

Title of Session: Special Education Forum

Moderator: Paul Bohac

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Room: Special Education Forum Group

PaulDB: I was looking forward to more discussion about RTI.

BJB2: the CA RTI group agreed to collaborate with this group

PaulDB: The two emails you sent were very interesting and informative.

BJB2: . o O (but that group is pretty slow)

BJB2: why don't you post some questions to the discussion board and see if you can generate some interest?

BJB2: you can do the same to the CA RTI group also since they've collaborated

PaulDB: I read through the RTI one, including all of the hyperlinks. It was a lengthy computer exercise!

BJB2: yes.

BJB2: I recently came across a study that I found absolutely fascinating...has nothing in particular to do with RTI though

PaulDB: I might try and do that. Seems as though the confusion surrounding the issue may be more a product of its sophistication rather than its intent.

BJB2: are you familiar with the BBCPrison Study?

PaulDB: What study?

PaulDB: I don't think so.

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

PaulDB: What was its focus?

BJB2: about group dynamics

BJB2: and what triggers those dynamics

PaulDB: So it included a review of environmental factors?

BJB2: what ordinary people do in situations that place them out of their comfort zone

PaulDB: Did it look at only that which occurs within the prison or did it include information about life outside?

BJB2: not environmental factors as far as the participants...they were very carefully screened for similarities

BJB2: a prison setting was used, but only as the scenario....this could have taken place anywhere where there are people in control and people who are being controlled...like in a school

BJB2: They have changed our basic understanding of how groups and power work.

BJB2 . o O (quote from the front page of the study)

PaulDB: That would be very interesting. Sorta of like the study dealing with inmates in special segregation units and the interaction between the inmates and the guards.

BJB2: yes. I think people involved with prisons will read the study differently than those who aren't

PaulDB: Did the study delve into the personal philosophy of the participants?

BJB2: yes

BJB2: very stringent screening process

BJB2: the actual study is at <http://bbcprisonstudy.org/bbc-prison-study.php>

PaulDB: I am going to look up that study. During a previous research effort, found a great study regarding willingness to participate among inmate assigned to a substance abuse program.

BJB2: what was the motivation for those inmates?

PaulDB: It appears that "locus of control" is an important issue when voluntary participation is the objective.

BJB2 nods.

BJB2 . o O (and we all want to feel in control?)

PaulDB: Aside from the requirement to participate as a "betterment" program, the other

motivation was a gain time award for successful completion. The difficulty was trying to define "successful completion" and that is what prompted the study.

BJB2 understands.

BJB2 . o O (each person has their own idea of what success connotates?)

PaulDB: I can't wait to read the BBC Prison Study to determine if the two studies share any elements.

BJB2: I thought the prison study had some elements of administration vs staff possibilities

BJB2: or leaders vs followers

BJB2: I'll be interested in hearing your comments.

BJB2: Post them to the discussion board! Maybe there are members of the group who are not able to log in for real time chats, but are able to do asynch

PaulDB: I would think so!! The pervasive "us versus them" mentality contributes as much to prison unrest as perhaps any other single event or situation.

BJB2: I did post the study to the CEA Research group

BJB2 . o O (they're kind of distracted in some study of GED vs diploma)

PaulDB: That GED vs. diploma study is related to IDEA and whether or not a GED is the same as a high school diploma as it relates to Spec Ed youth.

PaulDB: It is a particularly troublesome issue.

BJB2: yeah, but they want to know how it relates to recidivism...is one more effective than the other

PaulDB: Do spec ed youth in prison actually receive a free public education that is comparable to a youth in the public school?

PaulDB: I think that recidivism discussion is a red herring.

BJB2: hmmm....wonder what would happen if you posted THAT to their discussion board ;-)

PaulDB: It is not a GED or a HS diploma but rather the transition services provided/available upon release.

BJB2: it's certainly an important issue

BJB2: but what about the people who aren't sped who get a GED?

PaulDB: In my mind, recidivism is a product of post-release supervision rather than post-release performance.

PaulDB: With effective transition services available, with transition supervision directed at achievement of transition objectives, and with an emphasis on the delivery of services as agreed to, the risk of further law violations could be minimized.

BJB2: one HUGE problem is that transition services are being slashed in budget cuts. Murray Ellison, who is the SIG President of CEA, was laid off from his Community Relations job

PaulDB: Most community colleges and many state universities will accept a GED as evidence of a high school education and thus allow admission. The same is true of many, if not most vocational technical centers, admission to post-secondary education is not the issue.

PaulDB: Finding employment to support post-secondary educational pursuits and the other costs associated with living in an open society represent the crux of the matter.

PaulDB: You and I both know that in many locales there are rigid restrictions to the employment of those with a felony record.

BJB2 nods sadly

PaulDB: If one cannot work, cannot be hired, is not eligible for some kind of governmental assistance (can you imagine the political outcry if some politician were to talk about providing funding for release offenders?) how does one pay bills?

PaulDB: That s why I say recidivism is the wrong measure to use.

BJB2: still think you could teach those young whippersnappers a lesson and should post that opinion to the research discussion board!

PaulDB: What we ought to be looking at is how effective the transition services are: how many ex-offenders were placed in some kind of employment situation or in some kind of supported education/training program, that sort of thing.

PaulDB: Okay, I will give that a try. Tell me where to locate the board where I can detonate my grenade.

BJB2: and this has nothing to do with whether the offender has a GED or high school diploma?

BJB2: go to www.ceanational.org and look for the phorum/discussion boards.

BJB2: you may have to join the discussion group

PaulDB: It has everything to do with some form of completion (HS Diploma, GED, or some kind of vocational certificate) but little or nothing to do with which one.

BJB2: ahhhh...gotcha

PaulDB: I will do that. If I have to join, so be it. I maintain my CEA membership so should not be a problem to access the forum.

BJB2: correct

PaulDB: I guess we are not going to see any spec ed forum members tonight.

BJB2: guess not, but we had a very stimulating discussion between us! I enjoyed it.

PaulDB: I did too! Just so you know, my dissertation was built around a teacher survey regarding preparation for teaching in a juvenile justice educational program. Very interesting results indicating that most people do not enter the field of correctional education by choice!

BJB2: can you blame them?! Ignorance is bliss

PaulDB: I am of the opinion that the field of correctional education suffers from a lack of professionalism caused by its subservient role in the institution/facility.

BJB2: and that brings us back to the prison study!

PaulDB: However, as the CEA forum is suggesting (I suspect), education of delinquents and adult inmates represents one of the most cost-effective means of controlling the cost of incarceration.

BJB2: if it's any consolation, public education is suffering from a similar problem

BJB2: . o O (not much consolation. I loved teaching in a correctional facility...)

PaulDB: Yes it does but at least the public response is predicated on the parents having a hand in what happens to their children while the delinquent or inmate has very little support.

BJB2: but I got burned out by the hopelessness of it

PaulDB: I am really looking forward to reading the study.

BJB2: great...I'll look forward to your comments

BJB2 . o O (which are always so interesting!)

PaulDB: You and so many others. It just made me angry and was the motivation to pursue my Doctorate. Maybe I can speak from a position of experience, knowledge and professional credentials.

BJB2: Sometimes angry is good! You have my vote!

PaulDB: I am hoping to publish my dissertation and while others may find fault with the methodology, anyone who wants to could replicate the study and offer their results to further the discussion.

PaulDB: Thanks for your vote!!

BJB2: I'll have to tell you the story of the straw that finally broke my back one of these times

BJB2: in the meantime, have a good month and post to the discussion board...

BJB2: and say hi to Laverne

PaulDB: When the anguish has subsided to the point where objectivity prevails, that will be the time.

BJB2 nods

BJB2 hugs goodnight

PaulDB: Will do and you take care. See you next month, same time same place!