

**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](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