Stories, Strategies & Resources for Success

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By

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Recognition

• Teachers are the single most important “variable” that determines the level student academic success.
• Teachers possess a “wealth” of instructional knowledge, e.g., “What do you do when...?” and “How can you teach...?”
• Let’s start today by recognizing the wealth of instructional knowledge that is in this room...
Challenge

• How do we capture, share and build upon teacher’s instructional knowledge?
• How can we share what we know and how can we be assisted in acquiring what we yet need to learn?
• How can we be even more effective in working with our students?
• What must WE and “the system” do to enhance teaching and learning with students who are deaf/hard of hearing?
• This is our challenge today, to address these questions.
Barriers to Success

• Students...
  • ...the primary problem of students who are deaf/hard-of-hearing (d/hh) is not too little hearing, but **too much isolation** from peers, meaningful learning opportunities and high expectations for academic performance

• Teachers...
  • ...the primary problem of PK-12 deaf education professionals is not too little effort, but **too much difficulty in collaborating with peers**, in sharing effective instructional practices and accessing needed learning resources.

• Faculty...
  • ...the primary problem of deaf education teacher preparation is not too little innovation, but **too much theory** that is not sufficiently grounded in the day-to-day instructional realities of teachers of students who are d/hh.

* I am @%&&* tired of these problems!
• So, we need to:
  • reduce isolation,
  • facilitate collaboration &
  • link learning with living.

• I would suggest that **ALL** of us (i.e., students, parents, teachers, faculty, administrators, interpreters, etc.) would benefit from less isolation, more collaboration and learning opportunities that were linked with our topical interests.
Learning...Stories & Observing

• I would also suggest that the primary way that we learn is not by taking classes, reading journal articles, or attending conferences, but rather by...
  • ...sharing stories with our peers regarding instructional problems we are experiencing and solutions we are trying;
  • ...observing, and then reflecting upon what happens when we try a given strategy or resource with our students.
• I would also suggest that WE only learn what we are interested in and need at any given point in time.
Challenges...

- The challenges are starting to “mount up!” So far we have...
  - reduce isolation;
  - facilitate collaboration;
  - link learning with living;
  - document, share & build upon teacher’s instructional knowledge;
  - use stories, observing and reflection; and
  - focus upon our interest and problems
- I think that is more than enough challenges for one 45 minute presentation!
Strategies?

• How do we do this?
• How do we meet these challenges within instructional settings that often seem more concerned with educational placements and testing than learning?
• One thing for sure, **we can NOT meet our challenges by simply doing more of the same**, both the “system” and WE must be willing to change.
A Moment of Reflection...

- I would suggest that we became teachers...
  - ...not for the pay or the paper work, but for the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of our students;
  - ...because we value learning, more than simply “knowing,”
  - ...because we know that the purpose of school is not more school, but life outside and after school; and
  - ...because we know that if our students are to be successful they must be prepared to use what they are learning to solve increasingly complex, “real world” problems.
Strategies for Success ...changing “us”

• The first strategy may be the hardest one, for it requires us to focus upon learning, rather than knowing.
• It requires us to...
  • ...use our student’s topical interests to accomplish our academic tasks;
  • ...demonstrate and explain how we learn, in order to enhance the learning skills of our students;
  • ...extend learning through use of our student’s out-of-school activities and problems;
  • ...share what we know and yet need to learn with and from our peers; and
  • ...take risks.
Strategies for Success...changing the “system”

• If WE must change, so too MUST “the system.”
• Success within the 21st Century is not based upon how much you know, but rather...
  • ...how effectively and efficiently you can use an ever changing array of technologies to collaborate with others,
  • ...as you solve increasingly complex, “real world” problems,
  • ...through the systematic, yet innovative application, of a rapidly evolving body of critical concepts and knowledge.
• I think we can agree that YOU can not produce 21st Century learners in a 20th Century classroom!
Strategies for Success...21st Century Classrooms

- 20th Century
  - Teacher Centered
  - Isolated Work
  - Info Delivery
  - Passive Learning
  - Factual Learning
  - Artificial Context

- 21st Century
  - Student Centered
  - Collaborative
  - Info Exchange
  - Active Learning
  - Critical Thinking
  - Authentic Context
21st Century Teachers are those that...
- ...understand the process through which learning occurs;
- ...understand the content areas they teach;
- ...design their instruction to focus on the interest and problems that their students face outside of school;
- ...focus upon concepts, rather than facts;
- ...assist their students to understand when and how they should use what they are learning; and
- ...use instructional strategies that are matched with the academic content they are teaching.
The second strategy requires a change in “the system,” for if it wants 21st Century learners, classrooms and teachers, then it MUST provide leadership and support for the...

1. documentation and sharing of teacher’s instructional knowledge;
2. use of in school and after school technologies that serve to reduce isolation, foster collaboration and link learning with living;
3. ”just-in-time” vs. “just-in-case” learning opportunities for both professionals and parents; and
4. piloting assessment protocols that focus upon students questions and problem solving skills, vs. simply their educational placements and test scores.
We are asking for a LOT, i.e., changes in how we teach, where we teach and the system in which we teach.

Sounds good, but is it possible?

Yep!

Just requires us to think a bit “out-of-the-box.”
• Lets take the suggested strategies one at a time:
  • 1. “Documentation and sharing of teacher’s instructional knowledge.”
  • 150+ teachers of the deaf have already shared their stories of “what works” on the Deaf Education Web site (www.deafed.net)
Resources...(cont.)

1. Log in...

2. “click” here...
   - Resources
   - Instructional Resources
   - Faculty Resources
   - Professional Postings
   - Help Information
   - Project Information

Where can I find information for deaf education professionals?
Where can I find resources to enhance my classroom teaching?
Where can I find resources to enhance my courses?
Where can I find deaf education jobs, candidates, or events?
Welcome back Harold Johnson
**Instructional Resources**

Where can I find resources to enhance my teaching?

*Note: Commonly accessed resources are available via categories below. All site resources are available via the gray navigation panel on the left.*

**Literacy**

- Recommended practices
- (with technology integration suggestions)
- Assessment strategies

**Math & Science**

- Recommended practices
- (with technology integration suggestions)
- Assessment strategies

**General Education**

- Resources for General Education

Additional information for literacy, math, and science, as well as other subjects, can be found via the following:

- Google search of site
- Problem/Solution documents shared by Master Teachers
- Technology Integration bulletin board
- Virtual Library
Master Teacher Problem/Solution Documents

Master Teacher Problem/Solutions documents are listed below by document subject (clicking a link will scroll the page to the relevant section):

- American Sign Language (ASL)
- Mathematics
- Art
- Miscellaneous
- Assessment
- Multiple Disabilities
- Behavior Modification
- Parental Involvement
- Early Intervention
- Science
- History and Social Studies
- Technology
- Itinerant Teaching
- Writing
- Language and Literacy
Mathematics

- *Animals in the Classroom: A Reason for Writing* (Word) by Vivian Smith*, Mississippi School for the Deaf

- *Card Business Makes Learning Fun* (Word) by Mary Knopfl, Howard Middle School

- *Family of Numbers* (Word) by Krista Phelps, Longwood Elementary School

- *Science is Fun!* (Word) by Christine Knowler*, Lexington School for the Deaf

- *VRS and Mathematics* (Word) by Margaret Collier*, Mississippi School for the Deaf
• Animals in the Classroom: A Reason for Writing
  • By: Vivian L. Smith
  • Mississippi School f/t Deaf
  • Problem: How to encourage deaf students to write creative assignments.
  • Grammar and writing English will always be a challenge to the pre-lingual deaf student. Students must have a reason to write. Writing for the sake of writing makes for a boring and difficult task. I suggest using animals in the classroom as a source for exciting topics that can be used with d/hh students.
  • The connection between classroom animals and science is obvious. However, all subject areas involve reading and writing skills. Here are some ideas that incorporate all three—classroom pets, science and writing.
  • Use animals to introduce the Scientific Method. An experiment as easy as “What does our guinea pig like to eat?” could be conducted. Collect data by documenting each step as it is completed. (The six steps of the Scientific Method are: identify a problem, formulate a hypothesis, research, experiment, data collection, and conclusion.)
  • (...the rest of the document is on line)
Is there any reason why the “problems & solutions” of teachers of deaf in NC could not be gathered and shared?

If this was done, how would it serve to reduce isolation, recognize instructional expertise, support learning and foster collaboration?

What would “the system” have to do to encourage you to take the “risk” of sharing something you have learned as a result of your years of teaching experiences?

What are the “down sides” to such an effort?
OK, next strategy...

2. “Use of in school and after school technologies that serve to reduce isolation, foster collaboration and link learning with living.”

Did you know that during a typical school year, students spend 14% of their time in school, 53% of their time at home/in the community; and 33% of their time sleeping.

Given the amount of material you must cover in school, I would doubt that you often have the opportunity to link what you are teaching to your student’s out-of-school interest and problems.

Is this true?
Imagine if a phone, a Web cam and a Web site could provide an efficient, effective, inexpensive and sustainable technology system that would enable teachers of the deaf to hear, see and work with one another as they collaboratively explored how they could use their student’s topical interests to accomplish required academic tasks.

Imagine how much less isolation and how much more fun it would be to share instructional stories and problem solve with your peers.

Imagine if essentially the same technologies could be used with selected students to extend their learning, while simultaneously serving to better prepare the next generation of deaf education teachers.
• Imagine no more...here is how looks and works:

Seven MSU graduate students, from MI, IL, GA and AZ, who are synchronously taking a course to prepare them to become “Parent/Infant Specialists.”
The technologies required are as follows:
1. phones & a phone conference system;
2. web cams & iVisit software; and
3. high speed Internet access & wiki software

Imagine if such a system was established for small groups of NC teachers, each group focused upon a particular topical area, e.g., literacy, mathematics and science.

Imagine if the groups explored how student’s topical interests, both at school and at home, could be identified and used to accomplish academic goals.
• OK, next strategy...
  • 3. ”Just-in-time vs. just-in-case learning opportunities for both professionals and parents.”
  • Imagine if the same small groups and technologies could then be used to provide “just-in-time” learning opportunities for teachers and parents.
  • Imagine if deaf education teacher preparation courses were designed to provide direct support to teachers and parents as they tried new strategies and resources
Imagine no more... here is how looks and works:

Fifteen MSU Interns worked with parents and teachers, in two different states (MI & IL), to problem solve how the language of three students who are deaf/hard of hearing can be enhanced.
Consider not only how “timely,” but effective such learning opportunities would be if they were grounded in a synthesis of the literature concerning effective instruction for students who are d/hh.

www.deafed.net
Consider how the learning would be further enhanced if it could be facilitated through discussions with renowned researchers and a growing community of learners.
• OK, final strategy...
  • 4. “Piloting assessment protocols that focus upon students questions and problem solving skills, vs. simply their educational placements and test scores.”

  • Imagine if we could determine the impact of our teaching not solely by student’s answers, or test scores, but also by longitudinal changes in questions they ask, the resources they use, the individuals with whom they collaborate, the problems they solve and the products they produce.

  • Imagine if student’s were given increasing responsibility to document their evolving knowledge and skills via “learning logs.”
Success

Consider if this were to occur, imagine if WE tried at least one, if not all four of the proposed strategies, how much...

- ...better prepared the students would be for the 21st Century;
- ...more you would be recognized for what you know and do, vs. have yet to accomplish;
- ...more satisfying it would be to have a technologically facilitated system to share and problem solve with your peers;
- ...more time you would have to teach, if your students were engaged and increasingly responsible for their own learning;
Success...(cont.)

• Consider if this were to occur, how much...(cont.)
  • ...more interesting it would be to learn with your students vs. keep plugging away at the same old material, month after month, year after year;
  • ...effective it would be if the theory, research and resources of teacher preparation programs was used to provide active, timely and direct support for students, parents and teachers;
  • ...less isolation you, your student’s and their parents would experience;
  • ...much collaboration and learning would occur; and
  • ...of a difference we would make in the lives of our students.
The choice is ours, we can either continue to identify, study, share and bemoan the problems that beset the field of deaf education, or we can decide to work “out-of-the-box” by...

- ...recognizing and sharing the instructional knowledge of teachers;
- ...using existing, readily available resources and technologies to reduce isolation, support collaboration and enhance learning; and
- ...focusing upon learning and problem solving for us all!
Thank You

• I am honored to have had this opportunity to share with you.
• I am looking forward to talking with and learning from you during the rest of the symposium.
References

- How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience and School
  - http://www.nap.edu/html/howpeople1/
- How People Learn: Bridging Research and Practice
- “Understanding, Valuing, Enhancing & Building Upon How Teachers Learn: Stories for Learning & Questions for Answers”
  - (http://www.deafed.net/activities/MiscPres/il_keynote.htm)
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