: you will find that there are many resources in this group room to help you if you work with at risk children

BJB2: you'll see that there is an At Risk children folder under Featured Items

MariaPa: okay thanks, I'll look into it.

BJB2: one group I especially recommend is NAREN

BJB2: <http://www.atriskeducation.net/>

BJB2: where are you located, Maria?

MariaPa: I am in Brooklyn, New York.

BJB2: ahhh...tons of great programs in New York!

BJB2: many are arts related

BJB2: . o O (mural arts, youth arts)

BJB2: I assume you are familiar with Rikers?

MariaPa: great, I'll look into everything.

MariaPa: Rikers Island the prison? yes.

BJB2: <http://youthportraits.org/>

MariaPa: what is that? are these education websites for at risk students?

BJB2: youthportraits is a series of short documentaries done by young adults who were incarcerated at Rikers

MariaPa: okay

BJB2: Create Now is based in California, but you might look around and see if there are comparable programs in NYC <http://www.createnow.org/>

BJB2: create now draws on artists and screenwriters and producers to mentor young people

MariaPa: that's important, since many young people are into art, dance and all sorts of entertainment. it gives them hope you can do anything if you really want to.

BJB2 nods

BJB2: the Girl Scouts are even involved: <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/troop1500/>

MariaPa: At risk students can be anything from students who have problems reading to children who are in gangs and don't really care about their education. correct? what are the different approaches you would use for each. I mean I know that you would have literacy programs for the first and probably self esteem programs for the latter, right?

BJB2: it's not necessarily self esteem issues that they're dealing with...they think they're great!

BJB2: a huge percent of at risk kids have some kind of learning disability

BJB2: they come from dysfunctional families

BJB2: usually poverty plays a role

BJB2: literacy programs are important for all at risk kids

BJB2: as are social skills and coping skills

BJB2: and problem solving

MariaPa: yes, I guess all these programs are necessary to make an individual well rounded and able to face the real world, whether you are an at risk student or not!

BJB2: many times, these kids have been told they're failures and they become programmed for failure...which means they don't even try. One important lesson all students need to learn is that it's ok to fail...as long as the failure is a learning experience

BJB2: take a quick look at <http://www.atriskeducation.net/>

BJB2: scroll down the page...

MariaPa: it's scary, that teachers are faced with such a big responsibility these days. you not only have to teach them social studies, science, math and everything else but you also have to teach them social skills. What a big responsibility! okay I'll look at the web page.

MariaPa: I'm in

MariaPa: of course there is a need for the term at risk. if there is no such term these students will not get the extra attention they so desperately need

BJB2: unfortunately, it's easy to label and much more difficult to find solutions

BJB2: and some kids who are at risk do fine

MariaPa: I guess so. I don't know, I just feel so bad, but a lot of kids don't even try to make it. if they don't want to no matter how hard someone tries to help them, they won't be helped. it's scary!

BJB2 agrees.

MariaPa: what do you mean by alternate education?

BJB2: sometimes a child will get in trouble in school and not fit in well with the general population...

BJB2: so the school labels that child 'at risk' and ships them to an 'alternative' school

BJB2: that school will focus on working with the child in a small group situation so that the child can be mainstreamed back into the regular school population

BJB2: some alternative schools are for gifted kids...it's a pretty generic term

BJB2 . o O (charter schools can be alternative schools)

BJB2: teachers have the best intentions, but the kids are often turned off by traditional education

MariaPa: but is that good for them. the way they say that disabled children with learning disabilities should be included in a general classroom shouldn't that be the case with these

"at risk" students? Oh, yes you're right! is Stuyvesant High School in Manhattan is that considered an alternative high school? you need a test to get in? It is good for them I guess. even gifted children need extra motivation.

BJB2: they are bored and feel that they have no need for public school

MariaPa: I suppose so

BJB2: I believe recent studies have shown that kids that drop out can be identified in elementary school

BJB2: technology is a good tool to motivate

MariaPa: that's horrible. at such a young age, a student's future is pretty much known if no drastic change is done.

BJB2: and giving the students an authentic way to communicate

MariaPa: yes, technology is motivational. kids can relate to technology since they are playing video games all day long.

BJB2 nods.

BJB2: blogs and wikis are good...I have a blog for my students...

MariaPa: yes, we do blogs in my media of instruction class. we're learning a lot of stuff in there.

BJB2: <http://voicesfromloysville.blogspot.com/>

MariaPa: wikis I haven't learned yet, but I hear more and more about them

BJB2: wikis are more interactive.

MariaPa: oh

BJB2: since my students are not allowed to be online, I don't use a wiki

MariaPa: do you think that pairing up at risk students with a non at risk student is a good idea?

MariaPa: you know, maybe they can relate to each other

BJB2: only if the non at risk student is older and can be a positive role model and mentor

BJB2 . o O (that is my personal feeling)

BJB2: often a positive role model is lacking in the at risk student's life

MariaPa: it's tough. I personally want all my students to succeed but I know realistically if I can change one person and their feelings towards education, then I've done good.

BJB2: have middle school kids read to elementary school kids

BJB2: you never know who you touch, Maria.

BJB2: the kids respond to structure, to showing that you care...

MariaPa: I can't wait. I feel like I will have a lot to offer. I hope I'm right!

BJB2 smiles...with that attitude you can't miss, Maria!

BJB2: did you have any other questions or concerns?

BJB2 . o O (yes, it does seem that teachers have to be all things to their pupils)

BJB2: sometimes, the best you can do is provide a safe place for them to be

MariaPa: yes, my sister in law was a full time teacher now she subs and this is how she feels

MariaPa: no other questions, I just hope that I can help as many children possible. I'm a little older, changing careers, have three children of my own, so I feel for these children. I just hope I get hired due to my age?

BJB2: I was ;-)

BJB2: teaching was a second career for me after my kids started school

MariaPa: thanks for the encouragement. I honestly can't wait.

BJB2 smiles.....you'll do great, Maria.

BJB2: you'll have to log in regularly and let us know how it's going

MariaPa: I will. I really enjoy this site. It's friendly and full of knowledge.

BJB2 agrees. I've been a member of Tapped In for 10 years...and never tire of meeting new people and learning new things

BJB2 . o O (although I'm not complaining that we don't have school tomorrow and I can sleep in!)

MariaPa: it's good to have people that can help you just a click away. enjoy the weekend. and if you celebrate Easter happy Easter!

BJB2: you too, Maria.

BJB2 waves goodnight

MariaPa: Good night!